

Palm Sunday  
March 28, 2010  
“The Palms”

Every year when Palm Sunday comes around, we priests are mystified and sometimes amused at how popular this day is.

People come to Palm Sunday Mass who haven't come since Ash Wednesday, or maybe even Christmas.

And if you are one of those, we love you, and we're glad you're here! Honestly!

What is it about the palms that is so attractive?

Some say it's like Ash Wednesday: it's the 2 days of the year you come and get something for free at Mass.

Perhaps, but I think that just cheapens the occasions.

Really, I do think that people come to Ash Wednesday and Palm Sunday more to keep their identification, their bond, their link with the Faith, even if they don't come to Mass every Sunday.

Some might think that's hypocritical.

But I'd rather see it as maybe the last vestige, the last trace of their trying to hang on to something that's really, fundamentally, important to them in life, and that's their faith.

So, what should the palms be meaning for all of us?

Well, it's the same as what they meant for the Hebrews who strew them to make a pathway for Jesus into their lives on the 1st Palm Sunday.

It's a really neat gesture when you think about it.

We really don't have anything to compare it to in our culture.

Oh, when a guest is coming, we'll fix-up, clean-up and spruce-up, just so as not to embarrass ourselves over the risk that our beloved guest might not feel welcome or comfortable.

But we really don't have a comparison that paves the way for a beloved guest so that his or her ways will really become our ways.

Well, that's what the Hebrews meant on the 1st palm Sunday.

They really wanted to welcome Jesus as their Messiah and new King.

They really wanted to make His ways their ways.

They really wanted Him to be their leader.

It was only when they became disillusioned, when they realized Jesus wasn't going to overthrow the Romans governing them, and do so instantly, that they became angry, and their shouts of praise on Palm Sunday became, 5 days later, shouts of murderous condemnation: "Crucify Him," "Crucify Him."

How fickle the human expectations can be!

But that's history; this is the present.

Let's take the palms we receive today, and beyond just making some beautiful designs and renderings of the blessed palms, let's make them symbols of our intentions, one more time, one more year, to make the Lord's ways, our ways.

Let us let the innocence of Jesus wash over us so that we can become more innocent ourselves.

In so doing, we become less cynical.

We can become more compassionate toward others, as Jesus was.

We can see their needs more clearly.

We can love them more totally.

And we can empty ourselves for their sake more generously.

All while we become the innocence and compassion of the One for whom we lay down our palms to make for Him and His ways a pathway into our lives.

Thank you, and God bless you!

