

SOLEMNITY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (PALM SUNDAY)

*FINEST 'ACT OF GOD'

- **Salvation.** Creation, Providence, and Salvation or Redemption are considered the three main external works (opera ad extra) of God. Looking at how some creatures continue to wreak havoc on one another even right now on planet Earth, one sees clearly why God did not stop at Creation and Providence. Sisters and Brothers, what a privilege to bask in the beauty of God's finest act: namely, Salvation, reenacted for us in the events of Holy Week. Palm Sunday liturgy is like a trailer, a preview of the entire Holy Week events. Today's Gospel reading (Mt 26:14-27:66) is an inspired account of part of the most decisive event in human and universal history: the passion, death and glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the mankind. Let us now meditate and contemplate the Passion of the Christ.
- **The Passion.** In it, the God-man, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, experienced the evils that plague humanity: injustice, violence, betrayal, doubt, fear, pain and, ultimately, degrading death. Yet it ended in victory over death. By accepting these evils out of love for us, out of self-emptying humility as described in today's 2nd reading (Phil 2:6-11), Christ drew out the highest good for mankind, from the worst evils by mankind. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) reminds us: "From the greatest moral evil ever committed – the rejection and murder of God's only Son, caused by the sins of all men – God, by his grace that 'abounded all the more', brought the greatest of goods: the glorification of Christ and our redemption." (CCC 312). Only God can do this. Thus: "One may never do evil so that good may result from it" (CCC 1789). All 117 billion humans who have ever lived (according to Live Science estimates), including the 8.2 billion currently alive, can find in the Passion of the Christ, a model for handling their own sufferings. Every passion for good is implicitly a passion for the Passion of the Christ, the path to final victory over evil.
- **Passion for the Passion.** The estimated 8.2 billion human beings on earth share many good passions including ending poverty, insecurity, war and violence, protecting the planet, etc. Commonly used for powerful feelings, 'passion' has Latin roots: 'pati', 'passio', meaning suffering, or enduring. At its core, passion is a strong desire that demands to be fulfilled, a pain that demands to be quenched. Imagine the deep yearning we 'all' have now to end forever wars and mass killings. Imagine the deep pain we feel over their effects on our lives, and you get a fresh grasp of the Passion of Christ, the suffering of Christ, to end the suffering of

mankind. Our passion to end all that threatens our lives thus thrusts us even more deeply into the mystery of redemption: that it takes suffering to end suffering. The Passion (Suffering) of Christ in today's Gospel reading relates details that enhance our appropriation of the redemption it brought us. Why then are we still suffering if Christ has already done so for us? To share in the effects of Christ's Passion (victory over sin and eternal death), we must share in the Passion itself by taking up our crosses and following Him (Matt 16:24). Some people even feel how our Lord felt during His Passion, when He said: "My soul is sorrowful even to death" (Mt 26:28). Yet He gave us a pattern for handling such moments. He prayed: "My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass without my drinking it, your will be done!" (Mt 26:42). This leaves you and me with a passion for the Passion of Christ. How I wish I can say every time I am in pain while trying to reduce or end the sufferings of others: "Father, thy will be done". Assured of a share in the victory of Christ even in the midst of setbacks, how I wish I can "set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame" using the inspired imagery of today's 1st reading (Is 50:4-7). May our passion for the Passion of Christ, lead us to a share in the victory of Christ, a share in the Resurrection, a share in God's finest act. Amen.

- <https://youtu.be/5AhKcdPxN5w>

****We are grateful to Fr Andrew Ekpenyong of St Mary Magdalene Catholic Church, Omaha, USA, for accepting to be our online homilist this year, 2026***