

## Passion/Palm Sunday

There was a little girl that wasn't feeling too well so her parents decided that she should not go to church that morning. One of the parents stayed home with the girl while the rest of the family left for church. When Mass was over the family returned home. They were waving their palm fronds as they entered the house. The little girl saw them and asked what those were. They responded, "We got these palms at church when Jesus made his triumphal entrance." The little girl exclaimed, "How do you like that! The one time that I don't go to church and Jesus shows up!"

We know that Jesus shows up at every Mass. He is present in His word, and in the Eucharist. He is present in the priest, and in each person at Mass. He inspires us and nourishes us. Today we celebrated the triumphal entrance of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem. Jesus willingly entered this city despite knowing that He would suffer greatly while being there. Yet, He was willing to do that because of His great love for us.

We just heard the Passion narrative. Jesus was an innocent man, yet He never defended Himself. He had every right to proclaim His innocence, but He kept silent. Why? Despite the fact that Jesus was innocent He took on our guilt. Despite the fact that He was sinless He took upon Himself our sins. So in a sense, Jesus was not innocent. He took on our guilt and was standing in our place.

Jesus is filled with compassion for His people. We can see this throughout the Passion narrative. He shares the first Eucharist with His disciples just before undergoing His passion. He prays for Simon (Peter) that his faith will not fail; and that once he has turned back that he will strengthen his brothers. In the garden of Gethsemane Jesus heals the high priest's servant's ear after it had been cut off. He tries to comfort the women of Jerusalem that are lamenting Him. "Do not weep for me." After Jesus is crucified He says, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." He forgives the good thief that is crucified next Him, saying "Today you will be with me in paradise."

Jesus has compassion for us. He doesn't want to see any of us lost. He wants to do whatever He can to bring us back. He wants us to be with Him forever. We can also look at Jesus and say "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." If we are faithful to Jesus throughout our lifetime we can trust that He will say to us too, "You will be with me in paradise."