

## Palm Sunday

My beloved brothers and sisters, today, we begin our journey into the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word: Passion, comes from the Latin word: *patior*; which means: to suffer. However, in English, it also means to have a great deal of energy and joy for something, like someone has a passion for art; or, I am passionately in love with you. In this case, both meanings are true: we enter into the profound suffering of Jesus; but, we also enter into His infinite energy of Divine Love for us, that begins with the First Eucharist and ends in His death and Resurrection! We do this, year after year. It is a pilgrimage into the definitive victory of Jesus' love over sin and hopelessness and death, which we declare and celebrate with palm branches, which were the ancient world's symbol of victory.

Jesus would have entered the Holy City, His own City, through the Lion's Gate, the Gate which was believed to be the gate through which the Messiah would triumphantly come to claim His Throne. The Throne of Jesus will not be a throne of gold, but the throne of the Cross. His Palace, not the royal palace of David, but the new tomb lent to His body by Joseph of Arimathea. His Royal purple robes, a soldier's cloak after having been scourged almost to death! His crown, not of gold and precious stones, but of thorns pressed into the flesh of His head!

As we enter into this pilgrimage with Jesus, we are being asked by Him this week and in every celebration of the Eucharist to enter into the very mystery of our salvation. We are being asked by Him to enter into His **Passion for us**. The Passion of Jesus reminds us that our Lord is faithful unto death, and even in the worst that human beings can do, He remains faithful to us. Even in our betrayal of Him, He remains faithful in His love for us. Time after time, trust has been violated in our lives, and we have violated the trust of others in us- that is the consequence of sin. With every violation of trust, we have built up higher and higher walls around our hearts, and they become hardened, suspicious and protective to the point that we isolate ourselves from others to avoid being violated once again. But God Jesus will never let us down, will never violate our trust. By His Passion for us, He wants to break down the walls we have built

between ourselves and our God and each other. This is the meaning of the Eucharist, which is first the Divine Sacrifice, from which we eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Sacrifice as the perpetual New Covenant of this eternal Love.

His Passion and Death are the eternal pledge of God in Jesus: “No matter what you do, I will keep on loving you. With this Eucharist, I pledge my all to you and give you my very self, so that you become what you eat! And not even death will separate us!” If we strike Him, scourge Him, crown Him with thorns, betray Him, crucify Him, He will continue to love us, because Jesus who is God, is God’s Passion for us! He never gives up on us: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing!” This is the One Love we can trust. This is the message of the Passion, this is the message of the Triumphal Palms, this is the Divine Love we worship in the Eucharist, that we eat, which fills us, with the very infinite love of God, and remains with us in the Tabernacle. This is why we fall down in worship in His Churches, why we are reduced to silence before Him: God in Jesus says to us: “I am with you always; because I love you always! I will never desert you! ”

When you bring your Blessed Palms home with you today, display them in a conspicuous place that will constantly remind you: **This is the Victory of Love!**