



## Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

**Palm Sunday**, as you may know, is also called **Passion Sunday** because we listen to the account of Jesus' trial, his way of the cross and his agonizing death. I'd like to highlight three things.

First the charge against Jesus - blasphemy. According to the Sanhedrin Jesus is only a human yet he makes himself out to be God. In *The Case for Jesus* Dr. Brant Pitre analyzes the significance of this charge and he asks a question we all have to face: Were the authorities correct? Is Jesus a blasphemer or is he truly God?

Second, Jesus' cry from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Dr. Pitre (in *The Case for Jesus*) considers this perplexing Bible verse and shows how we need to understand it in its original Jewish context. If you have puzzled about Jesus' apparent cry of despair, I encourage you to read *The Case for Jesus*.

Third, judgement. Throughout the Passion narrative people are judging each other. Some judge the woman who poured precious oil over Jesus. It could have been sold to help the poor, and they were infuriated with her. The crowds judge by preferring Barabbas to Jesus. "Crucify him," they shout. The chief priests for their part judge Jesus by mocking him.

Judgment is often misguided and cruel but that does not mean we should be like Pilate. He avoided responsibility by cynically asking, "What is truth?"

I give the last word to Bishop Minder, "As Christians we believe that Golgotha is not the end, but the Risen Lord will have the final word at the Last Judgment." Yes, Jesus' suffering is a living reality, but not the last word. Take home a blessed palm. It represents victory. That's our goal. "The Risen Lord will have the final word."

Have a Blessed Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord!

*Fr. Rafal Ligenza*

St. Joseph Parish Administrator