

APRIL 9, 2017



# PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD



MATTHEW 21:1 –11

ISAIAH 50:4–7

PSALM 22:8-9, 17–18,  
19–20, 23–24

PHILIPPIANS 2:6–11

MATTHEW 26:14–27:66 OR 27:11–54

## REFLECTION

Master. Betrayed. Crowds. Denied. Hosanna! Mocked. Blessed. Stripped. Comes in the name. Scourged. Hosanna in the highest. Crucified. Executed. Forsaken. LEFT FOR DEAD!

There are extreme tensions at play throughout today's liturgy. On the one hand, we gather in a place apart from our regular worship space, hear of Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, and then go forth in procession waving palm branches as we sing "Hosanna to the Son of David!" It is a time of elation and excitement. Imagine what it would have been like to be present on that day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem to cheers of adulation! And then there is the extreme shift that occurs in the Liturgy of the Word during the Mass. We hear from the prophet Isaiah about the suffering servant who is rejected by the people, yet keeps faith that he will be vindicated. St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians speaks of Jesus' taking on the form of a slave and humbling himself to the point of Death. And in the Passion reading from Matthew, we witness to Jesus' betrayal, persecution, and punishment of Death on the Cross. Today sets the stage for this week that is at the center of what it means to be a Catholic Christian. We enter into the Paschal Mystery with Jesus—literally the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

## ACTION

Today marks the beginning of the holiest time in the Church's year, Holy Week. This week, instead of just going to Mass on Easter Sunday, take action by fully entering into the services of Holy Week at your church. Bring your family and friends. Attend the liturgies on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. All of these liturgies comprise the one great liturgy of the liturgical year and they are all directly connected. And in the process of attending these services, be fully open to entering into the Paschal Mystery: dying and rising, death giving way to new life.

## JOURNALING QUESTIONS

● Throughout this week, reflect upon your own life. What in your life is dying or needs to die? Where is new life arising? Reflect on your own lived experience with regard to the event of Jesus' own Passion, Death, and rising to new life.