



What will you do with your blessed palm?

All throughout the world Catholics begin their Holy Week observance on this Palm Sunday. Many will hurry to churches in search of getting the best palm, picking out pieces that are fresh, green, hardy and strong.

As we select our pieces of palm, we feel their strength and vitality. Holding up these freshly blessed palm branches, welcoming the Lord, and singing "Hosannas," we begin the Mass. Then moments later, we can be heard shouting out "crucify him" as we participate in the Passion of the Lord. Quickly we realize that these same fresh, soft, and pliant palms become brittle and harsh with the passing of time.

How can this be? How can we be welcoming our Lord one moment and in the next moment be crucifying him?

In a way, the palm branches we hold this Sunday are reflections of our own relationships with the Lord. These same palm branches are much like our faith, not what it should be, but often what it becomes with the passing of time.

We vacillate so many times in our lives between being strong in our faith to becoming dry and brittle. We welcome the Lord and seek him often when we need help and then later often forget what he has done for us.

After our celebrations this

the vibrancy of our faith away like we will do with our blessed palm branches in a few days.

Once these palms have been tucked away until next Lent, often it's business as usual for us; we forget the uneasiness we feel in our stomachs on participating

not be party to his death on Calvary, we will do worse. We will look right past him; we will forget what he did for us, as quickly as we forget about the palms we hold.

May this Palm Sunday be different for us. May the palms we hold help us understand what our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ demands of each of us. As we welcome the Christ of victory this Sunday, may we be just as welcoming of the Christ of suffering. As we embrace his message of love, may we also embrace his gospel of justice, humility and forgiveness.

May the palm we take home this Sunday remind us every day of Christ's promise that despite the many crosses in our lives, the many Good Fridays of lives, Easter morning always dawns. Let us never forget what he did for us and let us never stand by silently.

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Readings for March 16 Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Matthew 12:1-11; Isaiah 50:4-7;
Phil 2:6-11; Matthew 26:14-27

weekend, many will tuck these much sought after palms behind statues, car visors, and crucifixes to be forgotten until next year when they are burned for Ash Wednesday.

Our faith, our welcoming of Jesus into our lives, our living his Gospel message is similar to the palms we hold this Sunday. On holy days, family weddings and baptisms, our faith is fresh, strong and alive. But over time, when our faith begins to tug at our consciences, when we hear Jesus asking us to take up our own crosses, we soon discover our frailty. We cannot tuck

in the Passion of the Lord. We walk away from Palm Sunday and often have short-term memories of what Jesus did for each of us. He suffered terribly and died for us.

It's hard for us to fathom that many of the same people who waved palm branches to welcome him into Jerusalem will soon either be a party to his death or stand by silently as he is crucified. We think to ourselves, we can never let this horror happen again.

Of course, each of us who waves our palm branches this Sunday will

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