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| Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) |
| Isaiah 50:4-7 |
| Philippians 2:6-11 |
| Mark 15:1-39 |

**A. Text/Context**

* We have just heard a very long gospel about the passion or suffering of our Lord
* During the 1st part of the liturgy which is the blessing of the palms we commemorate the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem
* Jesus was mobbed by the people glorifying him yelling: Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.
* The 1st part of the gospel is the praise and glorification of our Lord in Jerusalem because he is recognized as a king. That is the Palm Sunday that we are celebrating according to the tradition of the Church
* Now in the gospel we have another celebration the Passion Sunday because we are now starting the Holy Week. The week-long suffering of our Lord
* Jesus enters Jerusalem. The headquarters of the religion known as Judaism, where the holy temple stands. The only temple in the whole of Israel
* Jerusalem is the center of their religion. The center of their faith in God
* Jerusalem is very symbolic. In the beginning the people in Jerusalem welcomed Jesus as the king of Israel but in the end the people of Jerusalem condemned Jesus to death and to be killed like a criminal
* In just a few days the king that they glorify is now condemned to die like a criminal. For so short a time the people has changed a lot. They made a complete turn around
* What is the reason? Because they do not understand Jesus. They do not recognize who Jesus really is
* The people think that Jesus is a king who will be like King David, an expert in the use of the sword killing thousands of enemies in the battlefield. A valiant king who can ride a chariot and horse with lightning speed
* When the people heard of all the miracles that Jesus did. This is it. This is the king that Israel needs. The one who will free us from the bondage of the Rome. He possessed all the powers of God. This is our king who will destroy the Roman empire
* Of course, the people were all mistaken, because Jesus the king will not free them from Roman slavery but will free them from the bondage of sin. His kingdom is not like the vast territories of the Roman emperor; his kingdom is about love, charity, and forgiveness
* The king will be as meek as a lamb who does not resort to rebellion to all those who oppress him according to the 1st reading in Isaiah
* And this is the most touching part of the suffering of our Lord. Throughout his passion, throughout his suffering he has never uttered a single word of complain
* He has never turned the ferocious anger of others into hatred to all those who despise him
* This is what we call in theology as the charity of the passion wherein no other person in this world could ever carry. Such suffering can only be endured by no one else except God alone

**B. Human Situation**

* My brothers and sisters, for so long we have always heard how Jesus suffered. We all know this dating back to the days of youth and childhood that Jesus suffered for us
* We have heard that He was scourged at the pillar leaving him with hundreds of wounds gaping all over his body
* We remember also that He was crowned with thorns exploding all the arteries in his head turning his face into a mask of blood
* We recall that He was made to carry a heavy cross many times greater than the weight of his body falling to the ground 3 times because of the crushing weight of the cross
* We recall the horror that He was crucified with rusty nails that pierced through the flesh of his hands and feet
* He was pierced with a lance that tore the flesh on his side ripping his heart apart
* And most of all, the most painful of his suffering is that in his greatest moment of need he was abandoned by all his disciples
* All his friends were gone when Jesus needed them most except John who accompanied the Most Holy Mother. He was left all alone grimacing in the most excruciating pain one could ever imagine
* In the entire suffering of our Lord, there was only one consolation to him. It was the Holy Mother of God who remained at the foot of the cross until the last drop of his blood
* This is the charity of the passion. No human being could undergo and endure such suffering except God alone
* The charity of the passion is the greatest charity God has ever shown to all his children and because of that, salvation was made possible to the entire human race
* This is the image of Jesus in his most horrid situation of the passion and suffering which the holy people of God and all the saints throughout the centuries have cried in torrents of tears reflecting on such an awesome charity of our God
* And even the most obstinate of all sinners, the most hardened of all criminals will really be touched by God’s tremendous love and awesome charity
* The charity of the passion has converted the great sinners back to God throughout the centuries

**C. Challenge**

* My brother and sisters in this season of the Holy Week we are reminded to reflect and meditate once more about the suffering of our Lord
* We are reminded of our gratitude of the charity that God has shared to us
* We will continue to reflect in the coming days that God alone and only God alone can offer to us the most supreme sacrifice of enduring all the sufferings just to redeem us from total damnation
* And it is to God alone that we need to return back in gratitude of what he did to us
* Only God can elevate us from the pit of destruction. Only God can save us from the total ruin of sin
* We are reminded of the powerful symbol of the cross because the cross is the climax, the grandeur, the pinnacle, the zenith, and the epitome of the entire history of salvation
* We are all invited to share in the suffering of the cross because the prize of suffering is our own redemption
* We go back to ourselves and we journey inwards and we ask: Have I been grateful to the greatest charity that God has shown to me