

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
COMPASS, PA

March 29, 2026 – PALM/PASSION SUNDAY, YR. A

The Rev. Dr. Nina George–Hacker

Homily: “*By His Wounds We Are Healed*”

Mark 11:1-11	(Jesus enters Jerusalem in triumph)
Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29	(Christ is the chief cornerstone which the builders have rejected)
Isaiah 50:4-9a	(A prophecy of Jesus' determination to stay the course)
Psalms 31:9-16	(The psalmist's prayer for God's mercy in his distress)
Philippians 2:5-11	(Christ emptied Himself so that His humility would be an example for us)
St. Mark 15:1-39	(The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the upper room to crucifixion)

The prophet Isaiah (53:7) tells us that Jesus “was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

For the followers of Christ, this text evokes a response deep within us when we understand that it applies to God Himself, as He came into the world in the Person of His Son, and how He died for every one of us. In the words of St. Peter (1 Pet. 1:8), “Although you have not seen him, you love him, and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.” Without this sincere love of Christ and experiencing the joy of our salvation, we are not His true followers. And we cannot say we fully love Him until we fully appreciate what He willingly suffered *for us*.*

After hearing the Passion Narrative there's no need to retrace in great detail the events there described. However, we might reflect on how Christ was no stranger to hardship, privation, and suffering, long before that final day of His life. “Being in the form of God,” as St. Paul says, from the moment He came to earth, Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,” becoming as we human beings are (Phil. 2:6f). He, the most high God, suffered the hardships of the poor, at times not even having a place to lay His head. He endured hunger and thirst, and after long days of being mobbed by crowds demanding deliverance and healing, He often spent entire nights alone in prayer on a hill top.

Despite Jesus' compassion for all who came to Him, He was met with hatred and rejection, in particular from the religious establishment—the Pharisees and priests, who planned to have him killed. How this rejection, mockery and hatred must have grieved our Lord. William Shakespeare's King Lear knew “How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child.” Imagine how Jesus must have felt at being rejected by the very people He had chosen.

The sweat-stained features of Jesus are the features of God. The forehead streaming with blood, the hands and feet nailed to the cross, the body wounded, the side pierced with a lance, were the flesh of the Eternal Word who dwelt among us. Why did he have to suffer so much?

In the words of Isaiah 53:5, the Good News Translation: “because of *our sins* he was wounded, beaten because of the evil *we did*. We are healed by the punishment *he suffered*, made whole by the blows *he received*.” Our salvation for which Christ suffered and died, and which He freely offers to us *at no cost*, brings healing and wholeness not only to our souls, but also to our hearts, minds, bodies, how we live our lives, and our relationships with others. For, as St. Paul testifies (2 Cor. 5:17-18, CEV), “Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new. God has done it all! He sent Christ to make peace between [God] and us, and He has given us the work of making peace between Himself and others.”

During this holiest of weeks, as we walk the way with Jesus toward the Cross and ultimately the empty tomb, may the grace of Christ's Passion bring all-encompassing healing to each and every one of us, and to all those we love and for whom we pray. *Amen*.

* Adapt. “29 March 2026 – Palm Sunday, (Passion Sunday) Years A, B, C,” [ACP](https://associationofcatholicpriests.ie/homily-resource/29-march-2026-palm-sunday-passion-sunday-years-a-b-c/), 29 March 2026 <https://associationofcatholicpriests.ie/homily-resource/29-march-2026-palm-sunday-passion-sunday-years-a-b-c/> 24 February 2026.