

Preparing for Palm (Passion) Sunday

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (the full name) is the Sixth Sunday of Lent and the first Sunday of Holy Week. It commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. As he entered, the people of Jerusalem recognized Jesus as their king, saying "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

Palm Sunday Mass begins with the "blessing of the palms," where the palms used in the procession that follows are blessed. It is during this time that the story of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem is read. Then a procession into the church building follows. If there cannot be a procession from the outside of the church, a solemn entrance, taking place entirely within the church, may be done.

The hymns and psalmody are related to Christ's office as King. We listen to the story of Jesus' Passion, where different events in the last days of Christ are proclaimed. The priest and a combination of readers read aloud Matthew 26:14-27:66 (Year A), Mark 14:1—15:47 (Year B), or Luke 22:14-23:56 (Year C).

Resources for our celebration

- Free clipart from <http://cruzblanca.org/hermanoleon/semsanta/ramos.htm>



- Palms & Palm crosses.
In Ireland, we have traditionally used evergreen leaves for Palm on Palm Sunday. These were not the palms used in Jerusalem, but many cultures use local substitutes for palm: in Germany, congregations use budding willow branches, for example. More and more parishes are now importing palm fronds – long narrow leaves, and these can be used to create palm crosses. This website has lots of craft ideas for families/children using palm fronds: http://www.catholicmom.com/palm_crafts.htm
This blog offers lots of ideas for including children in the Palm Sunday celebration – for example, including them, in a prayerful way, in the procession.
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com/2011/01/year-the-sixth-sunday-in-lent.html>
- A prayer space for Palm Sunday weekend in our church
Parishioners can find it helpful if we link palm and praise in a clear way for them.

Consider creating a 'praise God' corner for the weekend.

Display a poster/backdrop with Psalm 150 in large print.

- Underneath offer an invitation – to read the psalm prayerfully and consider what we want to give praise to God for. Then write a phrase, word or picture on the cut outs on offer and to attach the cut out around the psalm.
 - Cut-outs – paper 'cut outs' of palm leaves with the words 'I praise God for ...'
Can then be attached with blutack.
- Displaying palms at home

Every home has signs of what matters to its occupants. Pictures of those we love, treasured memories, football scarves and ties ... all point out what's important to us.

Christian homes need Christian signs. A bible is a necessity, a crucifix is important. Many homes also have an image of the Sacred Heart with a lamp (many a county tie hangs on it!). Some homes find it helps to have a prayer corner in the house where the bible and seasonal prayer resources can be easily seen/accessed – for example, a window ledge where a May altar /Easter tomb/ Christmas crib might be built.

Many people don't realise that they can, and indeed should, display palms in their homes – why not help them to re-discover this prayerful tradition! Blessed Palm can be displayed behind a crucifix, in a prayer space, by a sacred heart picture, or similar.

A Prayer Service for the new blessed Palm.

In advance, as a family, decide where the palm will be placed (e.g. above the door in each room, or behind the main crucifix in the house).

Gather, as a family, at home. One adult/teen reads the account of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (from the Gospel of Mark 11:1-10 or Matt 21:1-11 or John 12:12-16 or Luke 19:28-40). Then another adult, with a lighted candle, leads a short procession through all the rooms of the house, while singing an appropriate hymn .

Place the palm in its new home and invite each person to name one event, relationship or thing that they are grateful to God for. Finish with an 'Our Father'