

Passion (Palm) Sunday Year A –5th April 2020

Introduction

Today is Passion (Palm) Sunday. We remember when Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by crowds and hailed as King, which led to the Chief priests and the Pharisees demanding His death by crucifixion. We reflect on the account of His Passion and death on the cross.

We are now preparing to enter into Holy Week a time when we have the Easter Triduum - Holy Thursday (where we remember the Last Supper where Jesus instituted the Eucharist), Good Friday (when Jesus was crucified and died on the cross) and Easter Sunday (when we celebrate Jesus' Resurrection and victory over death). Ask the children to reflect on their Lenten journey and consider the things they have done over the past weeks that have brought them closer to Jesus.

Make the Sign of the Cross – a sign of the love God has for us. (This is optional, as we have already done this at the start of Holy Mass, but for young children it helps to demonstrate and practice how to do this correctly.)

Light the candles on the table next to the Lectionary. An adult lights the candles).

(If we were at church there would be a procession of palms, there is an Opening Prayer and Liturgy of the Word. The priest would bless the palms. Maybe you have a blessed palm in the house from last year that you can show the children or otherwise you can remind them of this).

Penitential Act

Ask the children to think how they have behaved in the past week. Ask them if they have always been kind and helpful to others, obedient to their parents, listened to their teachers etc.

We are sorry, truly sorry,

Heal us Lord, in Your love. (sung to tune of Frere Jacques)

Help us to do better. Help us to be kinder. Forgive us, forgive us!

NO GLORIA

All stand to welcome the Gospel singing the **Gospel Acclamation:**

Praise to You Christ,
King of glory,
For our sins
Crucified, (same tune)
Raised high by the Father,
Named above all others,
Praise to You,
Christ our King.”

Gospel

Select the correct Gospel from the Children’s Lectionary. This week it’s on pages 38-41, Passion (Palm) Sunday, in the Book of Readings. The Lectionary Adapted for Children.” (Year A). As we can’t be in church at present it is quoted in full below:

Matthew 27:11-54

“A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew”.

Explain and demonstrate – make three crosses: one on your forehead, one on your lips and one on your heart (in this way we think God’s word, speak God’s word and keep God’s word in our hearts) **as we say together “Glory to You, O Lord.”**

Read the Gospel aloud to the children:

“Jesus stood in front of Pilate, the governor of Jerusalem. Pilate asked Jesus,

“Are you the king of the Jews?”

Jesus answered.

“You have said so.”

The chief priests and leaders started accusing Jesus, but he didn't answer them. So Pilate said,

“You hear all these things they are saying against you. Don't you have anything to say?”

Still Jesus did not say anything, and Pilate wondered why.

Now every year at the feast of Passover, the governor would free one person from prison- anyone the people wanted.

At that time there was a man in prison named Barabbas, and everyone knew who he was.

So Pilate asked the people,

“Who do you want me to set free, Barabbas or Jesus?”

Pilate did this because his wife sent him a message saying

“Do not harm Jesus. He is a good man. I had a dream about him today and it worries me.”

But the chief priests and leaders told the people to ask for Barabbas and have Jesus killed. So when Pilate asked them again, they said,

“Free Barabbas!”

Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?”

They all shouted, “Kill him! Crucify him!”

But Pilate said,

“Why? What has he done wrong?”

But the people kept on shouting “Crucify him!”

So Pilate set Barabbas free. He told the soldiers to whip Jesus, and then he gave them to the people so they could crucify him.

The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus and made a crown of thorns and put it on his head. And they put a stick in his hand. They then knelt in front of Jesus and made fun of him saying,

“Hail, King of the Jews!”

They took the stick away from Jesus and started hitting him on the head with it and spitting at him.

After they had made fun of him and laughed at him they took the purple robe off and led Jesus away to crucify him.

As they were taking him away they saw a man from Cyrene named Simon and they made him carry Jesus' cross. When they came to a place called Golgotha, which means “the skull” they crucified Jesus.

They put a sign over his head that said,

“This is Jesus, King of the Jews.”

Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. And while they were hanging there one made fun of Jesus, but the other did not. The second robber said he deserved his punishment and asked Jesus to remember him. Jesus told him that he was forgiven and that he would go to heaven.

The people who were going by laughed at Jesus and said,

“He saved other people, but he can't save himself. If he is the King of the Jews, let's see him come down from that cross. Then we will believe him! He trusts in God and even said ‘I am the son of God.’ Well let's see if God wants to save him now!”

About noon, everything became dark and stayed dark until about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

“My God, my God, why have you left me alone?”

Some of the people said,

“He is calling for help. Let's see if God comes to help him.”

The Jesus cried out again, and he died.

The people who were there were terrified. One of the Roman soldiers said,

“This really was the Son of God.” *This is the Passion of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.*

“The Gospel of the Lord”.

All reply: **“Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ”**. Ask everyone to be seated.

Lead a Discussion on the Gospel

Explain to the children that there are two Gospel Readings today- one is the Passion (which we have just read) where we hear how Jesus was crucified and died. The other involves a procession with Jesus riding on a donkey and lots of palms.

Ask the children what they know about Palm Sunday and why we carry palms through the Church.

In the Gospel Jesus rode through Jerusalem on a donkey. People waved palms at him as he rode through. A donkey was not seen as a very noble animal. Why do you think Jesus chose this animal? (There may not have been much choice back then and it showed that Jesus was not too good for anything or anyone, we are all the same. He was humble).

The people throw palms at Him. Why do you think they did this? (They were showing their respect, they were singing Hosanna. Just like the hymn “Sing Hosanna, the children may have heard this sung today).

Ask the children how they welcome someone special to their house (Make an effort, tidy up, offer biscuits etc.)

Discuss with them how we also welcome Jesus with the same joy in our lives today. (We pray in thankfulness, we tell others about him and we try to live our lives in a way that pleases him)

As we come to the end of our Lenten journey discuss with the children how special Holy Week is and the events that will take place- including Good Friday.

For parents or carers reading this at home there are some craft activities to go with this that you can do in advance- how to make palm trees out of newspaper or rolled up coloured card. See separate sheet on website.

Prayers of the Faithful (optional/ time dependent)

You may wish to prepare some of these yourselves or ask the children for their prayers. Here are some suggestions for today:

Lord Jesus, help us to try our best during Lent to come closer to You by **praying** to You - remembering to tell You that we love You, that we are sorry for our faults and also to thank You for all the love that You show us.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: **“Hear our prayer.”**

Lord Jesus, help us to try our best during Lent to **fast** by giving up something that we like and to show **charity** by not being selfish and being kind and generous to others especially those who have less than we have.

Lord, in Your mercy.

All reply: **“Hear our prayer.”**

Closing Prayer

Lord, help us to show your love in our lives by welcoming all those we meet today, tomorrow and always. Open our hearts.

Amen.