FATHER GARY PENNINGS

PASTOR'S CORNER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Since Ash Wednesday, we have been on a spiritual journey leading us to Holy Week, which begins today, Palm Sunday, as we recall Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. It was a day filled with great joy and a day on which Jesus' disciples must have had high hopes for the future. As we hear the passion narrative from the Gospel of Matthew, we realize that suddenly it all changed. Jesus was arrested, tried, and executed. Within a few days his disciples went from hopeful exuberance to grief-stricken fear.

The liturgies of Holy Week are a way of spiritually reliving these key moments in the life of Christ and the history of salvation. On Holy Thursday, at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, we will recall the institution of the Eucharist and the New Testament priesthood. We are reminded by the practice of washing feet that we are called to live the love to which the Eucharist testifies.

On Good Friday, we will hear the passion according to St. John. These passion narratives make very real the darkness of those last days and what Jesus, the incarnate Lord, endured in order that the greatest good could be achieved for us. We will have the opportunity to venerate the wood of the cross, "on which hung the Savior of the World." Good Friday was necessary so that Easter Sunday could come.

Finally, at the Easter Vigil, the first celebration of the resurrection, we rejoice in the victory that Christ won over death and how He restores life in the Resurrection. We baptize adults, welcome those joining the Church, and renew our own baptismal promises.

I invite you to take seriously these special days of the Church year that help us to encounter, in a profound way, the mystery of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. Avail yourself to the graces that Holy Week offers.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life,

Fr. Gary