



FOR OUR SAKE

by Fr. Gil A. Alinsangan, SSP



PART I: THE COMMEMORATION OF THE LORD'S ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem ushers us into the celebration of the Holy Week and sets the scene for the paschal mystery—his passion, death, and resurrection. In the liturgy, it is known as "Palm Sunday." This is based on the Gospel of John which narrates that the crowd "took palm branches" and went out to meet Jesus (Jn 12:13). The full title, however, is "Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord" as it is on this Sunday that the passion narratives found in the Synoptic Gospels are read based on the liturgical cycle. The Passion according to John is always read or dramatized on Good Friday.

This year, Year B, the Markan accounts are read both for the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem and for the Gospel proclamation of the Lord's Passion. Instead of the crowd waving branches of palms, Mark has people spreading leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. The reference to the branches of green and the antiphonal singing recall the entry into Jerusalem of Simon, the last of the Hasmonean brothers, on a triumphal occasion (1 Mc 13:51). The action is similar to a royal salute or a gesture of profound respect. It was a moment of enthusiasm outside the city walls on the part of pilgrims who thought of Jesus coming to Jerusalem in fulfillment of a prophetic mission.

The cry that greeted Jesus is the chanting of the great psalms of ascent to the holy city, the so-called Hallel Psalms (Ps 118). "Hosanna" ("Save us!") is properly a prayer invoking God's saving action. But through liturgical use, it came to be dissociated from its original meaning and was used as a shout of salutation like "Halleluyah" ("Praise God!"). "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" formed a part of a customary form of religious greeting of pilgrims (Ps 118:26), but in Jesus' case, Mark would have intended a deeper, Messianic significance: Jesus comes to fulfill the Messianic promises God made to King David

("Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come!").

But shortly after, this joyful shout of praise would turn sour and be replaced by a clamor for Jesus' death. Instigated by the religious leaders who condemned Jesus for blasphemy, the crowds asked Pontius Pilate to release a rebel who had committed murder—Barabbas—instead of Jesus. Jesus suffered betrayal by Judas and the abandonment of his apostles. He was taunted and challenged to come down from the cross to prove that he was indeed the Messiah, the King of Israel. In the abyss of his solitude, he called to his heavenly Father by the generic name "God": "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He experienced the utmost abandonment.

Why did this happen? Pope Francis, in his homily for Palm Sunday last year—celebrated without the faithful because of the pandemic—said, "It was done for our sake, to serve us. So that when we have our back to the wall, when we find ourselves at a dead end, with no light and no way of escape, when it seems that God himself is not responding, we should remember that we are not alone. Jesus experienced total abandonment in a situation he had never before experienced in order to be one with us in everything. He did it for me, for you, for all of us; he did it to say to us: 'Do not be afraid, you are not alone. I experienced all your desolation in order to be ever close to you.' That is the extent to which Jesus served us: he descended into the abyss of our most bitter sufferings, culminating in betrayal and abandonment. Today, in the tragedy of a pandemic, in the face of the many false securities that have now crumbled, in the face of so many hopes betrayed, in the sense of abandonment that weighs upon our hearts, Jesus says to each one of us: 'Courage, open your heart to my love. You will feel the consolation of God who sustains you.'"

Solemn Procession (*First Form*)

(The people, with their palm branches, gathers in a suitable place outside the church. Wearing a red cope, the priest joins the assembly and begins the celebration. The following antiphon or another appropriate song is sung.)

Antiphon (Mt 21:9)

Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel: Hosanna in the highest.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P — The Lord be with you.
All — And with your spirit.

Introduction

(The priest may use this introduction or similar words.)

P — Dear brethren (brothers and sisters), since the beginning of Lent until now we have prepared our hearts by penance and charitable works. Today we gather together to herald with the whole Church the beginning of the celebration of our Lord's Paschal Mystery, that is to say, of his Passion and Resurrection. For it was to accomplish this mystery that he entered his own city of Jerusalem. Therefore, with all faith and devotion, let us commemorate the Lord's entry into the city for our salvation, following in his footsteps, so that, being made by his grace partakers of the Cross, we may have a share also in his Resurrection and in his life.

Blessing of Palms

P — Let us pray. (*Pause*)
 Almighty ever-living God, sanctify (+) these branches

with your blessing, that we, who follow Christ the King in exultation, may reach the eternal Jerusalem through him.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

(In silence, the priest sprinkles the palm branches with holy water.)

Gospel of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem (Mk 11:1–10)

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

P — A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All — Glory to you, O Lord.

WHEN Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately on entering it, you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone should say to you, 'Why are you doing this?' reply, 'The Master has need of it and will send it back here at once.'" So they went off and found a colt tethered at a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. Some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They answered them just as Jesus had told them to, and they permitted them to do it. So they brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks over it. And he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! Hosanna in the highest!"

— The Gospel of the Lord.

All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(A brief homily may be given.)

Procession to the Church

P — Dear brethren (brothers and sisters), like the crowds who

acclaimed Jesus in Jerusalem, let us go forth in peace.

All — In the name of Christ. Amen.

(Processional Song)

PART II: MASS

(When the priest reaches the altar, he kisses it. He removes his cope and puts on a red chasuble. Then he begins the Mass with the Collect.)

Collect

P — Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Almighty, ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Savior to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection.

Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Is 50:4–7) *(Sit)*

This mysterious Servant prefigures Jesus who identifies himself as the Servant who frees all people.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THE LORD GOD has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.

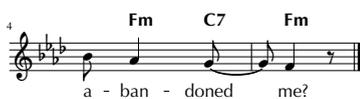
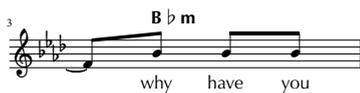
The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 22)

R — My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?



1. All who see me scoff at me;/ they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:/ "He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, if he loves him." **(R)**

2. Indeed, many dogs surround me, a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;/ They have pierced my hands and my feet;/ I can count all my bones. **(R)**

3. They divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots./ But you, O LORD, be not far from me;/ O my help, hasten to aid me. **(R)**

4. I will proclaim your name to my brethren;/ in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:/ "You who fear the LORD, praise him;/ all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;/ revere him, all you descendants of Israel!" **(R)**

Second Reading (Phil 2:6–11)

The glory of Jesus comes from the total emptying of self. His passion and death are his exaltation.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

CHRIST JESUS, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness, and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

— The word of the Lord.

All — Thanks be to God.

Verse before the Gospel
(Phil 2:8–9) (*Stand*)

All — Christ became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.

Gospel

(Mk 15:1-39) (*Short Form*)

(The Proclamation of the Gospel is read without candles and incense; the greeting and the sign of the cross are omitted.)

(**J** — *Jesus*, **N** — *Narrator*,
P — *Pilate and Individual Speaker*,
C — *Crowd*)

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

N — As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him,
P — “Are you the king of the Jews?”

N — He said to him in reply,
J — “You say so.”

N — The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him,

P — “Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of.”

N — Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested. A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed. Pilate answered,
P — “Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?”

N — For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate again said to them in reply,

P — “Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?”

N — They shouted again,

C — “**CRUCIFY HIM.**”

N — Pilate said to them,

P — “Why? What evil has he done?”

N — They only shouted the louder,

C — “**CRUCIFY HIM.**”

N — So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with,

C — “**HAIL, KING OF THE JEWS!**”

N — and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him. They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. They brought him to the place of Golgotha—which is translated Place of the Skull. They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying,

C — “**AHA! YOU WHO WOULD DESTROY THE TEMPLE AND REBUILD IT IN THREE DAYS, SAVE YOURSELF BY COMING DOWN FROM THE CROSS.**”

N — Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said,

C — “**HE SAVED OTHERS; HE CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF. LET THE CHRIST, THE KING OF ISRAEL, COME DOWN NOW FROM THE CROSS THAT WE**

MAY SEE AND BELIEVE.”

N — Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him. At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

J — “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*”

N — which is translated,

J — “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

N — Some of the bystanders who heard it said,

C — “**LOOK, HE IS CALLING ELIJAH.**”

N — One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying,

P — “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down.”

N — Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

(Here all kneel and pause for a short time.)

N — The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said,

P — “Truly this man was the Son of God!”

— The Gospel of the Lord.

All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Profession of Faith (*Stand*)

All — I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P — Let us pray to our heavenly Father who willed that all human beings be saved through the passion, death, and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ. We pray:

R — **Through the passion of Christ, listen to our prayer.**

C — May the Pope, bishops, priests, and deacons continue to profess their faith in God in an indifferent and sometimes hostile world. We pray: **(R)**

C — May government and civil leaders follow the example of Christ who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life for the good of the people. We pray: **(R)**

C — May we support the *A/ay Kapwa* program as our way of responding to the challenges of restoring social justice and helping the weak and the needy. We pray: **(R)**

C — May those who continue to crucify Jesus by acts of violence against their brothers and sisters be led to the road of repentance and atone for the evils they have done. We pray: **(R)**

C — Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P — Father, look tenderly on your children. As we follow Christ in the joy of his entrance to Jerusalem, as well as in the pains of his sacrifice on Calvary, may we be worthy to enter your kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

**THE LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST**



Presentation of the Gifts (*Stand*)

P — Pray, brethren...

All — May the Lord accept ...

Prayer over the Offerings

P — Through the Passion of your Only Begotten Son, O Lord, may our reconciliation with you be near at hand, so that, though we do not merit it by our own deeds, yet by this sacrifice made once for all, we may feel already the effects of your mercy.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.



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Preface: The Passion of the Lord

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

P — Lift up your hearts.

All — We lift them up to the Lord.

P — Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All — It is right and just.

P — It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For, though innocent, he suffered willingly for sinners and accepted unjust condemnation to save the guilty. His Death has washed away our sins, and his Resurrection has purchased our justification.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration we, too, acclaim:

All — Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation (*Stand*)

All — We proclaim your Death ...

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All — Our Father...

P — Deliver us, Lord...

All — For the kingdom ...

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion (*Kneel*)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**All — Lord, I am not worthy ...
Communion Antiphon** (Mt 26:42)

**Father, if this chalice cannot
pass without my drinking it,
your will be done.**

Prayer after Communion (*Stand*)

P — Let us pray. (*Pause*)

Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, just as through the death of your Son you have brought us to hope for what we believe, so by his Resurrection you may lead us to where you call.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P — The Lord be with you.

All — And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P — Bow down for the blessing. (*Pause*)

Look, we pray, O Lord, on this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to be delivered into the hands of the wicked and submit to the agony of the Cross.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All — Amen.

P — And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All — Amen.

Dismissal

P — Go forth, the Mass is ended.

All — Thanks be to God.