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PALM SUNDAY

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault
(Fontgombault, March 29th, 2026)

Vexilla Regis prodeunt.
The standard of the King advances.
(Hymn at Vespers during Passiontide)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
My dearly beloved Sons,

THE SOLEMN MASS of Palm Sunday opens the Holy Week, the Great Week, as it was called in the fourth century, the Sorrowful Week. What inner and outer dispositions can we implore at the threshold of this week, during which the various stages of Our Lord's Passover will be fulfilled one by one?

From the Saturday before the first Sunday in Passiontide, the Church has been singing at Vespers the hymn *Vexilla Regis*:

The standard of the King advances,
Behold the resplendent mystery of the Cross,
In which the Creator of all flesh
Was nailed to the gallows in His own flesh...
Over the nations, God reigns through the wood...
Hail, O Cross, our only hope...

These lines, written in the darkest days of human history, bear witness to a victory: God reigns. What is more, the standard of the King advances. Throughout the ages, from the creation of the world to its end, God has never retreated. His reign advances, marked by the victories represented by each act of charity. There lies the truly significant history of humanity. The death and resurrection of the Lord is undoubtedly the culmination of this

story. But every act performed by the most overlooked, the most insignificant person, is not overlooked by God. It is weighty.

The situation in the world, the situation in our own country, which deems it wise, while the dead are piling up as a consequence of wars, to engage in the diabolical spiral of the adoption of euthanasia, can lead us to despair.

How many hours of our own lives come back to us and accuse us. Nevertheless, let us never be discouraged.

Following Christ through His Passion is not without risk, and may even seem too demanding. Wasn't it St. Peter, the leader of the apostles, destined to become the first pope, who abandoned Him?

Let nothing turn us away from following Christ! Following Christ to the end, means learning to rise again, to be resurrected with Christ. Our miseries and our sins are not an insurmountable obstacle, if we call upon God's inexhaustible mercy. Then God advances in our lives, and we walk with Him. This is our hope for ourselves, for those near us, and for the world.

Let us draw more than ever in these days upon the graces that the Lord has obtained for us through his Cross. Let us especially ask for the grace of holy confessions in preparation for a holy Easter.

Let us also live these days with Mary. *Stabat Mater*. She stood by the Cross. She stood in hope, she whose faith never wavered. She stood upright, pondering all things in her heart.

O Mother, fount of love, let me feel the violence of thy suffering...

May my heart burn with love for Christ, my God...

May I be wounded by His wounds,
may I become intoxicated by the Cross,
and by the blood shed by thy Son.

Amen.

