

Dear Friends of Saint Catherine,

This Sunday Jesus will enter Jerusalem. It will happen in the Gospel. It will happen in the symbol of palms. But most importantly, it will happen spiritually in our hearts. As you remember, liturgy is God's action which is celebrated in the Holy Spirit and expressed in our gestures and words. Palm Sunday marks the first day of the greatest liturgical celebration of Christianity: Holy Week and Easter. The events of this week will lead us through the history of salvation; from creation of the world until the highest moment of history, which is life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It seems almost ironic when we speak this way about any moment of time. We have so many points of reference: birthdays, anniversaries, great battles, deaths, moments of triumph and moments of pain. Yet, above all of them, rises the person of Jesus Christ. This week is the time when we renew our personal participation in the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

Please do not take this week only symbolically. Symbols, if you look into the source of the meaning of this word, are real. They really connect seemingly separate worlds. That's their nature. Participating in symbols truly and really reconnects us with the never-ending and never-changing action of our Lord Jesus.

When we read this Sunday about Jesus' entrance to his beloved city and then later, when we take different roles to read the passion of Christ, we truly enter great mystery. As a community of Saint Catherine of Siena, let's do it together. And that way, let us be united with all Catholics around the world, although in our separate houses.

As I mentioned last week, our tiny community at the Newman Center will celebrate Palm Sunday at 6:30 in the evening. If that time of the day is difficult, for whatever reason, you can pick any other time. It would be important also to prepare an appropriate space. Some sort of an altar or shrine in your house. It could have a crucifix (that might be covered with a purple fabric). It should have a couple live candles. Really anything, that would help you to unite with the pilgrimage that Jesus Christ and the Church start walking this Sunday.

We are attaching to this letter a proposal of the celebration of Palm Sunday at home in the time of emergency, that we found in the resources of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Following our bishop's invitation, another way that we can participate in the worldwide prayer for the end of the pandemic, is to come back to the ancient prayer of Angelus. The most popular way of saying the Angelus is at noon every day. There is also the tradition in France, especially in time of need, of saying this prayer three times each day - 7 in the morning, at noon, and at 7 in the evening. This could simply mean in the morning, at noon, and in the evening. The text of the prayer is below.

The Angelus

The Angel of the Lord declared to Mary:

And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to Thy word.

Hail Mary...

And the Word was made Flesh: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ Our Lord.

Amen.