

**Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion**  
Reflection on the readings by Sister Paule Freeburg

On this day we will hear two Gospels.

**Luke 19:28-40**

This last Sunday of Lent begins with shouts of joy. Luke tells us “the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy for all the mighty deeds they had seen.” And in their joy they shouted Hosanna to our King. And we too join in as we wave our palm branches and enter the Church with our own songs of praise. This is a happy procession for adults and children alike.

**Isaiah 50:4-7**

Our shouts of joy and Hosanna quickly turn to the solemn reminder that our King and Lord is on his march to death. Isaiah speaks of one (now applied to Jesus) who is open to the word God speaks, of one who undergoes suffering at the hands of others. He ‘sets his face like flint’ because he knows ‘The Lord God is my help.’

**Psalms 22**

Can we hear any more of his sufferings? We are plunged into details that make us cringe. How do we have the courage to repeat these sufferings and cry out with the Psalmist: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” Though the Psalmist finally helps us pray for the Lord’s unfailing help here, do we not long to continue waving our palms and singing Hosanna to our King!

**Philippians 2:6-11**

St. Paul presents us with a mystery that is scarcely imaginable. Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God... emptied himself to be one of us. He lived our life. And for that, he was put to death, and death on a cross. Jesus, our Lord put to death. But because he remained steadfast in his trust in God, “God greatly exalted him.” No, we are not running with palm branches, we are kneeling and professing “Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

**Luke 22:14-23:56**

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ

This account of the death of Jesus begins with his desire to remain with us through the Eucharist. I am reminded of the words of St. Louise: (though she was speaking of the Incarnation, it is equally true of the Eucharist.) “We have a God who seems unable or unwilling to be without us.” This consolation is the beginning of a long night during which we will witness a range of reactions: awe, desire, fear, denial, faith, and disbelief. We will witness his closest disciples sleeping during his agony, denying they know him when he stands alone, fleeing from him in his greatest pain. This long night will culminate in the morning with his death, his ultimate witness of unconditional love for them and for us.

**Try this today:**

Reflecting on the Passion, aware of those who slept and those who walked away, let's take moments throughout the day to say, "Jesus I will stay with you, close to you, Jesus." As we repeat this mantra during the day, we remember as Ladies of Charity that Christ is present in the Poor we serve. Our mantra is our desire to stay close to Jesus in prayer and close to Jesus in the Poor.

**Prayer:**

O God, Give us the courage to follow your Son, Jesus, wherever that takes us. Help us to strive daily to pattern our lives on his, that through our dying and rising in our everyday lives, we will come to live with him in Paradise for all eternity.

**Closing thought for the day.**

The Palm branches that we waved so joyfully this morning, will be crushed and burned next year to mark our foreheads as we begin another Lent, reminding us that we need to be called again and again to follow Jesus who always gives us the grace to begin anew.