

The faithful yesterday marked Palm Sunday, which commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem and marks the start of Holy Week.

BY MONITOR TEAM

Christians across the country yesterday thronged their churches holding palm leaves to celebrate Palm Sunday. They held palms to represent the story of people greeting Jesus when he arrived in Jerusalem.

Palm Sunday marks the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem ahead of his crucifixion and the start of Holy Week, leading up to Easter. It welcomes Christians into the Holy Week before Good Friday and Easter Sunday, celebrated as the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Clerics in several churches across the country urged Christians to pray for peace in the world despite the difficulties they are facing.

The Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Mbarara, Rev Fr Serverinus Ndugwa, who celebrated mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Cathedral, Nyamitanga, tasked Christians to pray for peace in the world.

"Let us put in our prayers for Israel, where they will not be able to celebrate this occasion because of war. Let us pray for peace in our country and the rest of the world to stop bloodshed and love one another," he said.

Fort Portal Catholic Diocese Bishop Robert K. Muhirwa asked Christians to reflect on the value of the palms they hold while celebrating Palm Sunday.

"We have blessed these palms with holy water. I urge you to understand their value and importance. When you leave here, keep them in your homes where you can see them throughout the year and be reminded. They are like a trophy a team wins, a sign of victory for us through Jesus Christ," he said.

Our Lady of Assumption Kasere Cathedral, Rev Fr Clement Masereka, who led the mass, asked Christians to be holy. "As Roman Catholic faith believers, in this Holy week, remember to go for penance to cleanse your body and soul to resurrect with Christ," he said.

In Ibanda, Fr Eladius Tailo, the Bubaare Catholic Parish Priest, urged Christians to be holy and humble. "It is a journey of our faith, and Jesus sent his disciples to bring him a donkey, which he used to enter Jerusalem. Back then, people used donkeys, and even us whenever we plan journeys, we use expensive cars. Let us open our hearts for Jesus to enter and bring peace," he said.

Rev Fr Romanos Etwap of St Immaculate Conception Soroti Catholic Church urged Christians to have compassion.

At Kings Church in Kabale Town, Fr Benedicto Mubangizi asked Christians to draw closer to God. "In case of frustrations, don't lose hope. Keep trusting in God, and you will succeed. Use the Holy Week to pray for the sick, poor, old age, and the souls of the innocently killed in acts of conflict and hatred," he said.

Clerics rally Christians on peace, forgiveness



Rev Canon Rebecca Nyegenye, the dean at All Saints Cathedral Kampala, in Nakasero (Kampala City) prays for the faithful during a Palm Sunday service yesterday. PHOTO/STEPHEN OTAGE



The faithful attend Palm Sunday Mass at Christ the King Church in Kampala. PHOTO/ GEOFFREY MUTUMBA

At St Peter's Gisoro Catholic Church in Kisoro Municipality, parish priest Fr Alfonso Mbabazi called on the Christians to reject betrayal and greed for money to live peacefully.

"Judas Iscariot was a close friend, a disciple, and the trusted treasurer who witnessed miracles firsthand, yet he ended up selling his friendship with Jesus for 30 pieces of silver," Fr Mbabazi said.

At All Saints Atiri Church of Uganda in the Bukedi Diocese, the parish priest, Rev Nicodemus Ekisa, tasked Christians to use the day to repent from their sins and be born again.

"Palm Sunday is not a normal day but comes with praise and humility must come from a heart that recognises Jesus's servant king nature, not a merry spectacle," he said.

Rev Aloini Mwisaka, the assistant vicar of St Andrew's Cathedral in Mbale City, urged believers to love one another and stop wish-

ABOUT HOLY WEEK

During Holy Week, Christians remember the story of Jesus' life leading up to his crucifixion when he died on the cross. It begins with Palm Sunday and goes on to Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The day after Holy Saturday is Easter Sunday, which commemorates when Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead.

ing others harm.

"You find people fighting others to block their promotion in public offices, forcing some to pay bribes before securing jobs. Please stop that and wish your neighbours well," he said.

At Kitovu Cathedral, Masaka Diocese Bishop Severus Jumba rallied the faith-

ful to refrain from engaging in witchcraft and other evil acts that undermine the purpose of God's love for humans.

In Jinja City, Rev Peter Ekadu, while preaching at Christ Church Cathedral Bugembe, emphasised that Christians should accept Jesus Christ in their life.

"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved," he said.

Rev Andrew Gulumaire, the Vicar of Nabukalu Parish and Youth and ICT coordinator East Busoga Diocese, said Christians need to have faith amid challenges as Jesus did.

In Jinja Diocese, Christians were told to reflect and rediscover the values of humility, peace, love, and hope.

"On Passion Sunday, as Christ began His journey of sacrifice, let us embrace reconciliation and urge nations like Iran and Israel to pursue peace," Fr Ben Wakabi, the Kamuli Catholic Parish Priest, said.

In Lango Sub-region, the Parish Priest of Apac Catholic Parish, Rev Fr John Baptist Aliigi, urged Christians to actively engage in prayer and acts of kindness as they begin the solemn journey of Holy Week.

At Rubaga Cathedral in Kampala City, Fr Marvin Lukyamuzi, an assistant Cathedral administrator, called on believers to reflect on the values demonstrated by Jesus Christ, particularly His humility and selflessness, culminating in His death on the cross.

"The donkey represents simplicity, peace, and humility, values that Christians should embody in their daily lives. The Lent season is a time for spiritual cleansing, calling on them to abandon vices such as envy, corruption, witchcraft, ego, laziness, and fornication even beyond this season," he said.

Fr Lukyamuzi also addressed the youth, cautioning them against the misuse of social media platforms such as TikTok. Instead, he encouraged them to use their time to strengthen their faith through reading the Bible and engaging in meaningful spiritual practices.

At Christ the King Church in Kampala, Rev Fr Vicent Mubiru, urged Christians to emulate the pain of Jesus Christ on the cross on Good Friday, to forgive, repent, and do well to Christians for God's blessings.

"Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross," he said.

At All Saints' Cathedral Kampala, the dean, Rev Canon Rebecca Nyegenye, challenged Christians to confront sin in society and actively spread the gospel, especially in urban areas.

"These days, even people claiming to be Christians still perform rituals such as sacrificing animals and human beings to cleanse new cars or to bless ancestors for their construction projects, and in the end, they are not getting satisfaction from such projects they have heavily invested in," Rev Nyegenye said.

Compiled by Felix Ainebyoona, Jovita Kyarisiima, Alex Ashaba, Moureen Bira, Susan Nanjala, Robert Muhereza, Julius Hafasha, Fred Wambede, Joseph Omollo, Felix Warom Okello, Patrick Okaba, Clement Aluma, Rachel Adidi, Robert Elema Dan Wandera, Enock Matovu, Gertrude Mutyaba, Opio Sam Caleb, Santo Ojok, Denis Edema, Sylvia Namagembo, David Walugembe & Stephen Otage.

A woman prays at the Rubaga Cathedral. PHOTO/ IBRAHIM KAVUMA