

## **Stewardship Reflection on Lectionary Readings**

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IS 50: 4-7; PS 22: 8-9, 17-20, 23-24; PHIL 2: 6-11, MK 14: 1 – 15: 47

The official name for today is, of course, Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. We tend to shorten it and simply call it Palm Sunday. It is the final Sunday of Lent and marks the beginning of Holy Week. It commemorates the triumphant arrival of Christ in Jerusalem. We call it Palm Sunday because in our Catholic tradition we receive palm fronds that we use to reenact Christ's arrival. Palm branches are a symbol of peace and victory. To show great respect to someone, the people of Jesus' time threw palms in front of the person as a sign of great respect. The prepositional phrase "of the Lord's Passion" is much more important.

On this day our Gospel Reading is Christ's Passion, this year from the Gospel of Mark. It is the longest Gospel Reading of the church year. With more than 2,300 words in Mark's Passion Gospel, that alone is longer than 26 other books of the Bible. In fact it is longer than Paul's entire letter to the Philippians, from which our Second Reading is drawn.

The purpose of these reflections is in part to plant seeds for possible homily subjects, and to try to take something out of each reading to provide a focal point. On this Palm, or Passion, Sunday many priests opt not to give a homily, or to give a very brief one. There are so many possibilities for emphasis in the Passion alone; yet the other readings also offer "food for thought." This reflection might be more appropriate to use in a letter to the faithful or some other communication.

The First Reading comes from the prophet Isaiah. More than any other prophet he anticipated the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. In the last verse of this reading the Messiah says, "I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame." One might say that there are two kinds of courage — the courage of the moment that requires no previous thought, but there is also what might be called a "planned" courage. Jesus shows a "planned" courage in this instance.

The Lord knew the agony in front of Him, but He had an unwavering determination to obey His Father and to follow His Way. Jesus knew what awaited Him, but He suffered for us, in our behalf. As we approach life and living, we need to seek a similar determination to live as Disciples of Christ, and to do what we should do in spite of the possible consequences.

The Second Reading from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians declares in the opening verse that Christ Jesus was in "the form of God." Some scholars point out that the ancient Greek word for "form" (*huparchein*) is difficult to translate because it has more depth of meaning than the word "form" can communicate. When we use the word "form" we tend to think of shape, but that is not what was meant by the ancient Greeks. A better word might have been "essence," which includes the inner nature of someone as well as the external one.

Because of how we celebrate Christmas, we may lose sight of the fact that Jesus' existence did not begin in a manger in Bethlehem. Jesus was, is, and always will be. He is eternal. Perhaps on this Passion Sunday we should focus on that because it is really eternity that should be our focus.

Being human, it is difficult for us to either appreciate or concentrate on eternity, but that should be the motivation of everything we do.

Mark's Passion alone provides so much to think about and on which to meditate. We need to carefully listen and hear this Gospel Reading. There is so much here for us. The Passion of Christ is reported in all four Gospels. Those who analyze these things point to the fact that Mark seemed to place Christ's suffering at the center of his version.

The time of the Passion is significant in many ways. At Passover there was always a great expectation of the Messiah. At that time of year Jerusalem tended to be crowded. As the Romans were the rulers in that part of the world, they were alert to any hint of revolt, which was always a threat from their perspective. Thousands of pilgrims came to Jerusalem as every male Jew who lived within 15 miles was obligated to come, and many more came from great distances, including Galilee.

You might say that the chief priests and the scribes feared the people more than they feared God. There is, as indicated, so much here for us as Catholics. The Last Supper includes the statement from Jesus, "Take it; this is my body.

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.'" Christ gave us so many gifts on this day, the gift of life, and the gift of the Eucharist. We must never forget that, now or at any Mass and celebration.

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**ANNOUNCED MASSES**  
**March 24<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018**

<b>Saturday</b> 4:30 p.m.	<b>Mar. 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Sunday Vigil</b> Bruna Alesi – RIP – by the family
<b>Sunday</b> 9:00 a.m.	<b>Mar. 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Passion Sunday</b> Maria E. S. Ponte – RIP – by Kevin Smith
11:00 a.m.		Adrian de Souza – RIP – by the family
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Mar. 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
<b>Tuesday</b> 7:00 p.m.	<b>Mar. 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Weekday</b> Thanksgiving by Ruth Gaudreau
<b>Wednesday</b> 9:00 a.m.	<b>Mar. 28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Weekday</b> Theresa Helferty – RIP – by Joan
<b>Thursday</b> 7:30 p.m.	<b>Mar. 29<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Holy Thursday</b> Mass of the Lord's Supper
<b>Friday</b> 3:00 p.m.	<b>Mar. 30<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Good Friday</b> Celebration of the Lord's Passion
7:00 p.m.		Stations of the Cross
<b>Saturday</b> 8:00 p.m.	<b>Mar. 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Holy Saturday</b> Resurrection of the Lord (Vigil)
<b>Sunday</b> 9:00 a.m.	<b>Apr. 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>The Resurrection of the Lord</b> Rita Mosca – RIP – by the family
11:00 a.m.		<i>Pro Populo</i>

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Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed  
through the mercy of God rest in peace.

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### HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Holy Thursday, March 29	7:30 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday, March 30	3:00 p.m. Celebration of the Lord's Passion
	7:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross
Holy Saturday, March 31	8:00 p.m. Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday, April 1	9 & 11 a.m. Resurrection of the Lord

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### ECUMENICAL MARCH OF FORGIVENESS

Among the activities and rituals recalling the Passion of Christ, which in turn allow us to better appreciate and celebrate His Resurrection, the Christian churches of Saint Laurent will be holding their annual Ecumenical Good Friday's Walk of Forgiveness on **March 30<sup>th</sup>**.

The walk will start at the **Notre-Dame-du-Bois Franc Church** at 8:30 a.m. There will be a stop at our Parish around 12:05 p.m. to pray with us at the **12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> Stations** of the Cross. The walk will end at Saint-Sixte Church at 1 p.m. where refreshments will be served. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

### WAY OF THE CROSS



Everyone is invited to the Way of the Cross **every Friday** at 7 p.m. during this Lenten season.

### FLOWERS FOR EASTER



If you would like to contribute to beautifying our Church with Easter flowers, please place an envelope in the collection basket and mark on it "Easter flowers". If you include your name or envelope number, you will receive an income tax receipt for it at year end.

### INCOME TAX RECEIPTS



To our dear parishioners who used the envelope system for the weekly donation to the Parish in 2017, your income tax receipts are ready at the **Sacristy**. Please pick up your receipt either on the weekend after Mass or during the week, Monday to Friday, from 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. Thank you.