

## **Palm Sunday: “Enter with Jesus to Save the World**

A little boy was sick on a Palm Sunday and stayed home from church with his mother. His father returned from church holding a palm branch. The little boy was curious and asked, “Why do you have that palm branch, dad?” “You see, when Jesus came into town, everyone waved Palm Branches to honor him, so we got Palm Branches.” The little boy replied, “Hmmm...The one Sunday I missed, and Jesus shows up”.

All the four evangelists take notice of this passage of Christ’s riding in triumph into Jerusalem, five days before his death; the Passover was on the fourteenth day of the month, and this was the tenth day; on which day the law appointed that the paschal lamb should be taken up (Ex. 12:3), and set apart for that service; on that day, Christ our Passover Lamb, who was to be sacrificed for us, was publicly showed by His triumphant entry... but how?

### **1. Pride vs Humility**

The kings enter triumphally on their horse; but Jesus enters on a donkey. He was not lacking in dignity. He received all the honor from the people.

a. Garments – the people spread their garments on the streets; cloth on the donkey, instead of saddle on a horse.

b. Branches: Others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way, as they used to do at the feast of tabernacles, in token of liberty, victory, and joy;

c. Hosanna:(jubilation) The crowd calls out Hosanna, which means "save now!"; the crowd openly gives Jesus the titles appropriate for the Messiah. (Ps. 118:25- 26) Fulfills the prophecy of **Zech.9:9**

### **2. Horse vs Donkey:**

Horses were kept only by great men; sign of pride, used for race and for war. Not to carry burdens; but a symbol of conquest. [Note: in Rev. 19:11-21 Jesus comes on a white horse in triumph to judge] Christ could have summoned a cherub to carry him or legions of angels accompany him [Mt. 26: 53].

But here he entered using a colt, a beast of burden; a beast of humility; a beast of travel of the people. What did the colt think of all of this? Did she think the celebration was for her?

The colt was excited & having enjoyed the pleasure and pride on Palm Sunday, wanted to show himself to the people, next day; he thought they would welcome him; but they didn't notice him. He told them "Throw your garments down," "Don't you know who I am?" He went to the market place and asked, "Where are the palm branches, etc.?" The people stoned the colt. Hurt & confused, the colt returned home to his mother. Shared everything. "Foolish child," she said gently. "Don't you realize that without Him, you are just an ordinary donkey?" Stupid are those who spread the good news of

Jesus and expect to receive glory themselves. The glory should go to Jesus.

We are just the donkey in our families, in our work place; in our world. We are people called to serve and carry one another's burden. "Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself". [Gal. 6:2-3]. Jesus came to carry our burdens [Is 53:4]; he was a suffering servant. He was humble and never opened His mouth [1<sup>st</sup> Reading].

### 3. Jesus Vs Man:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> readings [Phil. 2: 6-11] tells today, Jesus, though in the form of God... emptied and humbled Himself and took the form of slave... and died on the cross; therefore, God has exalted him; and honored him. **Romans 12:3** "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Sadhu, Sundar Singh, a great Christian of India, was asked if he was influenced by the honor his friends gave him. He said, "When Jesus entered Jerusalem, many people spread their clothing and palm branches on the street in honor of the Lord. Jesus was riding, as the prophets foretold, on a donkey. In this way the feet of Jesus did not touch the street adorned with clothes and branches, but instead the donkey walked over them. It would have been very stupid of the donkey if she had imagined that she was very important. It was not for her that the people threw their clothes on the streets."

Just like the donkey who carried Jesus in Jerusalem, we are most fulfilled when we are in the service of Jesus Christ. Without him, all our best efforts are like "filthy rags" (**Isaiah 64:6**) and amount to nothing. When we lift up Christ, however, we are no longer ordinary people, but key players in God's plan to redeem the world.

Do you know why some people do not attend Mass but hop different churches? Because, their favorite donkey wasn't here singing. Their favorite donkey wasn't here celebrating Mass or preaching. They think more of the donkey than they think of the rider. Too many people who go by the name "Christian" base their decisions on the donkey and not its rider. Jesus is the same everywhere! Enter with Jesus; and you will carry Jesus to the world.

Brothers and sisters, as we have begun the Holy Week, ***let our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds.*** Choose each day to open yourself to the beauty of God's grace. Open your heart completely to His mercy and as you are filled with His love God himself will reveal opportunities for you to share His love with others; to carry Him to our neighbors.