

Fr. Simon Sez

During Holy Week we commemorate the culminating point in salvation history and in Jesus' public ministry: 1) His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, 2) His offering of Himself as the Suffering Servant at the Last Supper, 3) His crucifixion and death, and 4) His resurrection. Through these events of the Paschal Mystery, Jesus paid the price for our sins, redemption. When we liturgically celebrate these events, we are celebrating our redemption and obtaining its saving grace for our salvation! This celebration is not only a remembering of these historic events but also a liturgical celebration using sacraments which make us liturgically present in the saving mysteries of our faith. This is the primary way we participate and thus, become fruits of these saving events. The liturgy is designed to help us celebrate and participate in the life, passion, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for our salvation.

Liturgy uses narration to help us call to mind the History (His Story) of the Mystery and uses liturgical symbols to give us physical signs of spiritual realities. We need to take advantage of re-presentation that the liturgy provides for us by being present and participating these saving events and live them.

On Palm Sunday we use palm branches which were taken from the "kingly" tree and used in Jesus' time as a symbol of royalty and military victory. They are used during the Feast of Tabernacles to indicate the presence of God in his temple. The red cope and chasuble are the color of "the faithful witness (martyr) and firstborn from the dead."

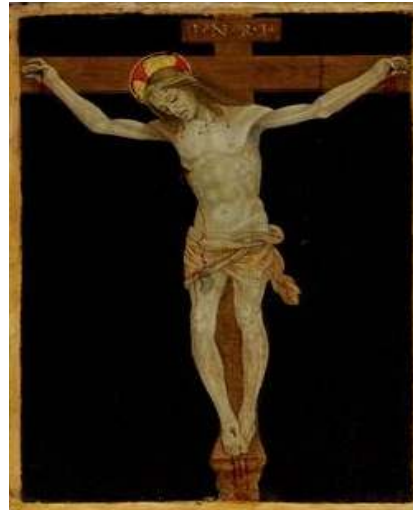
On Holy Thursday we celebrate the institution of the Eucharist and Holy Orders. The priest washes feet in imitation of Jesus to show Jesus through His priests has come to serve others. The Last Supper is celebrated with the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion. The Blessed Sacrament is then removed in procession and the sanctuary is stripped to represent Jesus leaving and going into the darkness of the Mount of Olives and death.

On Good Friday we recall the Passion and venerate the Cross which is the instrument of Jesus' death and our salvation. We receive communion and end in silence to remind us of Jesus' death.

Easter Vigil is a burst of symbols. It starts in darkness. The Light breaks through when we bless the fire and process with the Light of Christ. The Sacred Scriptures are read as a progression through salvation history. The Liturgy of the Eucharist gives us Jesus sacramentally so we may participate in His death and share in His Resurrection. This Easter celebration continues for fifty days through Easter Season.

Thus, the Church provides us opportunities to celebrate our redemption and participate in it so that it applies in us and can bear the fruit of salvation. May we pray and live these liturgies for our salvation and the salvation of the whole world.

All is Fulfilled: Scott Hahn Reflects on Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord



Isaiah 50:4–7
Psalm 22:8–9,
17–20, 23–24
Philippians 2:6–11
Matthew
26:14–27:66

“All this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled,” Jesus says in today’s Gospel (see Matthew 26:56).

Indeed, we have reached the climax of

the liturgical year, the highest peak of salvation history, when all that has been anticipated and promised is to be fulfilled.

By the close of today’s long Gospel, the work of our redemption will have been accomplished: the new covenant will be written in the blood of His broken body hanging on the Cross at the place called the Skull.

In His Passion, Jesus is “counted among the wicked,” as Isaiah had foretold (see Isaiah 53:12). He is revealed definitively as the Suffering Servant the prophet announced, the long-awaited Messiah whose words of obedience and faith ring out in today’s First Reading and Psalm.

The taunts and torments we hear in these two readings punctuate the Gospel as Jesus is beaten and mocked (see Matthew 27:31), as His hands and feet are pierced, as enemies gamble for His clothes (see Matthew 27:35), and as His enemies dare Him to prove His divinity by saving Himself from suffering (see Matthew 27:39–44).

He remains faithful to God’s will to the end. He does not turn back in His trial. He gives Himself freely to His torturers, confident that, as He speaks in today’s First Reading, “The Lord God is My help . . . I shall not be put to shame.”

Destined to sin and death as children of Adam’s disobedience, we have been set free for holiness and life by Christ’s perfect obedience to the Father’s will (see Romans 5:12–14, 17–19; Ephesians 2:2; 5:6).

This is why God greatly exalted Him. This is why we have salvation in His name. Following His example of humble obedience in the trials and crosses of our lives, we know we will never be forsaken. We know, as the centurion realizes today, that truly this is the Son of God (see Matthew 27:54).

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