

## Sermon for Palm Sunday 2017

Palm Sunday - the day we commemorate the Lord's entry into Jerusalem - the solemn entrance into Holy Week. Throughout Lent, we have been preparing for this week and the great mystery of Easter.

Today in faith we stand together with Jesus ready to enter the most sacred moment of his life and as his followers we follow in his footsteps. In faith we are with him and "partake" of the Cross that is ahead, and we "share" with him in the Resurrection.

In the readings today we are being prepared for the tumultuous time ahead. They offer comfort, prayer for deliverance from enemies, spiritual direction and the assurance that the prophecies of God's promise of salvation for creation, are being fulfilled.

We are comforted by Isaiah in words that speak to us about the prophet who will sustain the weary with a word. The prophet who trusts and obeys God, regardless of persecution.

A little further on we hear the necessity for such an obedient servant, for the future salvation that is God's promise, is *firmer than the created order*.

The psalm prays for deliverance from enemies. It is an individual lament, with strong affirmations of trust, for God is the source of stability and protection.

In the epistle, Paul directs us to put on the "mind of Christ." To live in the self-emptying love that is all about humility, trust and obedience. In effect what this means is to live in awareness that God is with us always – flowing out through us in the way self-emptying love would feed the hungry, clothe the naked and have compassion for the poor.

In Matthew's gospel the writer quotes from the Old Testament prophet Zechariah who prophesied about the coming of the last king who would be a true prince of peace.

The true king will come not on a warhorse but on a donkey.

He would not be fitted out with the trappings of majesty and the banners of victory, but greeted with the waving of palm branches and piles of dusty garments.

And so here we are today, watching and waiting to follow at the gates of Jerusalem. It is a thought that can play on our minds for Jerusalem was the symbol of the most powerful place of biblical lore.

It represented the historical, emotional, and spiritual centre of the Hebrew faith. It was the location of the first and second temples. It was the seemingly un-breach-able powerhouse of the religious culture of the day.

And look here comes the one we are to follow - Jesus riding on a donkey in the power of humility, trust and self-giving obedient love to celebrate the Passover, which for us, is to become the first Mass.

One force of power coming in contact with another. Both very different and both uncompromising.

Jesus was not overtaken by the crowd and their welcome – he knew that to complete God’s mission there was going to be one almighty clash when he and the religious leaders of the day came together in Jerusalem.

A big bang we might call it – and what would burst forth from this explosive event was the new creation – what would burst forth from this big bang was a new unity in creation: non duality, reconciling love, healing, mercy, and compassion.

A new heart to humanity, both on the individual and the collective planes.

But we can’t get ahead of ourselves here.

We have to go through the days ahead that lie before us.

We need, to go step by step in Holy Week and not neglect to meditate at some depth as we go.

On Maundy Thursday we celebrate together the first mass of the Easter triduum, on Good Friday we stand at the foot of the cross bringing our own sin, suffering, and death.

And, finally, on Easter Sunday we rise with him.

Hope has conquered all evil and the human person is redeemed through the cross of Christ.

It is an incredible journey in just a few days! But it is the journey from death to life, from despair to hope.

It is the most important journey the faithful will ever take.

The Lord be with you.

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