

Rev. Fr. Leonard Goffine's

The Church's Year

Palm Sunday

Why is this day called Palm Sunday?

In memory of our Saviour's triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when the multitude strewed palm branches before Him, for which reason the Church, on this day, blesses palms, and carries them in procession.

Why are palms blessed?

That those who carry them with devotion, or keep them in their houses, may receive protection of soul and body, as prayed for in the blessing; that those who carry the palms may, by means of the prayers of the Church, adorn their souls with good works and thus, in spirit, meet the Saviour; that, through Christ whose members we are, we may conquer the kingdom of death and darkness, and be made worthy to share in His glorious resurrection and triumphant entrance into heaven. St. Augustine writes of the palms: "They are the emblem of praise, and sign of victory, because the Lord by death conquered death, and with the sign of victory, the cross, overcame the devil, the prince of death." Therefore, preceded by the cross, we go in procession around the church singing hymns of praise; when we come to the church door, we find it locked; the priest knocks at it with the cross. Heaven was closed to us by the sin of Adam, and it is opened to us by reconciliation through Jesus on the cross.

To move us to compassion for the suffering Redeemer, the Church, in the person of Christ, cries in lamenting tones at the Introit:

INTROIT O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from me, look towards my defense: save me from the lion's mouth, and my lowness from the horns of the unicorns. O God, my God! look on me, why hast Thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins. O Lord! Remove not, &c. (Ps. XXI.)

COLLECT Almighty and everlasting God! who didst vouchsafe to send Thy Son, our Saviour, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, to give mankind an example of humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of His patience, and be made partakers of His Resurrection. Through the same &c.

EPISTLE (Philip. II. 5-11.) Brethren, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery himself to be equal to God; but debased himself, taking the form of a servant, being made to the likeness of men, and in shape found as a man. He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath exalted him, and hath given him a name, which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that the Lord, Jesus Christ, is in the glory of God, the Father.

INSTRUCTION In this epistle, the apostle urges us in a special manner to humility by which we are made like to Christ, our Lord, who putting off the majesty of His divinity,

became man, and humbled Himself in obedience to the ignominious death of the cross. "Would that all might hear," exclaims St. Gregory, "that God resists the proud, and gives His grace to the humble! Would that all might hear: Thou dust and ashes, why dost thou exalt thyself? Would that all might hear the words of the Lord: Learn of me, because I am humble of heart. The only-begotten Son of God assumed the form of our weakness, suffered mockery, insult and torments for the purpose that the humble God might teach man not to be proud."

ASPIRATION Ah, that my sentiments were as Thine, O my Lord, Jesus! who so humbled Thyself and was obedient to the most ignominious death of the cross. Grant me, I beseech Thee, O my Redeemer, the grace. diligently to follow Thee in humility.

Instead of the Gospel, the Passion, that is, the history of the sufferings of our Lord according to St. Matthew, (Chaps. XXVI. XXVII.) is read in this day's Mass, and neither incense, nor lights are used, nor is the Dominus vobiscum said, thus signifying that Jesus, the Light of the world, was taken away by death, and that the faith and devotion of the apostles was shaken, and became almost extinct. When reading the History of the Passion at the words: and bowing his head, he gave up the ghost, the priest with all the congregation kneel and meditate for a short time on the great mystery of the death of Jesus, by which our redemption was effected.

At the blessing of the palms, the priest reads the following

GOSPEL (Matt. XXI. 1-9.) At that time, when Jesus drew nigh to Jerusalem, and was come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet; then he sent two disciples, saying to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately ye will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to me; and if any man shall say any thing to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done, that the word might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut down boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way; and the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem so solemnly and yet so humbly?

To show that He was the promised Messiah and King of the Jews, as foretold by the Prophet Zacharias, (IX 9.) and that He had come to conquer the world, the flesh and the devil, for which He used the weapons of meekness, humility, and poverty and therefore came seated not on a proud steed but like a poor person on the weak colt of an ass, entering Jerusalem in all humility, thus teaching us that meekness and indifference to earthly goods are our best weapons to gain victory over our enemies. Jesus entered Jerusalem so humbly to perfect the type of the Paschal lamb, for on this day the lambs which were to be sacrificed in the temple on the following Friday, were solemnly led into

the city. Thus Jesus like a meek lamb, entered the city of Jerusalem to be sacrificed for us.

Why did the people meet Christ with palm branches?

This happened by the inspiration of God, to indicate that Christ, the conqueror of death, hell and the devil, would reconcile man with God, and open the heavenly Jerusalem to him, for the palm is the emblem of victory and peace. By this we learn also the inconsistency and mutability of the world; for the very people who on this day met Christ with palm branches exclaiming: "Hosanna to the Son of David," a few days later shouted: "Crucify him! Crucify him!" - Learn from this to despise the praise of the world, and be careful not to imitate the inconsistency of this people by crucifying Him again by sin (Heb. VI. 6.) after having received Him with joy in holy Communion.

How should we take part in the procession on this day?

With the pious intention of meeting Christ in spirit, with the devout people of Jerusalem, adoring Him, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna to Him who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna to the Highest!" and with the heart-felt prayer to Jesus for His grace, that with Him we may conquer the world, the flesh and the devil, and thus merit to be received into the heavenly Jerusalem.

PETITION O Jesus, Tree of Life! ever fresh and fruitful, grant that we may by love be like palms ever green, and by the practice of, good works blossom and bring forth fruit.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, CHAP. XXVI., XXVII.

At that time, Jesus said to his disciples: You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified. Then were gathered together the chief priests and the ancients of the people into the palace of the high-priest, who was called Caiphias. And they consulted together, that, by subtlety, they might apprehend Jesus and put him to death. But they said: Not on the festival day, lest there should be a tumult among the people. And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the leper, there came to him a woman having an alabaster-box of precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he was at table. And the disciples seeing it, had indignation, saying: To what purpose is this waste? For this might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. And Jesus knowing it, said to them: Why do you trouble this woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For the poor you have always with you: but me you have not always. For she, in pouring this ointment upon my body, hath done it for my burial. Amen, I say to you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done, shall be told for a memory of her.

Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed for him thirty pieces of silver. And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray him.

And on the first day of the Azymes, the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Pasch? But Jesus said: Go ye into the city to a certain man, and say to him: The master saith: my time is near at hand, I will keep the Pasch at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them, and they prepared the Pasch. Now when it was evening, he sat down with his twelve disciples. And whilst they were eating, he said: Amen, I say to you, that one of you is about to betray me. And they being very much troubled, began everyone to say: Is it I, Lord? But he answering, said: He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of Man indeed goeth as it is written of him; but woe to that man, by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed: it were better for that man, if he had not been born. And Judas that betrayed him, answering, said: Is it I, Rabbi? He said to him: Thou hast said it. And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat: This is my body. And taking the chalice he gave thanks: and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. And I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day, when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to Mount Olivet.

Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalized in me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed. But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. And Peter answering, said to him: Though all shall be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized. Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, that in this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. Peter saith to him: Though I should die with thee, I will not deny thee. And in like manner said all the disciples. Then Jesus came with them to a country place which is called Gethsemani, and he said to his disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder, and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to grow sorrowful and to be sad.

Then he saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here, and watch with me. And going a little further he fell upon his face, praying, and saying: O my Father! if it is possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh to his disciples, and findeth them asleep; and he saith to Peter: What! could you not watch one hour with me? Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again he went the second time, and prayed, saying: O my Father! if this chalice cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done. And he cometh again, and findeth them asleep; for their eyes were heavy. And leaving them, he went away again, and he prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then he cometh to his disciples, and saith to them: Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go; behold, he is at hand that will betray me.

As he yet spoke, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the ancients of the people. And he that betrayed him, gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: hold him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, rabbi! And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him: Friend! whereto art thou come? Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus, and held him. And behold one of them that were with Jesus, stretching forth his hand,

drew out his sword; and striking the servant of the high-priest, cut off his ear. Then Jesus saith to him: Put up again thy sword into its place for all that take the sword shall perish by the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of Angels? How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that so it must be done? In that same hour Jesus said to the multitude: You are come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to apprehend me. I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and you laid not hands on me. Now all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then the disciples all leaving him, fled away.

But they holding Jesus, led him to Caiphias, the high-priest, where the scribes and the ancients were assembled. But Peter followed him afar off to the high-priest's palace. And going in, he sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests and whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death: and they found not, though many false witnesses had come in. And last of all, there came two false witnesses. And they said: This man said: I am able to destroy the temple of God, and in three days to rebuild it. And the high-priest rising up, said to him: Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high-priest said to him: I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him: Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you? But they answering, said: He is guilty of death.

Then they spit in his face, and buffeted him, and others struck his face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophecy unto us, O Christ! who is he that struck thee? But Peter sat without in the palace, and there came to him a servant maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest. And as he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: I do not know the man. And after a little while, they that stood by came and said to Peter: Surely thou also art one of them: for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man.

And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus which he had said: Before the cock crow, thou wilt deny me thrice. And going forth, he wept bitterly.

And when the morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people held a council against Jesus, to put him to death. And they brought him bound, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, who betrayed him, seeing that he was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the ancients, saying: I have sinned, in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? look thou to it.

And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed: and went and hanged himself with a halter. But the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona, because it is the price of blood. And having consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for

strangers. Wherefore that field was called Haceldama, that is the field of blood, even to this day.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field, as the Lord appointed to me.

And Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus saith to him: Thou sayest it. And when he was accused by the chief priests and ancients, he answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to him: Dost thou not hear how great testimonies they allege against thee?

And he answered him not to any word: so that the governor wondered exceedingly.

Now upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would. And he had then a notorious prisoner, that was called Barabbas. They, therefore, being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus, who is called Christ? For he knew that through envy they had delivered him up. And as he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent to him, saying. Have thou nothing to do with that just man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream on account of him. But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people, that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away. And the governor answering, said to them: Which will you have of the two to be released unto you? But they said: Barabbas. Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They all say: Let him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let him be crucified. And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made; having taken water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man: look you to it. And all the people answering, said: His blood be upon us, and upon our children. Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to them to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto him the whole band. And stripping him, they put a scarlet cloak about him. And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And bowing the knee before him, they mocked him, saying: Hail, king of the Jews!

And spitting upon him, they took the reed, and struck his head. And after they had mocked him, they took off the cloak from him, and put on him his own garments, and led him away to crucify him.

And going out, they found a man of Cyrene, named Simon; him they forced to take up his cross. And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is, the place of Calvary. And they gave him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when he had tasted, he would not drink. And after they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots; that the word might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided my garments among them; and upon my vesture they cast lots. And they sat down, and watched him. And they put over his head his cause written: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Then were there crucified with him two thieves; the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. And they that passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and

saying: Vah, thou who destroyest the temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again, save thy own self: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also, the chief priests with the scribes and ancients, mocking, said: He saved others; himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now if he will save him: for he said: I am the Son of God.

And the self-same thing the thieves also, that were crucified with him, reproached him with. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: Eli, Eli, lamma sabacthani? that is: My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me? And some of them that stood there and heard, said: This man calleth for Elias. And immediately one of them, running; took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar; and put it on a reed and gave him to drink. And the others said: Stay, let us see whether Elias will come to deliver him. And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

And behold the veil of the temple was rent in two, from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent; and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints that had slept arose: and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were greatly afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God. And there were there many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him; among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. And when it was evening, there came a certain rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded that the body should be delivered. And Joseph taking the body, wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way. And there was Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.

And the next day, which followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that seducer said, while-he was yet alive: After three days I will rise again. "Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day; lest his disciples come and steal him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead. So the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard, go guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, with guards, sealing the stone.

INSTRUCTION ON HOLY WEEK

Why is this week called Holy Week?

This week is called Holy Week because during it we celebrate the most holy mysteries of our religion, and in all her offices and ceremonies the Church refers in quiet mournfulness to the passion and death of our Redeemer.

What remarkable things did Christ do during the first four days of this week?

After He had entered the temple at Jerusalem on Palm Sunday amidst the greatest rejoicings of the people, and was saluted by the children with that cry of joy: "Hosanna to

the Son of David," He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and when He had spent the entire day in preaching and healing the sick, He went in the evening to Bethania, where He remained over night in Lazarus' house, because in Jerusalem no one wished to receive Him for fear of His enemies. The three following days He spent in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple, and passing the night in prayer on Mount Olivet. In His sermons during these days He strove especially to convince the Jewish priests, the Doctors of the Law and the Pharisees, that He was really the Messiah, and that they would commit a terrible sin by putting Him to death; that they would bring themselves and the whole Jewish nation to destruction. This ruin of the people He illustrated most plainly causing the fig-tree to wither under His curse, and by foretelling the destruction of the city and the temple of Jerusalem. He disputed with them, and confounded them, and brought them publicly to shame by parables, so that out of anger and hatred they with one mind determined to kill Him. The impious Judas aided the most in the execution of their design; through avarice he sold Him for thirty pieces of silver (about eighteen dollars in our money) to the chief priests, and the next day, Thursday, became His betrayer and delivered Him over into their hands.

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