

## Palm Sunday

**Matthew 26:39.** He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.”



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St. John Parish is deeply entwined in our family life. We could never think of going anywhere else because this faith family is such a part of us. Our involvement didn't happen overnight. It was a journey. This parish has been a blessing to us.

My first thought as I read this Scripture passage was of Christ in the garden. He knows what is coming next. When I'm faced with stress, this passage reminds me that Christ was human, too. I know that whatever situation I'm in, Christ has experienced those human feelings and I know that there is nothing to fear. Obviously, God is perfect and all-powerful and yet at the same time he understands my weaknesses, and knows them because he was human here on earth.

I'm also reminded of the importance of prayer in troubled times. When something bad happens, the first thing we want to do is find someone and complain about it. We say, "Oh, man, I don't need this right now. Why is this happening to me? This is terrible." Christ could have done that, too. Instead he fell prostrate in prayer and prayed to his Father. This is a good reminder to me. When faced with difficulties and challenges, the first thing we need to do is pray. Go right to God.

Anything is possible with God. Jesus asked that his cup of suffering be taken from him if it was possible. He put it in the Father's hands, but at the same time he understood that if his suffering was the will of the Father, he would endure it. I need to remember that I don't always know the will of God and God knows what is best for us. No matter what I want, or what I think, God's will must be done. I may not understand it now. I may never understand it. I have to let my faith in God prevail. In the end, God is right and God knows what we need. This lesson has been particularly difficult for me.

There have been many things in my life that I've come to accept that I didn't want to do at first. As much as I would like, it's not all about me! I have to ask myself what God's will is in this situation. Will I do what God wants, or will I do what I want?

My wife and I have been getting more involved in the Pro-Life Movement. I value life and have children, but I didn't know that thousands of babies are dying every day. When we finally stand before God, he will ask us what we did about that. I had to admit that my answer to God would be, "Nothing." That realization led me to be involved in this program. I was very uncomfortable in the beginning. I wondered whether people would think I was crazy, out in the middle of Detroit or Flint saying the rosary. I prayed for a long time about this, even though in my heart I knew I should get involved. I tried to tell God that I didn't want to do this, but in my prayer I found the strength and courage to do it; to give testimony to the holiness of human life.

The same was true with Natural Family Planning. I had never heard of it before even though I had gotten married in the Catholic Church. Then my wife went to one of the classes. I wasn't really open about it. I knew it was one of the teachings of the church, but I didn't understand it. Initially I didn't want anything to do with it. I thought, "This is weird!" I was very closed off to it. Through prayer I realized that I should take a look at it. Over time we even began to share our story. God gave me the courage to do it, even though I really fought him hard! If I had only paid attention to my will, I would never have gone to one of the classes or listened to one of the CDs. Being open to God working through me allowed me to do his will.

Tithing is another example. Early on, I thought, "Wow, that's a lot of money. How can we afford to give up that much?" But, eventually we started to tithe and God has always provided. We have a car to drive and a roof over our heads. Eventually I realized that we have a responsibility to give back to the church. I prayed to "let this cup pass, or really, let the basket pass!" and I fought it for a long time. Jesus speaks about money quite often in the bible, and God is asking for a portion of that income. I resisted that for a long time. I came up with a lot of excuses for not tithing. Again, not as I will, but as God wills. It's worked out a whole lot better than I could have imagined.

I look at what I have now and I know that I'm the luckiest guy in the world. Trusting in God, putting my discomfort and my doubt in the hands of the Lord was difficult in the beginning. Over time, it just gets easier and easier.

*If you would like further information with regard to Pregnancy Services or Natural Family Planning, or the Familia Program, please contact the parish offices at 653-2377.*

*Explore the diverse ministries of our parish and decide which one is right for you!*

*Please join us for the liturgies of the Sacred Triduum.*