

FR . PETER'S PALM SUNDAY HOMILY
"EACH OF US IS CALLED TO ACCOMPANY JESUS"

During this final week of Lent, the week we call "Holy," we meditate upon the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice and its implications as a saving act of divine love.

This Sunday's liturgy always begins with the jubilant account of those who greeted Jesus as he entered Jerusalem, laying their cloaks and branches before him as they cried, "Hosanna."

The complete text of the Passion Narrative according to Mark is very long and full of details about those who accompanied Jesus as he carried out the work of our salvation.

It begins by recounting how an unnamed woman anointed Jesus in the home of a Pharisee, and continues by describing how the disciples of Jesus prepared for the Passover meal.

After the Last Supper Jesus invited his trusted three disciples to accompany him to the garden of Gethsemane - but they kept falling asleep.

Finally there is the betrayal by Judas, the arrest, the mock trial before the Sanhedrin, and the denials by Peter.

Jesus is then taken to Pilate, and this is where we begin our reading of the Passion today.

Once Jesus is unjustly condemned to death and cruelly tortured, he is lead out to be crucified.

Jesus is helped by Simon of Cyrene, who is pressed into service.

This is perhaps one of the strongest images we have of someone accompanying Jesus on his way of the Cross.

After the death of Jesus the centurion testified: "Truly, this man was the Son of God."

And there are the women, including Mary Magdalene who had ministered to him and faithfully accompanied him to Calvary.

Finally, we hear of Joseph of Arimathea who boldly asked for the body of Jesus and provided him with a tomb.

Each of us is called to accompany Jesus as he enters into his "Passover," the Paschal Mystery.

Can you be present on Holy Thursday evening at 7:00 for the Mass of the Lord's Supper?

Can you walk with him as he carries the Cross during the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at 1:30 in the afternoon or during the Stations at 7:00 on Good Friday evening?

Can you be like the holy women who keep vigil at his tomb by spending some time in quiet contemplation on Holy Saturday?

Each of us should reflect on how we can observe this as a truly Holy Week, at least taking the time to read from Scripture and to reflect upon the inestimable gift of our salvation in Christ.

May we prepare well during this Holy Week so that we might gather with overflowing joy for the celebration of Easter.