

Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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March 29, 2026

Brothers and Sisters,

We are almost at the close of our Lenten Season. First Sunday, we met Jesus in the desert. The Second Sunday, we met Jesus on the mountain, transfigured in glory. The third Sunday, we met Jesus in a Samaritan town in conversation with a woman of ill repute, calling her to a change and transformation of her life. On the fourth Sunday, we met Jesus giving sight to a man who was born blind. The fifth Sunday of Lent called us to reflect on the mystery of the resurrection. Today, the Sixth Sunday of Lent is “Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.”

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord marks the beginning of Holy Week. Prior to the second Vatican council, the fifth Sunday of Lent was called “Passion Sunday,” and Palm Sunday was observed on the sixth Sunday. Currently the Roman Rite denotes Palm Sunday as “Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord,” which combines the two Sunday observances.

The fifth Sunday of Lent was called Passion Sunday because, on this day, the Church began to make the Sufferings of Jesus the main focus of reflection and prayer. Passion Sunday also marked the beginning of a special sub-season called Passiontide, which extended from the fifth Sunday to Holy Saturday. During this time, the Church’s liturgy became more somber, and a sorrowful mood was reflected in the various practices that occurred in the liturgy. The most obvious example of a more somber mood was the veiling of statues and images, which remains an optional practice in the current liturgy. Crosses remain covered until the end of the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, but other images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

Palm Sunday of the passion of the Lord is often thought of as the remembering and reliving of the suffering of Jesus. The word passion seems to have the same meaning as suffering. Passion however has a much deeper meaning. It is important for us to note that suffering is only one of the consequences of passion. Passion is an eager interest, a feeling of intense enthusiasm towards or compelling desire or longing for someone or something. Passion is determination, conviction, commitment and love. Passion is a strong desire, a hunger, a thirst and an urgent longing that can move you and get you to do amazing things. Passion can move you through difficult, troublesome and trying times because you don’t care about the cost of fulfilling your desire, satisfying your hunger and thirst, and achieving what you are passionate about.

The passion of Jesus was not the rejection or the insults or the condemnation or the cross or the suffering or his death – they were the consequence of his real passion. His real passion was

doing the will of his Father. Jesus said to his disciples, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:30) and "I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me" (John 6:38). Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "This is how you are to pray... Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven" (Mathew 6:9-10). And Jesus prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

The passion of Jesus was the will of his father, and he gave his life for it. His passion moved him to accept the cross and carry it to his death. It is this passion and its consequences that we remember today, on Palm Sunday. We remember Jesus entering Jerusalem to face rejection and eventual death. He moved, with courage, into hostile territory. He entered a city which killed its prophets and did not know how to receive the things that are for its own good, a city that did not know how to receive blessings and gifts and grace!

They greeted him as they would greet a pilgrim: "Blessed is he who enters in the name of the Lord" (Psalm 118:26). And they shouted "Hosanna!" "Hosanna" means "Save now." It was a cry for help, which a people in distress addressed to their king or their god. "Save us, we beseech thee, O Lord" (Psalm 118:25). Hosanna in the highest means, let even the angels in the highest of heavens cry unto God, "save now". It is essentially an oppressed people's cry to their savior and king for deliverance. These hosannas of Palm Sunday will become the cries of "crucify him, crucify him!"

As we remember the Lord's passion, let us not stop with recalling the events that led to his death. Let us get in touch with our own passion. What are we passionate about? Is there something deep inside of us that moves us, urges us, and keeps us going? What gives meaning and direction to our lives? Do we have a hunger or thirst, or urgent longing that holds us together and keeps us alive and moving?

We are often challenged to make difficult choices, face difficult situations and work with difficult people. We can face them only if we really hunger and thirst, if we really desire...if we are really passionate! If we are really passionate and passionately strive for God and God's ways, we will do those things that are difficult and troublesome... even carry the cross if that is what it takes to fulfill God's plan and purpose.

I encourage you to take a few moments each day of this week to be still and get in touch with your own inner longings! Bless yourself with good, noble, wholesome and redeeming desires! Try to align your plan and purpose with God's plan and purpose for you. And pray, "May your will be done!" Pray also for courage and wisdom to face difficult and troublesome situations.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today's mass....

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.

March 29, 2026

**Lent is not an effort to save ourselves.
We have been saved by the one and perfect sacrifice of Jesus.
Rather, it is part of our journey, the continuum, the falling in love, staying in love,
and growing in love with God.**

Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
who as an example of humility for the human race to follow
caused our Savior to take flesh and submit to the Cross,
graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering
and so merit a share in his Resurrection.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Liturgy of the Word

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**Being serene does not mean you don't move.
It means you move gently, gracefully and peacefully.**

Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.

Reflect on developing a “well-trained tongue” and “well-disciplined” life....

Reflect on speaking words of compassion, encouragement, kindness and support.....

Reflect on speaking a language of hope....

Psalm 22

**I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
In the midst of the assembly, I will praise you.
You who fear the Lord praise him;
All you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel.**

Philippians 2:6-11

Paul says, Jesus humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even on a cross. **B**

Be humble in your ways. Surrender to God's plans, even at great cost.

Mathew 26:14 – 27:66

We remember Jesus being betrayed, tried, judged, condemned and crucified. We remember him dying on a cross. We remember Jesus giving himself totally in life and in death. We remember the cross, sign of shame and punishment, becoming the symbol of sacrifice, healing, unconditional love, total giving, redemption and salvation. We remember and relive the passion, the cross and the death of Jesus.

Reflect on how you share in the passion and cross of Jesus. Remember those who have heavy burden to carry.

Remember the innocent, especially children and the helpless who have to suffer without support.

Reflect and Pray....

What do you need to do in order to develop a "well-disciplined" life?

What do you need to do to move into and face difficult situations?

What does it mean to you to cry out "Hosanna" - Lord, "save now"?

What does the "passion" of Jesus mean to you? How do you share in that Passion?

Saint of the Day, March 29 - St. Ludovico of Casoria and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

Ludovico was born Arcangelo Palmentieri in Casoria, near Naples, on March 11, 1814. He apprenticed as a cabinet maker in his youth. He entered the novitiate of the Order of Friars Minor on July 1, 1832, taking the name Ludovico. He was ordained a priest five years later and was appointed to teach philosophy, mathematics, and chemistry to the younger members of the Order at the Franciscan priory of San Pietro in Naples.

In 1847, he had a mystical experience which he later described as a cleansing. After that, he dedicated his life to the poor and the infirm, establishing a dispensary for the poor, two schools for African children, an institute for the children of nobility, as well as an institution for orphans, the deaf, and the speechless, and other institutes for the blind, elderly, and for travelers. In addition to an infirmary for friars of his province, he began charitable institutes in Naples, Florence, and Assisi.

To help continue these works of mercy, in 1859 he established the Gray Brothers, a religious community composed of men who formerly belonged to the Secular Franciscan Order. Three years later, he founded the Gray Sisters of St. Elizabeth for the same purpose.

Toward the beginning of his final, nine-year illness, Ludovico wrote a spiritual testament which described faith as "light in the darkness, help in sickness, blessing in tribulations, paradise in the crucifixion, and life amid death." The local work for his beatification began within five months of Ludovico's death. He was beatified in 1993 and canonized in 2014.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**With Christ the unbearable becomes bearable,
the impossible becomes possible.**

