

Reflection for Palm Sunday

The gospels state clearly that Jesus was very conscious of the purpose of his final journey to Jerusalem and was all too aware of the suffering and death which he would experience there. Today, in the year of St. Matthew, both the account of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and the account of his Passion are taken from that gospel. Long before the events of Palm Sunday and Good Friday, St. Matthew records that even before his Transfiguration Jesus had "*begun to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.*"¹ As he rode into Jerusalem he was in no doubt of the fate which awaited him.

However, Jesus was resolutely committed to fulfil the will of his Father and he was prepared for what was coming. He enters Jerusalem in a very ostentatious fashion intended to draw attention to his arrival. He sends for the colt to ride upon so that he is seen to enter in peace as opposed to riding a great charger, which would have been seen as a sign that he had come to conquer with force. The crowds cry "*Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!*" In these lines we find a direct reference to Psalm 118 verse 25 where it is written "*Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord*" and where we learn that the word Hosanna is understood as a prayer or a cry for help because it is translated as "*Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!*"

Today Jesus enters the city which he has long identified as the place of his brutal passion and death to be followed by his glorious resurrection and the scene is set for the coming week.

¹ Matt 16: 21