

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord • Year C • April 13, 2025

*Loving Father,  
your Son came among us  
as a servant,  
obedient to  
your plan of Salvation,  
pouring out his life  
upon the Cross  
so that we might  
be freed from sin  
and filled with faith.  
May every knee bend  
and every tongue proclaim  
him as Lord  
and Redeemer.  
Amen.*



## Sunday Word

Luke 19:28-40 (at the procession with palms)

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

Philippians 2:6-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

### *The Stones Will Cry Out!*

Jesus enters Jerusalem to shouts of joy. The crowds acclaim the one who comes in the name of the Lord. And if the crowds had not been allowed to acclaim Jesus' entrance, the very stones would have cried out!

### *God Shields Us With Dignity*

The faithless may deride believers, but God will uphold us. His dignity will shield us. The Suffering Servant of the Lord stands firm in the conviction that God remains ever close. No shame can touch the servant who, by faith, stands within the orbit of the Master.

### *Exaltation*

Jesus emptied himself. He suffered and died on the Cross for our sakes and was exalted by God above all. What love is greater than that of the innocent one who forsakes the self in sacrifice for another? Even a pagan soldier is able to assess Christ's innocence. There was no guilt in him, yet Jesus paid the price for our transgressions. He bore the burden of our sins, nailing them to the Cross.

## Church Teaching: The Significance of Suffering

### *In Union with Christ*

Each time we gather for the Eucharist, we celebrate the Paschal Mystery (the suffering, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension) of Jesus. At certain times, however, one particular dimension of that single reality stands out more prominently as we focus upon it.

The many celebrations of Holy Week exemplify how the liturgy is able to celebrate the entire Paschal Mystery even while commemorating one or another historical moment of its unfolding. The first focus of today's celebration commemorates

the Lord's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. It then moves to contemplate his Passion and Death. Nonetheless, we also celebrate his Resurrection as we recognize in the breaking of bread the presence of the Risen One in our midst.

The Lenten season has prepared us, through the disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, to undertake this Holy Week celebration. As we begin, the whole Church pauses as one at this threshold to the week, a special week that is the high point of the liturgical year.

United in faith, hope, and love, we acknowledge that Christ, the Messiah, suffered, died, and rose from the dead to accomplish the work of Salvation. We profess that if we are united with him in his suffering on the Cross, we will share in his Resurrection and new life.

### *Suffering Seen in a New Light*

Sickness, pain, and suffering are burdens that every human being must shoulder to a greater or lesser degree in life. But in the light of faith, these burdens take on a deeper significance beyond human limits, physical degradation, and misery.

For Saint Paul, the passover effected by the suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus is the basic pattern of all Redemption. He even goes so far as to say that the Christian must be ready to fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ (see Colossians 1:24).

In other words, we believe that when we unite our suffering with the suffering of Jesus in his own Passion, it can indeed become redemptive. Saint Paul reminds the Church in Corinth that believers continually carry within their own bodies the dying of Jesus so that, in their human bodies, the life of Jesus might also be revealed. In the light of faith, suffering acquires a new, positive meaning. It can become a participation in the saving work of Jesus.

### *Distinctiveness of Church Teaching*

We do not have to be passive, accept our own or others' suffering, and do nothing to alleviate the horrible conditions of misery and pain around us.

As followers of Jesus, we owe those who are sick as much physical relief and spiritual comfort as we can possibly provide. But as followers of Jesus, we also emulate his attitude that suffering can be transformative.

## **Key Terms**

### **PALM SUNDAY (Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord)**

So called because of the palm branches blessed and handed out to the assembly at the start of the Mass that opens Holy Week. The practice of using palm branches (or other branches in northern countries) in this liturgy dates from early Christian ritual in Jerusalem itself.

### **CHALICE**

From the Latin *calix*, meaning "cup" or "goblet." The cup, the sacred vessel used at Mass, is often referred to as a chalice.

## **Voices of Faith**

By saying then, "If it be possible, let it pass from me," he showed his true humanity. But by saying, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as you will," he showed his virtue and self-command. This too teaches us, even when nature pulls us back, to follow God. In order to make clear that he is truly God and truly human, words alone would not suffice. Deeds were needed. . . . See in how many ways he shows the reality of the incarnation. He demonstrates both by what he speaks and by what he suffers.

—Saint John Chrysostom

Every trial accepted with resignation is meritorious and draws divine goodness upon the whole of humanity.

—Pope Benedict XVI

## **Further Reading**

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 1499 (uniting ourselves with Jesus' suffering contributes to the good of the Church), 1505 (healing miracles of Christ announce the greater healing achieved in Paschal Mystery)

### **United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:**

Chapter 19 (Anointing the Sick and Dying), especially the section entitled "Effects of the Sacrament," page 254

### **Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:**

314 (Jesus' suffering and Death gives new meaning to our suffering), 319 (the sick unite themselves to Jesus' suffering through the sacraments)