



Parent Pages

Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church*

* The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

Holy Week at Home: Palm Sunday

On Palm Sunday we recall Jesus' entry into Jerusalem

- Gather around the prayer table (a piece of purple cloth or purple paper on a small table will suffice)
- Light a candle
- From your family Bible, read Mark 11:1-10

When Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately on entering it, you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone should say to you, 'Why are you doing this?' reply, 'The Master has need of it and will send it back here at once.'" So they went off and found a colt tethered at a gate outside on the street, and they untied it. Some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They answered them just as Jesus had told them to, and they permitted them to do it. So they brought the colt to Jesus and put their cloaks over it. And he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out:

"Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come!

Hosanna in the highest!"

- Mark 11:1-10

Welcoming Jesus

- The people greet Jesus by waving palm branches. They lay their garments on the ground before him and sing "Hosanna". Can you imagine the excitement of the people as Jesus enters the city? As a family, we can reflect upon how we are also called to welcome Jesus, just as the crowd welcomed him into the city on that day. How can we welcome Jesus into our hearts today?



- When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowd spread cloaks on the road before him. To spread cloaks on the road was an ancient gesture of homage before a king. Homage means a special honor or respect is shown. How can I honor Jesus today? What can we do as a family to honor Him? Can we welcome him in song?
- In the Land of Israel, the palm trees were valued for their dignity, beauty, and for the shade they provided. The branches were used at special occasions to welcome royalty. Bring the palm branches home from your Church's celebration today. What is your family custom: to arrange the branches on your family table, to weave them through your home crucifix, cross, or other religious symbols or images that hang in your home.

Hosanna

- The word 'Hosanna' is found in both the Old Testament (Psalm 118) and in the New Testament (Mark 11:9, Matthew 21:9) It is a shout of praise, adoration, or joy. Make a Hosanna prayer card or a 'Hosanna' banner to hang near your family prayer table.
- Jesus entered Jerusalem and the people sing 'Hosanna to the King.' Where do we see Jesus' majesty in our home, in our community, in the world?
- Can you sing 'Hosanna'? Do you know any songs of praise and adoration? Can you say (or write) a prayer of praise to God? Older children may enjoy reading through the Psalms to find words of praise to God.

A Note to Parents about the Events of Holy Week

The Younger Child

When speaking to children about the events of Holy Week, we need to remember that Jesus' death and resurrection are two facts connected in time and are absolutely inseparable. In the atrium we do not speak about the death of Jesus without mentioning His resurrection. ("*Jesus died, but he is risen.*") They are considered one event. Death does not have the last word; in Jesus, Life has won forever. Life is stronger than death. We do not focus on the details of Jesus' suffering but lift up the death and resurrection as one event. The children come to know that Jesus conquered death with his cross and his resurrection. Jesus conquered death not only for himself but for everyone.

The Older Child

With the older child, we also want to lift up that the death and resurrection of Jesus as more than a momentary victory, but ushered in a new way of life for each of us. We live the death and resurrection of Jesus through our participation in the Sacraments. Look at your Church's bulletin and as a family, discuss how you will enter into the Paschal Mystery (life, death, and resurrection) of Jesus during Holy Week.