

## THE STORIES OF PALM SUNDAY ARE OUR STORIES.

Today, we begin our Holy Week celebration with Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem which is characterized by much jubilation, joy, and songs of praise. Ironically, the same crowd that sang praises to Jesus shouted "crucify him" before Pilate. The stories and the voices of the people we heard during the readings today are our stories and voices. These people were human beings like us, and they reacted or behaved the way we react or behave in our lives today. So, the way the people we heard in the readings today treated Jesus is the way we treat Him. In the readings today, Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by a cheering crowd singing "Hosanna" and other kind gestures. The same people that welcomed Jesus turned against Him and shouted, "Crucify Him". Sometimes, we welcome Jesus in our lives and at other times, we reject Him or treat Him unfairly. In the Gospel of Matthew 25, Jesus taught us that whatever we do to others we do to Him (Matthew 25:40-45). We welcome Jesus or treat Him fairly in our lives when we welcome others and treat them fairly. When you receive Holy Communion believing that you receive Jesus, He lives in you. Anyone who treats you with love is not only loving you but also Jesus who lives in you. In the Gospel of Matthew 10, Jesus told His listeners; "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me" (Matthew 10:40). We welcome Jesus by welcoming others into our lives, families, parishes, and communities. We welcome Jesus into our lives by doing His will or living in accordance with His teachings and commands. Let us make a resolution to start seeing Jesus in others and make an extra effort to abide by the teachings or will of Jesus Christ. When we fail to treat Jesus fairly by not treating others with love, we join those who in the readings treated Jesus unfairly by shouting "Crucify Him". A woman in the reading made herself outstanding by shattering an alabaster jar and using expensive oil to anoint Jesus. We need to ask ourselves what we have done for Jesus and His Church. The most expensive thing we can do for Jesus in imitation of what this holy woman did for Jesus is to spend our time doing what Jesus wanted us to be doing. Do you spend time attending the Holy Mass, praying, reading the Bible or other spiritual books, helping others, decorating, cleaning the church, and so on? Most of our priests spend time preparing for Mass and their homilies. The time our priests spend preparing for Mass and their homilies is greater than the time we spend celebrating the Mass. Spend your time doing the will of God, spend your resources, talents, and skills in supporting the growth of God's Church and in making the lives of others better. In this Holy Week, let us decide not to imitate Judas who betrayed Jesus because of money or

wealth by not valuing money or wealth more than other people's lives or God's will, nor Peter who denied Jesus because he was afraid of being hurt or by what people would say and do. Let us distance ourselves from imitating Pilate who longed for justice but failed to stand for justice by giving in to the crowd. Let us emulate Jesus who believed that God is ever with us and cry out for His assistance always most especially in our trying times. May God enrich us spiritually in this Holy Week, Amen.