

I'm about to say something that might offend and shock some people: ***Palm Sunday is NOT about the palms!*** Now some might say, "Well Father then why is it called 'Palm Sunday'?!?" And I would respond by saying that the full, official title that the Church gives to this solemn liturgical day is "Palm Sunday of the ***Passion of the Lord.***" Therefore, today is ***not primarily*** about, "How many palms can I get?!" Rather today is all about calling to mind ***our own role*** in the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, the whole reason ***why*** we're given roles in the reading of the Passion today is not because we're putting on some Broadway show that's designed to entertain us! No, we participate in the reading of the Passion because we as individuals and as a collective human race are ***intimately involved*** in what happened to Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, ***we, in our sinfulness, are responsible for everything Jesus lovingly endured and suffered in His Passion and Death.***

Brothers and sisters, everything we just read ***actually, truly happened!*** This isn't some "dramatic Shakespearean play," but rather ***this is actual history!*** In the early half of the 1st century AD in what was

then Roman Palestine, the Son of the living God *willingly* descended into the depths of human darkness and evil: From the sham trial of the Sanhedrin which was rooted in pure hatred; to the self-centered political expediency of Pontius Pilate who shamefully sought to appease the blood-thirsty crowds; from all of the barbaric treatment of Jesus: the rejection, the mockery, the humiliation, the heinous torture, all leading to Jesus' graphic and painful death on a cross; *All of this horror—everything that Jesus freely endured and suffered* was *because of us* and *for us*—all in order to save us from our sins and give us eternal life.

Therefore, the only rational response to everything Jesus lovingly endured for us is a sincere love and gratitude that is *manifested* by a *serious, ongoing conversion of heart*. So as we prepare to worship and receive our crucified and risen Savior, Who *suffered so much for us*, let us praise and thank our Lord Jesus in sincere love and gratitude and *let us truly honor His ultimate sacrifice* by *turning away from the sins* that He suffered and died to save us from.