

# Palm Sunday

When Jesus and his disciples drew near to Jerusalem,  
to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives,  
he sent two of his disciples and said to them,  
"Go into the village opposite you,  
and immediately on entering it,  
you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat.  
Untie it and bring it here.  
If anyone should say to you,  
'Why are you doing this?' reply,  
'The Master has need of it  
and will send it back here at once.'"  
So they went off  
and found a colt tethered at a gate outside on the street,  
and they untied it.  
Some of the bystanders said to them,  
"What are you doing, untying the colt?"  
They answered them just as Jesus had told them to,  
and they permitted them to do it.  
So they brought the colt to Jesus  
and put their cloaks over it.  
And he sat on it.  
Many people spread their cloaks on the road,  
and others spread leafy branches  
that they had cut from the fields.  
Those preceding him as well as those following kept crying out:  
"Hosanna!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come!  
Hosanna in the highest!"

Mk 11:1-10

How many people make a crowd? How many people greeted Jesus when he was entering Jerusalem that year? Was it dozens? Hundreds? Maybe thousands? They were there because they heard about the great new teacher. They were probably grateful for the healings and miracles, for good words, for a moment of emotion or inspiration. They might have thought these were the opening days of some new prophet. Some of them hoped that he was the Messiah, but none of them really understood the meaning of that title.

This scene feels familiar: a very human decorum for a very human event. Jesus was humbly riding on a donkey, and the people were happy. They had no idea that the event in which they were participating was much, much bigger.

The Son of God enters the Holy City to rebuild the covenant with his Father. The son of the owner of the vineyard comes to comfort the tenants. The servant of Yahweh enters

Jerusalem to be sacrificed, like a lamb, and through his death to liberate the people in darkness and to guide them into the promised New Land.

All biblical images, all prophecies, all miracles, and all the stories that shaped and guided the people of Israel, through hundreds of years, are coming to fulfillment. There is more than Israel here however. What really happens is larger: a tired, wounded, exhausted humanity is brought to life by the radical action of God's love. Life that was lost is restored by the obedient love of the Son.

It is impossible to grasp events of such magnitude. We simply don't have the tools or the experiences to connect to the actions of God. In the same way, we are not capable of detecting and seeing the reaction of the whole creation. None of us lives in the presence of such enormous energies and gigantic events. The Creator enters and redeems His creation; the loving Father is looking for His children; the Good Shepherd searches for the lost sheep; and I am in danger of not noticing any of this.

How can I be with Him? How can I walk by His side? What should I do when they are crucifying my Lord?

I will follow the example of the people of Jerusalem. I will carry the palm and follow the donkey. I will follow all the human gestures, all the words, and all the rites of this great week, and I will let Him speak to me in His own way. I will try to allow my heart to become a place where He can stay. I will ask Him to reveal to me the endless magnitude of the Father's love.