

# Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

## Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (A)

Matthew 21:1-11 • Isaiah 50:4-7 • Psalm 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24 •  
Philippians 2:6-11 • Matthew 26:14-27:66



## The Tree of Life Restored

**P**alm Sunday ushers us into Holy Week with the solemn proclamation of the Passion. The readings are long and filled with details, and together they reveal one great mystery: through his suffering and death, Christ restores to us what was lost in the Garden of Eden.

From the beginning, humanity was cut off from the Tree of Life because of our sin. But in the Upper Room, at the Last Supper, Jesus gives us access once more. He institutes the Eucharist and inaugurates the New Covenant priesthood, appointing the Apostles to carry on his sacrifice in every generation. The Fathers of the Church saw the Cross as the new Tree of Life and the Eucharist as its fruit. In Holy Communion, we receive this fruit and, with it, the promise of eternal life!

The Passion narrative also places before us the striking choice between Jesus and Barabbas. Barabbas, whose name means “son of the father,” was guilty, violent, and condemned, yet he was set free. Jesus, the innocent Son of the Father, took his place. This exchange is not just a detail of history but the heart of the Gospel: Christ takes our place. We, the guilty, go free because the innocent Lamb of God offers himself on the cross.

Palm Sunday, then, is about access to life. By his Passion, Jesus opens the way to the Father, to the sacraments, and to eternal communion with God. As we begin Holy Week, we are invited to walk with him—to the Upper Room, to Gethsemane, to Calvary—so that we might also share in his Resurrection.



Entry of Jesus in Jerusalem by Lattanzio Gambara

## Living the Gospel

Holy Week is not simply about remembering the events of the past, but also about entering into the saving mystery of Christ's Passion here and now. Participate fully in the liturgies of this week, the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the veneration of the cross, and the Easter Vigil. Let the Eucharist be your food from the Tree of Life, and allow Christ's sacrifice to shape your heart. Then, go forth to live as one who has been set free, bearing witness to the victory of the Cross.

## Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6OEHFJ97SI>

## Ponder and Pray

» In Barabbas, we see ourselves—guilty yet set free, because Christ took our place. When have you experienced the Lord’s mercy in a way that made you realize he bore the weight of your sin? How might this truth move you from abstract gratitude to a lived response of conversion, humility, and love?

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» St. Paul tells us that Jesus humbled himself, “becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8). Where is God inviting you to imitate that same humility and obedience, in your family, in your work, or in the hidden struggles of your heart? How can you unite your daily sacrifices with Christ’s Passion so that his life may be revealed through yours?

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» Holy Week is not just a remembrance of past events but an invitation to walk with Christ through the mysteries of his Passion, death, and Resurrection. How will you make space this week to accompany him on this path?

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“ **Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped.... And being found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** ”  
—**Philippians 2:6–8**

### Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write about anything related to today’s Mass. It might be your view of Jeff Cavins’s reflection, your priest’s homily, your answers to the questions on this page—whatever will help you and your household get the most out of today’s celebration.

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