

Behold your King rides into Jerusalem. Holy Week, the most important week in human history, the most important week of your life. All the dark secrets of your heart are exposed too. You are there in Judas' betrayal, in Peter's denial, in the hateful crowd that chose Barabbas, you're even Barabbas, guilty yet set free. Your political correctness of Pilate, your cruelty of the Roman guards, how you are fair-weather followers, in cowardly disciples. Yet here is your only hope. Repent and rejoice. For the Son of Man is lifted up to draw you to Himself.

This is Passion Sunday, the older, more historic name for Palm Sunday. Passion: intense love, fervent devotion, intense. The word comes from the Latin passus, to suffer, His love shown in greatest -in His suffering, sacrifice, His death. The Passion- intense love that drove Him to die for rebels, for us, who mocked His divinity, who think they know better than He what makes for happiness, who've lusted, who've told lies, gossiped, been lazy, who desire revenge on those who've hurt or insulted them, who've stolen, who've neglected their duty; who pretend to be things that they're not. Lord have mercy on us all.

Behold your King rides into Jerusalem, this festive procession is a death march. But also a wedding march where He seals His enduring love, passion for His bride. So we wave our palms, shout hosanna today to hail Him as our King. Palms, an ancient sign of victory, you even see it in heavenly worship in revelation. Victory. The King who destroys everything that can truly harm you.

**Whoever loves his life loses it, whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Follow Him.** Not your own ideas, not loving the world and yourself. **Lose your life and gain it.** Your natural instinct - to put yourself first, do whatever pleases you. God condemns "Me first!" The world will tell you 'be who you are, follow your heart, live your dreams' And that's the dumbest advice in the history of the world, that philosophy will lead to eternal death. Every man dies, but not every man lives.

Live, dear saints. In that blood is your life. There is no other. All else is an illusion. For all of you, your family. For this parish. For every sinner – that blood is for you. Every drop that falls from the pulpit, that falls from the font. And His very blood, as He says and promises and Scripture declares it to be, His very blood that falls from the chalice onto your tongue, every drop of this blood is an ocean of absolution for you.

Behold your King, rides into Jerusalem for this, He comes to be a sacrifice for you, that God would die, that you will have a life without end. We cannot die. He is your life, you are not your own, you've been purchased with His blood. And from His cross flows the only love and truth and life and forgiveness and comfort this world has ever known. And He's the Lord who love you cannot lose. No matter what you've done, you cannot stop Him from loving you.

Behold your King, crown of thorns, a cross as a throne, a throne from which our King offers the greatest decree ever uttered by any King in the history of the world: **Father, forgive them.** His passion to forgive you.

Behold your King, Jesus' triumphal entry here, coming in the flesh, saving us. When you cry out before every Lord's Supper: Lord save us, Hosanna, He actually does it, by giving you His body and blood. He rides into Jerusalem to accomplish it. Your prayer is answered.

Don't ever forget, you were created for eternity; only eternal things can satisfy you –His daily gifts flowing in your from baptismal waters, a holy supper, the Word taught and preached from His servants. God creating, sustaining your faith with these things for eternity.

Do not let your desires, this times, your future years, this world, friends, take from you what you receive this day. The days ahead will be more difficult to confess this truth. Unchanging truth.

**The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified...And when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.** All creation, past, present, future looks to a day we call Good. What's so incredible, Jesus refers to His crucifixion as His glory. He glories in your salvation.

**Unless a grain dies, it bears much fruit.** And He has. He has brought forth much fruit. And He calls this fruit:        *all of you.* You are the fruit of Jesus' death, reward for His victory. Drawing you unto Himself. This is why the saints in heaven rejoice this week, hold their palms. Let us do the same, mingle our praises with theirs.

For heaven and earth joined here, His passion poured out for you as in no other way or place. No other life. No other perfect Word. Do not let anything take this Sacrament from you. You need this in your life more than anything. This is how He loves you to the end. Behold your King that rides into this Jerusalem every week, to answer your cry of Hosanna. Do not be far from the Sacrament. For He has baptized you. You belong to Him. The promise God spoke in heaven at your Baptism is still good. It always will be. Behold, Your king comes for you.