

Palm Sunday
April 9-10, 2022

Pray that you may not undergo the test.

Readings: Luke 19: 28-40; Isaiah 50: 4-7; Phil 2: 6-11; Luke 22:14–23:56

“Pray that you may not undergo the test.” With these ominous words, Jesus signaled that the disciples would encounter the aggressive power of death and evil in the world. They would question, wonder and doubt. How disturbing this must have sounded to these, his closest friends. And how prescient they proved to be.

Two thousand years later, we live in a time in which world events shake our faith, halt us in bewilderment, fear, even doubt. It is critical to understand that Holy Week is so much more than a re-enactment of historical events. Rather, we enter fully into the reality of the Paschal mystery of the suffering, death and resurrection of our Savior. It is a dark road, filled with the effects of our own sin and weakness.

Are we today able to comprehend that by means of our own actions, we are part of the crowd that is shouting, “Crucify Him!”? Palm Sunday is an invitation to examination our own consciences; we mustn’t remain silent in the face of injustice. Recent events have brought this tragic situation home.

It has been gut-wrenching to learn of the atrocities in Bucha, Ukraine, where more than 320 civilians—including children— were killed and buried in a mass grave. We held a powerful Holy hour here recently. Still, the gnawing sense of helplessness penetrates the depths of our soul. We feel helpless, powerless, and insignificant.

We ask why and answers are not forthcoming. Our faith is tried and tested. We do not always know the way, and at times feel alone in our convictions. Yet, it is to the name of Jesus that we all bow in humble supplication. Holy Week takes center stage in our lives. Do not allow the challenges of the world to overwhelm you.

Rather, together in faith, we allow the power of the Cross to transform us. Change begins with us. When we love unconditionally, as did Jesus, its effects will be felt by others. Our prayers and sacrifices matter. Never forget that.

Holy Week is the most solemn moment of the Church year, when, without fear, we enter into the darkness of sin, including our own, so that we might be a witness to the lifting of this darkness by means of the blood of the Cross. Let us walk with the Lord, let us not abandon Him now, not in this hour of need. Let us hold fast to the Truth, confident that the Truth will indeed set us free from our shackles, that in the end we might bear witness to the Light.