

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and sisters in Christ; Grace and Peace!



Palm Sunday begins the celebration of Holy Week as we receive the sacramental palms. Opening with the solemn entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem, the Church sings, “*Hosana filio David: benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*” (Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord). In union with the whole Church, as we process, may we contemplate the long and grueling unfolding of Jesus’ suffering and death that leads to his glorious resurrection. I enjoin all of you to make every effort to participate in the many liturgies of Holy Week, especially the Easter Triduum beginning on Holy Thursday.

In today’s First liturgical Reading, one of Isaiah’s ‘servant’ poems, the prophet fore-shadows Jesus’ life and passion. The detailed imagery immerses us into those violent strikes against our Lord’s sacred head, drawing us even deeper into this time of Passiontide. In the second reading, St. Paul’s celebrated hymn represents an ancient Christian understanding that the Church has always meditated on, sung and considered a guide of life.

The first part of the Gospel narrative depicts the royal reception already mentioned, while in the second part, we are challenged to examine our own lives in light of some of the ‘types’ in the story: consider Peter who *denies* Jesus, Judas who *betrays* Jesus, Pilate who acts against his conscience and *condemns* Jesus to death on the cross, Herod who *ridicules* Jesus and the elitist leaders of the people who protect their positions by *destroying* Jesus.

The beginning of Holy Week is a time to wait in simple silence, to reflect over our actions, to contemplate the crux of the events; Is Jesus weeping as a result of my sinful way of life as he wept over Jerusalem at the beginning of his Palm Sunday procession? Am I a barren or useless fig tree producing no sweet fruit, but the bitter fruits of impurity, injustice, pride, racism, jealousy and selfishness? Let us repent now, so that Jesus may welcome us at his Resurrection. This Holy Week will become more meaningful when we become like the humble donkey that carried Jesus. May we purposely leave no stone unturned as we strive to unearth the true meaning of this solemn week in the life of the Church.

“There is no remedy so powerful against the heat of concupiscence as the remembrance of our Savior’s Passion. In all my difficulties I never found anything so efficacious as the wounds of Christ: In them I sleep secure; from them I derive new life.” St. Augustine.

A Blessed and prayerful Holy Week!