

Reflection for Palm Sunday

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for every moment of your passion, offered for the salvation of the world. Increase my awareness and appreciation of the wounds you suffered for love of me, and help me to gratefully offer myself back to you. Amen.

Opening Prayer, *Stations of the Cross, with the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.*

This quote that starts my reflection this Sunday is taken from the book, *Stations of the Cross, with the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus*, written by Fr. William Prospero, S.J. and published by Ave Maria Press. This booklet for praying the Stations of the Cross was first published in 2015. Fr. William Prospero was born on the feast of St. John Vianney, August 4th, 1965. He entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1987 and was ordained a Catholic Priest in June of 1998. Fr. Will had kidney cancer and died on September 8, 2014. Fr. James Kubicki met Fr. Will when he entered the Jesuits and in 2014 received permission from Fr. Will to publish his reflections on the Stations of the Cross. Fr. James was always struck by Fr. Will's profound love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Eucharist, and the Blessed Virgin Mary. In Fr. William's Stations of the Cross this love is truly on display.

Passion or Palm Sunday that we celebrate this Sunday marks a step we take entering into the most holy and sacred week of the year. The opening prayer that is at the start of Fr. William's Stations of the Cross, invites us to be thankful to Jesus Christ for what He endured for our Salvation. The book also points out that we are not alone as we pray the 14 Stations of the Cross. As we enter Holy Week, we are also being reminded that we are not alone. Christ is with us, the Saints who have gone before us are with us, and the community of the faithful, the body of Christ is with us. Be it the start of the Lenten Season, the start of praying the Stations of the Cross, or the start of Holy Week, it is helpful and important to know and appreciate what Jesus Christ was willing to endure for our Salvation. May we embrace Passion Sunday with thankful hearts.

We have spent this Lenten Season preparing for this moment and now it has arrived. This Sunday is Palm Sunday, Passion Sunday, and with this celebration we enter the most holy and sacred week of the year. As we enter Holy Week, may we be reminded of the message in last week's Gospel where Jesus saved the women caught in the act of adultery, forgiving her sins and giving her a new lease on life. This week is filled with so much that it might be helpful to remember that all that Jesus Christ did for us, was motivated by love and mercy. He forgave the women of her sins out of love and mercy. The meaning of this sacred week, and all that Jesus has done in this world can be lost on us if we do not remember that love and mercy are what motivates our God.

This Palm Sunday may we be able to follow the example of our ancestors in faith. On this Sunday we embrace the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem where the crowds cried out "*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.*" We also embrace the Last Supper, the institution of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Our Gospel Reading, this Sunday, ends with Jesus on the cross on Golgotha, and the centurion who had witnessed what had happened saying "*This man was innocent beyond doubt.*" Jesus gave His life for our salvation and the forgiveness of our sins. In His journey in this world, He experienced extreme highs and extreme lows. What Jesus went through in this world was not for Himself, but for you and me. He suffered so that we may be saved, and through His suffering He shows us how to handle challenges in our daily lives. Jesus' suffering did not prevent Him from being a loving and caring Lord. In our hour of challenge and suffering may we turn to our Lord and join our suffering to His. The suffering that Christ went through clearly had a greater purpose than only His suffering, and may we see the same in our suffering, as we join our suffering with Christ's, our suffering has a greater purpose than ourselves. May we also see the Eucharist and all the seven Sacraments that Christ instituted as a gift that shares God's grace with us as we journey in this world looking forward to heaven.

The events of Palm Sunday that we celebrate today, prepares us for the rest of the events of Holy Week climaxing with the celebration of the Paschal Triduum, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. This week is filled with extremes, but at the end of the celebration, the end of the day, and the end of the week we are reminded and must recall the profound and complete love that God has for us, and may we have thankful hearts.