

The Church celebrates today as both **Palm Sunday and Passion Sunday**. Today's liturgy starts out so happy, perhaps even funny.

+A husband and wife husband had quarreled bitterly. The angry tension between them was so thick you could cut it with a knife. But, then the silence was broken.

Pointing to a **donkey** standing in a pasture out beside the road, the husband asked, "Relative of yours?" The wife quickly replied, "Yes, by marriage!"

In modern communication, the **donkey** is a symbol for *awkwardness*, *dumbness*, and blundering ineptness. Yet, a **donkey** plays a key role in the drama of Palm Sunday. The **donkey** in the day of Jesus was seen as **noble**.

Only in war did **kings** ride upon a **horse**; when they came in *peace* they came upon a **donkey**. So Jesus by this action came as a king of **love** and **peace**, and not as the conquering military hero whom the tumultuous crowds expected and awaited.

Interesting fact, but what is the most striking part of this day for us? Is it the **red color** of the vestments and the sudden departure from purple?

Is it **the palms** we all receive? Some are gifted enough to **braid** them into a cross and **wear it on their clothes** for the rest of the day or take the palms home and keep them behind a **religious picture** or **crucifix** on the wall.

Maybe it is that **long reading** of the Passion that recounts for us the details of Christ's suffering?

No, the **most striking part of Palm Sunday** for many people is the **shift from the acclaim the crowd** gives Jesus on his way to Jerusalem to their **call for his death** in the **Passion**.

The same people who laid **their cloaks** on the road as a "**red carpet**" for him, who waved palms like flags for him, who **shouted Hosanna** as Jesus passed, would later *turn on him or deny him*.

We can look on them **condescendingly** until we realize that *we maybe more like them than we'd like to think*. For us this **shift** takes the form of a split between the **faith we profess** and the **lives we live**.

*Are we faithful to **Jesus and his Church** when things become difficult, or are we "**fair-weather**" Catholics?*

When we take the palms home today, whatever else we do with them, let them **remind us** all year long of how we **can fail the Lord** like those people of Jerusalem long ago and how we all need the **grace**, the **power** from his **Passion**, to stay **faithful** and **loyal to Christ**.

The **drama** of Palm Sunday is not only an event of 2000 years ago; it is *still our drama today*, the split between **faith** and **life**.

It is **our hope** that we carry the palm leaves to our homes, we are declaring our choice to accept Jesus as the King and ruler of our lives and our families, not matter what **the situation**. *Stay with him* and we will **always** *rise with him*.