

Palm Sunday of the Passion (A)

March 29, 2026

“Spiritual Reading”

I have a confession to make: I’m not really into Holy Week this year, and the reason is probably obvious: I am focused on the Journey in Faith final plan. These seven sacred days are taking a back seat to the upcoming release of the full JIF plan, and I have many questions: Who will be my priest and parishioner neighbors? What is our future as a parish? An archdiocese? Will this plan really revitalize our Church?

While I should be looking forward to Easter Sunday, the high point of the Church’s liturgical year, I am actually looking forward Easter Friday, when the priests will gather in Reinbeck to see the final pastoral plan for the Journey in Faith, including pastorate groupings, number and location of Sunday Masses, and priest assignments. In some ways, I am just trying to get through Holy Week and Easter Week in order to learn about our future. You’re probably feeling the same way about the weekend of April 11 and 12, which can’t come soon enough.

What can be done? The words of Saint Paul can help. Paul tells us Jesus “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave”, etc. Jesus poured out his life for us, taking on a human nature without losing his divine nature, and giving his entire life on the cross for our salvation.

That’s the key to a rich and full Holy Week, to immerse ourselves and pour ourselves into the mysteries we are celebrating, by welcoming Jesus on Palm Sunday, confessing our sins, attending daily Mass and Stations one last time, celebrating the Eucharist and adoration on Holy Thursday, venerating the Cross and receiving Eucharist in Good Friday, and celebrating Easter next weekend. By participating as fully as possible in these mysteries, we can experience the richness of resurrection glory.

One practice that can help is spiritual reading. “Spiritual reading is an ancient tradition,” dating back to the day when monks copied manuscripts by hand. “The goal of spiritual reading,” one author says, “is to ignite the soul with a desire to grow in virtue and thus become the best-version-of-oneself” (Kelly, 129). It can help us grow holier.

Spending at least 15 minutes a day with the Scripture, one of “the great masters of spiritual writing,” or commentary on contemporary issues can feed our mind with insight and hopefully fill our heart with inspiration. One writer said, “Catholicism is not a set of lifeless rules and regulations”, but rather “a lifestyle” built on solid habits, and one solid habit is spiritual reading. It helps us keep our spiritual “North Star” in sight, and can change our lives.

As we begin Holy Week, let us keep our bulletin and a good spiritual book close, so we will experience new life, new inspiration, and receive new grace in these seven sacred days. I’ll do it. Will you join me? God bless you.