

Homily for Palm Sunday

Right around this time of year – the beginning of Holy Week that is – I find myself looking forward to Easter. I’m ready to sing Alleluia again. I’m ready for warmer weather. And I’m getting a little tired of giving up what I gave up for Lent!

But next Sunday is next Sunday. Today we’re celebrating this Sunday. It’s officially called Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion, or simply Passion Sunday, or more familiarly Palm Sunday. And there is no Easter Sunday without it or without the rest of Holy Week for that matter. With Jesus, we must first commemorate His passion and death before we can celebrate His resurrection.

That word ‘passion’ comes from a Latin word, which literally means, “to suffer, to submit to; to be vulnerable”. And this is what Jesus had to do – he had to submit Himself to His Father’s will and become vulnerable to the point of death – even death on a cross.

It’s true that on Easter “God greatly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every other name...” But first He had to empty Himself and take the form of a slave – completely humbling Himself in His passion and death on Good Friday.

When it comes to suffering and pain, we naturally react by wanting to avoid it; or, if we can't, than by rushing right through it so we can get it over with as soon as possible. I mean nobody really likes pain – nobody wants to suffer. And so a similar temptation for us might be to rush through Holy Week – to be busy with preparations for Easter – to hurry past the details of the Lord's passion, giving it *a passing nod* on our way to next Sunday. But there is no next Sunday without this Friday. And there is no this Friday without this Sunday – today – the beginning of Our Lord's own Passion.

Let us lay aside our defenses and our tendencies to recoil from reflecting on the suffering Jesus endured for us; and instead make our hearts more vulnerable. Let us keep giving up what we gave up. Let us wait to take in the colors of Easter eggs and bunnies. Let us hold off on smelling deeply the flowers. Let us walk through **all** the Stations of the Cross with Jesus in a special way by attending the liturgies of later in this week. And let us this week with Christ, "become vulnerable and live the passion of our vulnerability in the vulnerability of His Passion." God bless you.