

From the Pastor Sunday: 14th April 2019

This weekend the Church celebrates Palm Sunday AND Passion Sunday. In liturgical terms, we are beginning Holy Week, AND preparing for its ending, at the same mass. In this year (Cycle C) the triumphant entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (Lk 19:28-40), AND his unjust execution (Lk 22:14->23:56).

Public liturgical celebrations could only take place in the Roman Empire after Christianity was legalized by Constantine the Great in 313 A.D. The first complete description of such a post-legalization liturgy is from 378 A.D. (*Peregrinatio Sylviae*), in Jerusalem. The Greeks called it "Lazarus Sunday", because on the day before they have the feast of the resuscitation of Lazarus (John 11:1-44).

Celebration of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem began at dawn, with Mass at the church of the Holy Cross on Golgotha. A procession took place, timed to arrive at the Mount of Olives at 1 pm (7th hour in Roman usage), where hymns, readings, and other devotions took place.

At 3 pm (9th hour in Roman usage), the faithful would arrive in procession at the church of the Ascension, where more devotions took place until 5 pm, when the Gospel of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem was proclaimed. This would be acted out by children, one on a donkey, and others greeting him with palm or olive branches singing Ps 118:26, "*Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord*"; which we still recite as part of the *Holy Holy* before the Eucharistic Prayer. The Procession would then return to the Church of the Holy Cross on Golgotha, where Vespers would be prayed at sunset, and all go home.

When the Western Roman Empire collapsed in 476 A.D., its former provinces coalesced into smaller successor kingdoms, which formed the nuclei of the current nations of Europe. The faith endured, along with the liturgical remembrance of the importance of Palm Sunday as the beginning of Holy Week. These practices characterized the Medieval Period (*medium aevum*, the "middle ages").

From a Medieval custom of blessing springtime flowers, and entwining them among the palms, arose the name: "Flower-Sunday", in England, Germany, and among the Serbians, Croatians, Armenians, and Ruthenians. Additionally, the Armenians, celebrated another Palm Sunday on the seventh Sunday after Easter, which the west observes as Pentecost.

At this period, adult baptisms were only offered once each year, on Holy Saturday evening, so Palm Sunday would be the occasion for those to be baptized to wash and shave their heads in preparation; they were also presented the full text of the Creed for the first time, and given the week to memorize it.

In Switzerland, a practice developed of carving life size statues of Jesus on a donkey, which were carried in the Palm Sunday procession. Some surviving statues of this kind are still displayed in museums in Basle & Zurich, (Switzerland) as well as Bavaria and Nuremburg, (Germany).

From the Pastor Sunday continued....

Blessed Lanfranc of Bec (Normandy, France) began a custom that lasted for centuries in monasteries and parishes that had cemeteries attached.

After Palm Sunday Mass, a procession led by a crucifix entwined with palms, would bring the Blessed Sacrament to the cemetery, with the people following with their palm branches.

These palm branches, blessed at that mass, would be placed on the graves of the deceased, and prayers offered. This was the springtime visitation of the faithful departed, a parallel to the fall visitation during All Saints Day (November 1st).

There is no doubt that much has been lost to the secular age in which we live. Yet, we retain honor for Palm Sunday and Holy Week as an annual celebration of the central mystery of our faith: the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Many thanks to all of you who work and contribute to make our parish and school a worthy heir of our Catholic Heritage.

St. Louis King of France, Pray for us.

Father Mark

LENTEN HOUR of PRAYER and DEVOTION

Tuesday April 16th 6:00pm-7:00pm
in Church



Recitation of the
Chaplet of Divine Mercy
7 Last Words of Jesus
Prayers and Meditation