



Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday begins our Holy week, the celebration of the Paschal mystery of Christ, the climax of the history of salvation and the greatest of the Christian feasts. Pope John Paul II wrote: “What God accomplished in Creation and wrought for His people in the Exodus has found its fullest expression in Christ’s life, Death and Resurrection, though its definitive fulfilment will not come until the Parousia, when Christ returns in glory” (Dies Domini, n18).

The Passion reading from the Gospel of Mark deepens our understanding of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection. Why did the priests and the Pharisees plot to get rid of Jesus? Mark makes it clear that these men were motivated by hatred, jealousy and insecurity. They were trying to pose as devout religious men but Jesus exposed them as hypocrites. What they do is not for God’s glory but their own selfishness. At the same time the people were disappointed because Jesus did not do what they expected i.e. to free them from the domination of the Roman empire.

With Palm Sunday, we celebrate the beginning of our liberation from sin and death by uniting our lives to Christ crucified. We need to see Him not as a powerful and domineering king, who will show forth power and strength, but He is a gentle and humble king, who is willing to suffer for others. Mark tells us plainly that though Jesus showed himself as Son of God by his miracles, it was through obedience to the Father, dying the death of a criminal that he proved himself as the Son (15:39).

During the Holy week, we recall the stages of Christ’s passing from this world. It is a solemn passage through loneliness, betrayal, injustice and brutal suffering. It is a movement from life to death. We are invited to accompanying Christ on his final journey, bearing our own crosses, embracing our own loneliness, depression and struggle in faith with complete trust in the presence of God.

