

Palm Sunday Homily
Commemoration of Jesus' Entrance into Jerusalem
(Courtyard)



I tell you ... the stones will cry out!

A beautiful painting gives praise to the artist.

A good story gives praise to the writer.

A sturdy chair gives praise to the craftsman.

Through him all things were made. When Jesus walked this earth he was surrounded by his creation -- and each thing was doing *exactly* what he made them to do.

That is how creation praises God! -- even the stones in the road.

Yet in all creation it is only people who have problems praising God.

So often we don't want to be as he made us.

We don't want to follow his will, to walk his path.

But there are times, through his grace, that we get it right, almost in spite of ourselves. Now, at the beginning of this Holy Week, is one of those times.

We are his people and he is our God. Let us praise him.

Gathered in our Church let us praise him in this liturgy, *just as the people of Jerusalem did when they welcomed him so long ago*

Homily
After the Reading of the Passion
Luke 22:14 – 23:56



Peter denied Jesus for the third time and the cock crowed, and Jesus turned and looked at him.

Peter was a good man. He knew what was right. He knew in his heart what was true and what was false.

Yet even Peter, in the presence of the Lord, still sinned. He denied Jesus. He denied the truth.



“But the crowd continued their shouting, ‘Crucify him! Crucify him!’”

I have always hated speaking those words aloud, as if I was there in that crowd. It’s a relief that in recent years I have had the part of the narrator.

Yet every time we wound someone with our words, bruise them with our envy, beat them down with our injustice and our indifference, we do it to Christ.

Have you turned your back on the poor, the homeless, the hungry?

Are you angry because someone has offended you or disagreed with you? Have you embraced self-righteous indignation over mercy and forgiveness and reconciliation?

There are so many ways to crucify someone, even those we love. Whatever you do to one of these least brothers of mine, said Jesus, you do to me.



Peter was a good man. He loved Jesus, and yet in his presence he *still* sinned.

When Jesus looked at Peter, what was in his eyes: anger, resentment, disappointment?

I think what Peter saw, what made him so ashamed, was compassion and love.

We are all sinners. We all deny Christ ... even the best of us: if not in words, then in our thoughts and the things we do or fail to do. Sometimes we even crucify him.

God knows that we are weak, that despite our best efforts and intentions, we cannot free ourselves from sin.

That is the meaning of the passion. Jesus knows that we cannot break the hold that sin has on us. We cannot die to sin.

Out of love he died for our sins, ... for our sake. He knows the longing deep within our hearts and he knows that we are helpless in spite of it.

When he looked at Peter, I think it was the same look he would give him on that morning by the sea of Tiberias in the days after the resurrection, when he asked him "Peter, do you love me."

Peter, knowing his failure, ashamed of what he had done, but longing for his friend and his lord said, "Yes Lord, you know that I love you".

When we fail him, when we feel ashamed, Jesus looks at us as well. In his look is the only question that really matters.

He died for Peter. He died for me. And he died for you.

When you sin, he sees. He looks at you.
He won't turn away from you.

Don't turn away from him.
In his look are healing, and strength, and love.