

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion  
March 19-20, 2016 Year "C"

What does the Church expect of us this Palm Sunday, this Holy Week? Does this feast mean something more to Christians than a recurring annual custom, a simple custom of providing palms to be placed behind your crucifix, beautiful as that custom may be? After all, these branches will dry out within just a few hours after Mass. In an ancient Palm Sunday homily from the 8<sup>th</sup> century, we read:

So let us spread before his feet, not garments or soulless olive branches, which delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but ourselves, clothed in his grace, or rather, clothed completely in him. We who have been baptized into Christ must ourselves be the garments that we spread before him.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus knew what was in store for him as he entered Jerusalem. He did so in such utter humility; this was no Red Carpet march into the Oscars. Still, it is painful, for Easter Sunday must be preceded by Good Friday.

Through the Cross, and only through the Cross, the gates of the Kingdom will be opened. If today then, we join with the jubilant crowd and shout our Hosanna to the Messiah, let us seriously remember that as Christians, we know only One Lord, one King, one Messiah, who was rejected by all—including us—and who alone knows and opens the path to the Kingdom.

Some mock our Savior or our Church, but as angry as we may become in seeing this, we mustn't forget that Jesus came to die for them too. As the Gospels relate: "He will not cry out or raise His voice, nor make His voice heard in the street."

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<sup>1</sup>St. Andrew of Crete, sermon in Office of Readings for Palm Sunday

Let us pray for the courage to accompany the Lord on that long path this week. Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now; but you shall follow afterward.” Lord, help our hearts to be ready whenever you call.