



Meditation for the 27th and 28th March 2021

Palm Sunday

The Gospel according to John 12: 12-16

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him.

It is a few days from Passover. The crowd is there, waiting to celebrate this feast that commemorates the escape from slavery, the freeing of their people. Learning that Jesus is coming, they will find a way to honour him, to cry out their admiration, their joy, their thanks. Is he not the Christ, coming this day to bring new freedom, to set them free from the occupying Roman empire?

As is the custom in their country, they acclaim him with palm branches.

In this week before Easter, Jesus comes to be with us in «our Jerusalem»: that place where we are called to remember those times in our lives we too have been set free.

Today, from what do you want to be set free?

If you can't join a ceremony and receive your palm there, find a symbolic object for yourself (a branch, a flower...) to tell Jesus of your admiration, your pride in being one of his friends...

They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!"

"Hosanna !" shouts the crowd as they see Jesus. That can be translated as "salvation has come". It is a cry of joy that comes from the heart: hope has come, a future is possible! All those he welcomed, all those he healed, know of the power of Jesus' salvation. Remember Zacchaeus when Jesus said to him: "today, salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19, 1 – 10) and Bartimaeus whose sight is restored with these words: "Go, your faith has saved you" (Mark 10: 46 – 52). And the woman with the perfume who receives this word of life: "Your faith has saved you, go in peace". (Luke 7, 36 – 49). And many more besides....

In this complicated year, what is your "Hosanna", that cry that comes from the heart?

Where do you find your hope?

How can your future "open up" before you?

At this end of the season of Lent, find a way to make a gesture of solidarity with a charity or a person in need, either with a gift, or some time or attention given... in order to "open up a future" for them.

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

The people want a king who can free them and save them. Jesus will not shirk from this. He doesn't correct the crowd who acclaims: "Blessed be the King of Israel." Neither will he ride the wave of popularity. With the ride he chooses, the young donkey, he alters the expectation of the people who have come to acclaim him. The prophet Zechariah gave him this gesture (Zech 9, 9). The king God gives his people is a humble one, vulnerable and bereft of a halo. His only power is that of the gift of tenderness, his attention given to the poor, to the sick and to those who mourn. "Do not be afraid, daughter Zion" says the prophet Zechariah. Do not be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Do not be afraid, people of Brussels or of elsewhere. Here is the Lord God who comes towards you on his young donkey...

Today God invites us to trust by joining him in choosing simplicity and clarity.

Are you ready to enter into Holy Week in this way? What do you wish to reply to God?

End this prayer time with your schedule for the week. How can you transform this week to come into a Holy Week? What will your important spiritual times be? Where? With whom? How?

Sr. Anne Peyremorte