

HOLY WEEK – PALM SUNDAY

Holy Week offers us the opportunity to be immersed in the central events of Redemption, to relive the Paschal Mystery, the great mystery of the Christian faith.

Good Liturgy is not a reenactment of something that happened over 2000 years ago but an actual participation in the events themselves. They are timeless and made present in our Liturgical celebrations. Holy Week invites us to participate in the timeless Paschal Mystery, the saving life, suffering, passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION

Introductory Rites: The Church today “celebrates Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery” (Missal). The memorial of this event is to be included in every Mass. The Missal provides three forms for this memorial of the Lord’s entrance. Although the Procession should take place only once (before the principal Mass), the Solemn Entrance may be used before the principal Mass if the Procession cannot be held. The prayers for the blessing of the palms are used whenever the Procession or the Solemn Entrance is celebrated; the penitential rite of the Mass is then omitted. The blessing of palms without the Procession or Solemn Entrance is not permitted.

The Passion: Ministers of the Word and pastoral musicians are encouraged to study the rubrics for the proclamation of the Passion. There is a Gospel Acclamation as usual, and the deacon receives the blessing as usual (lay readers do not receive a blessing). Omitted are candles and incense, the greeting and response (“The Lord be with you...”), the making of the signs of the cross, and the people’s response (“Glory to you, O Lord”).

Since it is a reading from the Gospel, the appropriate posture for the assembly (where possible) during the reading of the Passion is standing. The deacon and/or priest may be assisted by lectors in the reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. There is often great difficulty in reading the Passion with various roles given to several readers, since the Passion accounts were never written to be scripts for a Passion play. This practice has been encouraged by missalette publishers, not by the liturgical books. The parish might wish to consider setting aside missalettes, give up their “crowd” lines, and listen to the Passion as proclaimed, not read.

Where it is not possible to celebrate Mass, there should be a Liturgy of the Word about the Lord’s messianic entry and his Passion, either on the Saturday evening or at a suitable time on the Sunday.