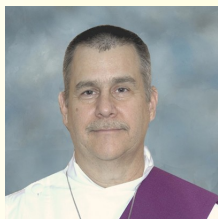


Homily Rerun: April 2, 2017 - Deacon Bruce



This celebration of Mass on Palm Sunday begins Holy Week. Have you ever wondered why we call it Holy Week? What makes Holy Week Holy?

Some better questions might be:

What are we going to do this week to make this a **Holy Week** for ourselves and our families?

What are we going to change in our lives so that we are better able to accept the holiness that Christ won for us and that Mother Church offers us this week?

If you listened to the Readings today our Scripture passages are quite diverse. The first Scripture passage we heard at the beginning of Mass from the Gospel of Matthew is all about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem amid cries of joy from the crowds gathered there to welcome Him. Later we heard St. Paul tell us how Jesus, our Lord and Savior, our God, humbled Himself before the Father and the Father exalted Him and so every creature on earth should do the same. We have just finished listening to the Passion of the Lord. We heard about The Last Supper, Jesus' betrayal by one of His chosen Apostles, His agony in the garden, the denial of Peter, Jesus' humiliation, the calling for His death by the same people who were welcoming Him and praising Him just a few days before, His suffering, His abandonment by his friends and followers, and His death on the cross.

As we reflect on what we have just heard, we should also reflect on who we are. There are many different voices, many different roles in the readings we listened to today. We should be asking ourselves, "Which of these am I? How many of these roles have I played and do I play?"

Am I one in the crowd rejoicing at Jesus' entry into Jerusalem? Remember most in the crowd were also the ones calling for Jesus to be put to death a short time later. Do I just go along with the crowd, or am I confident in whom I am as a Catholic?

Am I one of the Apostles at the Last Supper? When Jesus said that one of them would betray Him, each had a reason to ask, "Is it I, Lord?" Do we have a reason to ask the same thing?

Am I Peter, James, or John whom Jesus invites to go pray with Him and asks them to keep watch, and then fall asleep while Jesus is praying in the garden and counting on me? Am I always attentive to what God has planned for me and do I live my life accordingly?

Am I Peter who, after Jesus is arrested, tried to follow Jesus but when he was in fear of his life denied Jesus? Do I always proudly act Catholic? Do I always act the same everywhere as I do at Church, or do I act differently when I am with certain friends or coworkers, or when I am out in public?

Am I one of the apostles who abandoned Jesus until Easter and the resurrection? Am I going to do that now? Am I abandoning Jesus until Easter? Or am I coming to the Seder Dinner tonight? Am I coming to the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening? Am I coming to the Good Friday service and Good Friday Stations? Will I participate in the Easter Vigil? Will I be at the Easter Vigil to be present and support those who have been studying and praying and who will become part of the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil Mass?

Am I one in the crowd at the crucifixion mocking Him? Asking Him, "Aren't you God? Come down from there!" Do I look around at the world today, at the state of morality in our society, and at the Catholic Church and say to Jesus, "You saved others, but You cannot save yourself?"

Am I one of the thieves who, at the end of my life after living a life that was not the life I should have been living asks Jesus to save me?

Am I the centurion who finally kind of gets it and says, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" But he really didn't completely get it because the statement should have been, "Truly this man IS the Son of God!"

Am I Joseph of Arimathea who was a disciple in secret for fear of being discovered, who at the end steps forward and courageously asks for Jesus' body so he can bury Him?

As we reflect on what role we play in life and in the Catholic faith we should ask ourselves, "Am I the person I want to be? Am I the person I need to be? Am I the person I was created to be? Am I living my life **for** and **in** Christ?" In just a few moments we are going to experience the Last Supper, the Passion, the Suffering, the Death and the Resurrection of Christ as we do every Sunday in the Mass. We are going to experience the fullness of the offering of Christ. What have we done to prepare ourselves for that?

At the beginning of Mass we received a palm branch – in memory of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. We take home the palm branch but do we take home the Passion? As we leave Mass today let us remember that we too gave up ourselves in the waters of baptism and were made one with Christ. We should take home not only the palm branch but we should also take home the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.