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Why do we receive palms on Palm Sunday?

We know Palm Sunday is the day we bring home a palm from Mass, but have you ever thought about the deeper meaning behind this tradition? Find out here.

Palm Sunday is the last Sunday of Lent, exactly a week before Easter Sunday. On this day, the priest blesses palms for us at the beginning of Mass. This tradition is derived from the Gospel, when Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem and people celebrated His coming by laying cloaks and branches on the ground for Him. Palm Sunday is one of the only Sundays of the year you get a souvenir from Mass!

However, Palm Sunday is about so much more than just bringing home a palm.

In his book *A Devotional Journey into the Easter Mystery*, Christopher Carstens explains the deeper meaning behind the Palm Sunday Mass and what makes it so distinct.

Palm Sunday Mass begins with a procession of the palms, often taking place outside the church. The priest begins the procession and blessing by reminding us of why we have been praying and fasting and says, **“On this day the Church recalls the entrance of Christ the Lord into Jerusalem to accomplish his Paschal Mystery.”** We then participate in a procession and follow the Lord in the Gospel by accompany Jesus into Jerusalem as He completes His paschal bridge.

For the rest of Holy Week, we are supposed to follow God closely and faithfully, just like those who greeted Jesus in the Gospel did on Palm Sunday. Christopher Carstens notes,

As the priest blesses the Sunday branches, for example, he asks God to “sanctify + these branches with [his] blessing, that we, who follow Christ the King in exaltation, may reach the eternal Jerusalem through him.” Similarly, St. Athanasius (d. 373) teaches that “if we follow Christ closely we shall be allowed, even on this earth, to stand as it were on the threshold of the heavenly Jerusalem, and enjoy the contemplation of that everlasting feast.

As you attend Palm Sunday Mass today, instead of focusing on how to fold your palm into the perfect cross, imagine you are one of Jesus's welcomers who walk with Him into the week that altered the course of our salvation.

Palm Sunday begins the holiest week of the year. Take this day to reflect on the Gospel readings as you welcome Jesus into Jerusalem and your heart and prepare for the sacrifice He will make later in the week.

To learn how to become more devoted to Christ during this season, check out [Christopher Carstens's *A Devotional Journey into the Easter Mystery*, sold here.](#)