



PALM SUNDAY

Holy Week (Wielki Tydzień) begins on Palm Sunday, which is a commemoration of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. High Mass features a reading of Christ's Passion. On this day palms are blessed, taken home, and placed behind the crucifix or holy images. Since palms grow in the tropics, not in Poland, two varieties of substitute palms are used: pussy willows, and so-called "Wilno palms," which are rings of colorful flowers wrapped around a stick in bands.

Zofia Kossak described Palm Sunday thus:

"On Palm Sunday, every Polish church blossoms with bunches of willow, larch, huckleberries, and boletus as if whole groves descended to the temples to pay homage to the Savior. The willow branches studded with white catkins— that is the Polish palm, graceful and humble. When spring is early, and Easter late, the pussy willow catkins are no longer white, but yellow, strewing a sweet-smelling gold dust. On leaving church after the services, one should swallow several of the blessed catkins. Soft, shaggy, and passing down the larynx with difficulty the treatment is worth the bother, since it protects the throat from disease during the year"