

Palm Sunday: Triumphant Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem

And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them: *Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her; loose them and bring them to Me, and if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go.* Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Zion: Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way: and the multitudes that went before and that followed cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

The Gospel according to St Matthew, XXI:1-9.

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow upon the gospel of the day, and we will consider: first, why Jesus enters triumphantly into Jerusalem, knowing that He is going there in order to be crucified; second, what are the characteristics of His triumph. We will then make the resolution: first, to renew our love of the good pleasure of God, even when He crucifies us; second, to perform our communions better, by joyfully receiving Jesus within us as a conqueror who comes to take possession of our heart. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of the prophet: "*Say to the daughter of Zion: Behold thy King cometh to thee, full of meekness*" (Matt. XXI:5).

Meditation for the Morning

Let us transport ourselves in spirit before the Saviour entering Jerusalem in triumph; let us join ourselves to the people who acclaim Him, and let us say with them, "*Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.*" (Matt. XXI:9)

WHY JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM IN TRIUMPH

It is a very strange circumstance that Our Lord, who all His life long has flown from glory and splendour, to bury Himself in obscurity, accepts the honours of a triumph with all its demonstrations of public esteem, and that on the eve of His death, when He perfectly well knows that He is about to be crucified. Whence comes this difference in His conduct? Why accept today what He had always hitherto refused? It was: first, that He desired to show us how He loved the will of His Father. His whole life employed in praising Him, had doubtless been splendid homage rendered to His adorable will; but a solemn opportunity presents itself of carrying this perfect love up to the point of the most sublime heroism. His Father asks of Him the

sacrifice of His liberty, of His honour, of His life. O my Father, behold Me, He exclaims, I come to fulfil Thy commands. I come not with the patience which resigns itself, but with the joy which triumphs, to show the world how amiable is Thy will, above all when it crucifies, Thy good pleasure, ravishing above all when it immolates. Second, Jesus triumphs because He is about to give us the two greatest proofs of His love; the one at the Supper, in establishing the sacrament of His love; the other on Calvary, in dying for us. For a long period He had desired the one and the other with incredible ardour (Luke XXII:15; Ibid. XII:50). The moment so long desired has come, so much happiness is well worth a triumphal progress. Going to the Supper, it is a good Father who comes, His heart overwhelmed with joy, to leave to His children the most magnificent inheritance; going to Calvary, it is a Saviour King who is going to wage war against the infernal powers, the world, the flesh, and sin. It will cost Him all the blood which flows in His veins, even His very life, but it does not signify. He will save us at that price. He is glad, that is why He triumphs. Oh, who is there that will not bless this divine Conqueror, and that will not cry with all the people: "*Hosanna to the Son of David!*" Third, Jesus triumphs in order to teach us the value of the cross and of sufferings. The world makes happiness to consist in enjoyments which pass away, in honours which fade. In order to disabuse it Jesus took flight when the people wanted to make Him king (John VI:15). He withdrew into a place apart when He willed to transfigure Himself, and when He was offered enjoyments He stole away from them; but when there was a question of being humiliated and suffering, **Arise, let us go!** He exclaims (Matt. XXVI:46), the cross awaits Me; it is My glory. I will go in triumph to seek it, I will bear it on My shoulders as the prophet hath said (Is. IX:6). A beautiful example which has made twelve millions of martyrs hasten to death, singing canticles of joy! How, after that, can we place our glory in reputation, our felicity in pleasure, our shame in humiliation, instead of saying with the Apostle: "*I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ*" (II Cor. XII:10).

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRIUMPH OF JESUS CHRIST

First, it was a triumph which was humble and full of meekness; Daughters of Zion, says the prophet, thy King comes to thee in a poor and humble condition (Zach. IX:9), but with ravishing goodness and inexpressible sweetness (Matt. XXI:5). He is so humble that He has chosen the poor and children to sing His praises; He is so meek that He treats the proud Pharisees with the utmost gentleness when they ask Him to make the multitude cease their acclamations. It was by His poor and simple humility, by His meekness always full of complaisance, that the King of kings is recognised, and it is by these characteristics that His disciples also ought to be known. Second, the triumph of the Saviour is emblematic of the dispositions with which we ought to receive Him when He comes by Holy Communion, triumphing with love, into our hearts. The raiments laid on the ground beneath His feet are a type of the laying down of the bad habits with which our soul is, as it were, covered. The branches of trees strewed on the ground symbolise the retrenchment of the thousand desires, the attachments, and the self-will, of which Our Saviour asks the sacrifice. The palms which the people carry represent the victories which we ought to obtain over our passions, and which we ought to offer to the Saviour at every communion. Lastly, the cries of triumph with which the air resounds

are the symbol of the holy transports with which we ought to receive Him at His arrival in our hearts. Are these the dispositions we bring to our communions?

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.