

Each week during the Lenten season, one of the members of the Cathedral family will be offering a reflection on the Gospel. As Lent is a time of preparation, we hope that you will consider discussing this reflection with your son each week as well all prepare for the joy of Easter.

2026 CHS Lenten Reflections: Palm Sunday

This Sunday, many parishes begin with an extra Gospel reading at a ritual preceding the mass, and during which people receive blessed palm leaves. The account from the Gospel of Matthew is read where we hear Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem: "Hosanna, the Son of David: blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest" (Mt 21:9) Later, during mass, we hear the full story of the Passion and Death of Jesus, but I will let Brother Halen share more on that next Friday.

Throughout Lent, we have heard the accounts of the many wonders and deeds that Jesus accomplished. We've heard of the compassion with which he treats those who yearn for God's love. And all the while, we've been challenged to believe: "whoever has ears ought to hear" (Mt 13:9).

I recently had a conversation with a student who has been struggling; academically, mostly with time management, and in some instances, behaviorally. In my conversation with him about his missing assignments, I was becoming increasingly frustrated by his exterior demeanor. It dawned on me that he'd probably had this same conversation before with other teachers and maybe even at home. It was a subtle realization but one that compelled me to change my own tone and demeanor.

I moved our conversation from my classroom to the hallway, lowered my voice, and asked him to do something he'd probably never been asked to do. I said, "See the world around you as a gift." Maybe, not every moment in life might be a gift we'd like but it remains a gift, nonetheless. I asked him if he would throw away an iPhone because it wasn't the best/latest one? He shook his head no. I reminded him that life is the same. We might not always get what we want, but if we choose to see what we receive as a gift, then our view of the world around us begins to change as well.

I think it's this new/renewed sight that becomes the collective challenge of the readings these past Sundays. Despite the world around them Jesus not only preaches, but demonstrates compassion and forgiveness for those who most need it. He notices their circumstances, recognizes their dignity, and Jesus heals them. And he asks on every occasion; *can you see the gift of life in front of you?*

And so, I ask us the same question: Can you see that gift in front of you? The gift that is your neighbor? If so, I would suggest, we begin to recognize the marvelous deeds and wonders that happen, all the time, in our lives and to others. We begin to treat others with the compassion that comes from God's incarnate love because we recognize one another's inherent dignity as children of God: a freely given gift of that very same God. If so, then we can picture ourselves this Sunday, amongst the multitude, yelling "Hosanna in the highest!" because we recognize the gift giver is perpetually in our midst. I encourage you to not lose sight of this in the days ahead.

Brother Rafa, '13

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