

## **Passion (Palm) Sunday Year A 2nd April 2023**

### **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.

Next week is Holy Week. We have the Easter Triduum beginning on Holy Thursday when we remember the Last Supper where Jesus instituted the Eucharist. We remember Jesus being on trial and though sinless, being condemned to suffer and die on the cross on Good Friday and then Holy Saturday awaiting the Easter Vigil and the celebration of His Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

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).

**Penitential Act** There is no penitential act at Holy Mass today. After a procession of palms, there is an Opening Prayer and Liturgy of the Word. It is presumed that the children participate in the blessing of the palms and procession.

### **NO Gloria DURING LENT**

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

Praise to You Christ,  
King of glory,  
For our sins,  
Crucified. (sung to tune of Frere Jacques)  
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)  
Matthew 27:11-54

### **"The story of the suffering and death of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew"**

Explain to the children that today's gospel is a very special one and that it is quite a lot longer than usual. (The children can sit down today during the gospel). You may wish to split the gospel into smaller sections and ask questions on each section. Also as the gospel in the church will take a long time, you may wish to go through the Stations of the Cross for Children to help them reflect on the Passion.

### **Lead a Discussion on the Gospel**

Read section 1 – beginning of gospel – chief priests and scribes claim Jesus has done wrong, but Pilate can find no case against Jesus.

Discuss how Jesus is innocent and the chief priests and the scribes want him dead because they do not like Jesus. They don't like Jesus as he does not follow their rules and ways, but follows His heavenly Father's ways. They are jealous of Him and worried about their own positions as Jesus was popular and looked after the poor and oppressed.

Section 2 – Pilate again questions Jesus, finds that he has done nothing wrong, but has him whipped anyway and wants to set Him free. The crowd however, shout for Jesus to be crucified and want Pilate to set the murderer called Barabbas free instead. Pilate is scared of the crowd and so gives in to their demands.

The soldiers dress Jesus in a purple robe, and put a crown of thorns on his head. They mock Him, saying "Hail King of the Jews". They spit at Him and hit Him.

Ask the children how they feel if someone makes fun of them?

Ask the children how they would feel if people told lies about them, shouted at them and hit them? How do they think Jesus felt? (We know that Jesus loved us so much that He was prepared to suffer and die for us).

Section 3 – Simon of Cyrene is made to carry the cross with Jesus

Why was Simon made to help Jesus carry the cross? (The officials were afraid that Jesus, who had lost a lot of blood and was becoming weaker by the minute, would die before they could crucify Him, whereas they wanted Him to suffer the horrible death of crucifixion).

Section 4 – Jesus was crucified along with two criminals – one who mocked him and the other who was repentant and pleaded with Jesus to remember him in Heaven. The soldiers also made fun of Jesus telling him to save Himself, if He was really the king of the Jews.

Ask the children about the different ways the criminals treated Jesus and about what the soldiers said to Him.

Final section 5 -The sky grows dark at noon until at 3 O'clock, when Jesus cries out saying "My God, my God why have you left me alone?" Then Jesus dies. The soldier who witnessed this believes that Jesus really was the Son of God.

Discuss with the children how much Jesus loves us. Also ask how the disciples would feel at that time and how His mother Mary felt?

The disciples did not at this point understand that Jesus would rise from the dead three days later even though He had told them this.

Remind the children that the crucifixion and death of Jesus is not the end and that through our faith we know that Jesus rose from the dead three days later on Easter Sunday. Through his suffering he has conquered death forever and won Heaven for us.

Depending on time look at the Children's Stations of the Cross.

### **Prayers of the Faithful (optional/ time dependent)**

Leader: We pray for all prisoners especially those who are innocent. Lord in your mercy...

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for all people who do not know or believe that Jesus is God. Let them know your love through our kindness and care for our neighbours. Lord in your mercy....

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for peace in our world and especially in Israel and all of the Holy Land. Lord in Your mercy....

All: 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

Now ask for volunteers for the Offertory Procession. After the procession, children return quietly to sit with their families in church.