

**Sunday, April 17, 2011**  
**Rev. Diane Monti-Catania**

## **Sermon**

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Palm Sunday is a day of great celebration in the life of the church. It commemorates the day that the people of Jerusalem recognized Jesus Christ as their King. After a brief three years of ministry, filled with miracles and lessons, Jesus, riding on a donkey, was acclaimed as the Messiah.

The disciples, the followers and the Pharisees finally got it. They all finally realized that this teacher, this rabbi, this humble carpenter, was in fact the Son of God. For those who had been waiting in hopeful expectation for a Messiah – their prayers had been answered. For those whose power was based on being able to control the people – their worst nightmare had come true.

Here among them was the Savior.

When the people lining the streets, waving their palms, cried “Hosanna” it meant “Savior,” “Save Me,” “Save Us.” When the leaders heard the joy and exaltation of the people, they knew that this man had to be destroyed. They began to formulate a strategy to put this King to death.

Next Sunday, Easter, we will again cry Alleluia – because the Son of God will overcome that death. But before Easter, we will live through this Holy week. We will watch praise turn to panic. We will be witnesses as people who felt hope surrender to fear.

Today we read the passion story to remind us – to help us remember - all of the events between this triumphant Sunday and next triumphant Sunday. The “Hosannas” and the “Alleluias” are real, but in between them are anguish, sorrow, brokenness and defeat. This is our story. This is our faith. Our lives follow this same pattern. We rejoice, we proclaim, we suffer, we reconcile, we forgive, we are resurrected.

This week, take time to remember.

Take a moment to reflect on the magnitude of this story. Sit quietly and think about Christ’s suffering and what it means to you.

Come, this week, and experience the Tenebrae service on Thursday night as we relive the events that lead up to Christ’s death.

Come, on Friday and reflect with us on the final words that Christ spoke from the cross.

Choose one as your prayer for the week.

*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

*Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.*

*Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother.*

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.*

*I thirst.*

*It is finished.*

*Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.*

Come, on Sunday to celebrate the joyous resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.