

## REFLECTION FOR PALM SUNDAY

With Palm Sunday, we begin Holy Week, the week of all weeks, the week in which we celebrate the central mysteries of our faith: the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. On Palm Sunday, we have already anticipated this celebration, as we acclaimed, with the pilgrims from Jerusalem, Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Son of David, — and at the same time, through the liturgy of the Word of the Eucharist, we followed the journey of Jesus Christ's cross: his arrest, trial, condemnation, and crucifixion.

We began our liturgical ceremony today by remembering Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, on a colt, as King of peace, with the people acclaiming him, cutting branches, spreading their cloaks on the road, giving glory to God who visited his people. Today we also acclaimed Jesus Christ as our King and Lord, our Savior; our deliverer from the slavery of evil and sin.

We then entered the church for the Eucharist, where we listened to the Liturgy of the Word, centered on the reading of the Gospel of the Passion. We heard how Jesus, the innocent one, was arrested, tortured, and condemned to death on a cross. We heard the crowd of people who, a few days earlier, had acclaimed him as King and Lord, now, on seeing him arrested, shout: ***crucify him, crucify him!*** That is the way people are, that is the way ***we are***: we acclaim strength and power and condemn the weak and the poor.

In the second reading, we hear St. Paul explaining the reason for this tremendous event: the death of the Son of God on the cross: *“Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he is God who came to live among us, but he did not take advantage of his status as God; on the contrary, being Lord, he became a servant, humbling himself to the point of death on a cross. This is in obedience to the Father's plan of salvation, who gave us his Son to give us Life and life in abundance, life in his love, of his grace, life forever, eternal life.

Because he obeyed to the end, God exalted Jesus Christ above all names, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and in the deep. Every tongue shall proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The lordship of Jesus Christ is therefore affirmed through the laying down of his life for us, so that with him we may learn the ways of life, the ways of love, the ways that lead to life in God. Only love saves, only love gives full life forever.

Throughout the ages, God has been preparing his people for these events. In fact, the prophet Isaiah, as we heard in the first reading, was already talking about the Servant of God to whom the Lord opened his ears, and he did not resist or take a step back. He turned his back on those who beat him and his face on those who plucked out his beard; he did not turn his face away from those who insulted him and spat on him. Jesus' disciples saw in him, in his condemnation and death, the fulfillment of these prophecies. Jesus, being God, became man for us, he became a servant for our sake, so that we might become his children and masters in him, free in love.

Let us look at Calvary, at the cross of Christ, and find there the victory of love, the testament of God's love for mankind: *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”* (ref. John 3:16-17)

Amen.