

(Due to the reading of the Passion – the Homily on Palm Sunday of the Passion is a supportive reflection...)

Blessings to each of you on this Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord and welcome to Christ the Good Shepherd, where we are truly blessed to have you with us today once again, or for the very first time. Welcome home.

I suppose we can trace the roots of where our journey of Lent has brought us thus far all the way back to Christmas and Christ's birth. I recall, as I would guess many of you could as well, being a small (well, lightly chubby) child approaching Christmas with great enthusiasm over what I expect, hope, and desire from Santa – and anyone else smart enough to recognize the pure joy it would be in buying ME a gift or two, or three, or...

When Christmas Eve day arrived, I could hardly wait to go to bed knowing when I woke up (usually two hours after my poor parents went to sleep) the bonanza of commercial capitalism would begin! I also recall, not a memory as much as an emotion, of the euphoria of digging through the boxes, stockings and gifts moving on to the next with an increased joy and excitement. I also recall the emotion when it was over – disappointment and a near sadness. It was childhood greed, I suppose, that I wanted more, expected more, and was not happy with the amazing amounts of love poured out upon me.

I am reminded of that story of my childhood as I listen to the story of Christ's entry into Jerusalem on this very Palm Sunday. The excitement and exultation of the crowds as they see Christ coming to free them from Roman oppression, or so they thought. And then just a couple days later it all goes belly up! The joy is gone, anger is in the air, and an innocent man is given up. Not just innocent, but pure. Full of love and compassion for all of creation. Where has it gone wrong? How could Christ's journey have taken such a wrong turn? Well, it didn't. Through Christ's death, He as well as you and I, live again. It overwhelms me when I think of the whole Passion as I can not comprehend, nor can I understand such love as His, and I KNOW my own worthiness for such a sacrifice is simply not there. I am embarrassed and ashamed that so much was given for me and yet I offer so little back!

Those are the emotions of Holy Week my friends. We have been on a journey through Lent together for these past weeks. Giving, praying, and sacrificing to find ways to lend worthiness and understanding to what we can never be worthy of nor fully understand. We simply must accept our Lord's love with humble and contrite hearts.

Today we pivot from our journey through Lent into Holy Week. Once again, we will relive the gift of all gifts and reconnect to the Passion. Let's be ready to fully accept our Lord's sacrifice and love for us. Let us enter Holy week with our minds, eyes and hearts wide open. AMEN