

*Palm Sunday 2020*

# Homily for Palm Sunday

April 4-5, 2020

Readings: Isaiah 50: 4-7; Philippians 2: 6-11; Matthew 26: 14—27: 66

Preacher: Sr. Susan Schantz

Palm Sunday is a crowd event.

It's a liturgy of the crowd.

And each year the Church calls to us: Join the crowd.

Together we imagine Jewish believers, women, men and children, streaming into Jerusalem, the holy city, ready to celebrate the great feast of liberation: Passover.

Immersed in political upheaval and religious dissent, the Passover crowd is both celebrating and unruly. Some of them recognize Jesus, arriving with friends for the Passover.

Hosanna! Hosanna!

And we who have celebrated this week of mysteries before, cry out too:  
Hosanna! Hosanna!

But this is 2020. This is a plague year. How can we celebrate a crowd feast, a communal meal, this year? We and the whole world are isolating in response to viral threat. Hospitals and health care workers are strained to the breaking point. Churches and all common spaces are closed to us. We maintain physical and social distance.

And yet, in late spring 2020, we believers call to each other:  
Join the crowd!

Keep close to friends and family from a distance. Rediscover and deepen the truest communion. Recognize the healers and comforters and leaders in the crowd.

Join the crowd!

*Susan M Schantz*

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Be close in heart to all who are sick. To those who mourn. Breathe deep along with those who are anxious or depressed. Stand shoulder to shoulder with those who mourn.

Join the crowd!

No church building? No palms, no readings and songs? Make a sacred space at home. Make it Palm Sunday even if you are alone.

No palms? A branch ready for spring. A house plant. Some flowers from a market. A child's picture of early spring flowers from a park walk.

No choir? You sing. YouTube can do Palm Sunday. Traditional. Chant. Rock.

No procession? Move. Walk. March.

No church candles?

Light your own. Look for the same moon with a distant loved one.

No readings? Tell the story. Read it aloud. On line. From a Bible. From a child's story book. From a streaming service.

Palm Sunday and the Triduum will not be celebrated publicly, but we believers have our ways to be the crowd that walked with Jesus.

We have been, are and will be walking the way of the cross.

We are that crowd. We see him in the crowd. And we follow.

In closing, here is a poem shared last week by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry of the American Episcopal Church.

*Susan M Schantz*

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**Pandemic**

Lynn Ungar

What if you thought of it  
As the Jews consider the Sabbath—  
The most sacred of times?  
Cease from travel.  
Cease from buying and selling.  
Give up, just for now,  
On trying to make the world  
Different than it is.  
Sing. Pray. Touch only those  
To whom you commit your life.  
Center down.

And when your body has become still,  
Reach out with your heart.  
Know that we are connected  
In ways that are terrifying and beautiful.  
(You could hardly deny it now.)  
Know that our lives  
Are in one another's hands.  
(Surely, that has become clear.)  
Do not reach out your hands.  
Reach out your heart.  
Reach out your words.  
Reach out all the tendrils  
Of compassion that move, invisibly,  
Where we cannot touch.  
Promise this world your love-  
For better or for worse,  
In sickness and in health,  
So long as we all shall live.

*Susan M Schantz*