

From the Homily Library of Fr. Callistus Iyorembor

Palm Sunday - Year B – April 3, 2021

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday. As you know, it marks the beginning of Holy Week.

Later this week we have the privilege of celebrating Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. It is our celebration of the Paschal Mystery namely, our celebration of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus which is the central to our identity as Catholics.

All four Gospels have an account of Jesus making this journey into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. The people spread branches, leaves, palms and sang *“Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

Riding on a Donkey

While watching movies we often see earthy kings riding on horses, symbolizing power and strength. Jesus rides on a donkey; this is symbolic of His humility. *A horse is a vain hope for safety; despite its strength, it cannot save.*

We are meant to see in Jesus His humility. St Paul captures Jesus’ virtue of humility: *“Though He was in the form of God, Jesus did not count equality with God something to be grasped. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, death on a Cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every other name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow 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.”*

Spend time today on the second reading today from the book of Phil 2. Think about the various ways Jesus might be inviting you to a life of humility.

Passion Story

Today we read the Passion Story. We will read it again on Good Friday. It is a story of betrayal, of suffering and of death.

- ✓ Judas betrayed Him with a kiss.
- ✓ Peter denied Him three times.
- ✓ Some of His disciples could not watch and pray with Him.
- ✓ Thomas would eventually deny the resurrection.

He said, "*Father forgive them for they know not what they do.*"

We all have experienced betrayal; we, too, must respond with forgiveness as Jesus did. He is the Prince of Peace/Reconciliation; Instrument of Peace.

How many times must I forgive my brother/sister when he offends me? Seven times? Peter thought seven times was good enough, but Jesus tells him, "*Peter, not seven times, but 77 x 7.*"