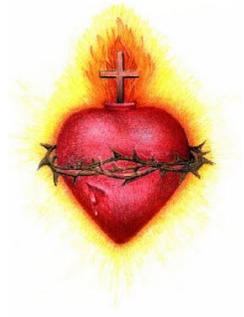


# Scripture Study

*Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion*



## **Opening prayer**

**Luke 19:28-40**    Isaiah 50:4-7    (Ps 22:8-9,17-20,23-24)    Phil 2:6-11    Luke 22:14—23:56

## **Overview of the Gospel:**

- **Note:** Rather than the main Gospel reading for Palm Sunday, this week we will be looking at the shorter **Processional Gospel** (Luke 19:28-40), proclaimed at the beginning of the Palm Sunday Liturgy, where is recounted Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This account is related in all four Gospels (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; John 12:12-19).
- This event marks the beginning of Holy Week, the last week in Jesus' earthly life spent in and around Jerusalem. It is also one week before Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection.
- Right before these events, Jesus (in the city of Jericho at the time) has just finished relating the parable of the ten pounds (Luke 19:1,11-27) where the wicked servants of the king squander his gifts and end up rejecting him.
- Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem takes him through the towns of Bethany ("house of figs"), Bethphage ("house of unripe figs") to Jerusalem itself, which Jesus previously compared to an unfruitful fig tree (Luke 13:6-9).
- By mysterious means (verses 34-34) Jesus arrives in the city mounted upon a colt, or ass, the traditional mount of a king who enters a subject city in peace (1 Kings 1:38-40). In contrast to a warrior-king who enters on a stallion of war, Jesus arrives as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

## **Questions:**

- What tasks does Jesus give two of his disciples? What problems might they have encountered in such a job?
- How do you picture the scene in verses 35-38? What do you see? Hear? Feel?
- What were the people expecting Jesus to do when he reached Jerusalem (verse 11. See Zechariah 9:9-10)? How are their expectations different from his? How does this help explain Jesus' words and emotions later in verses 41-44?
- What does Jesus' reply to the Pharisees (verses 39-40) imply about him?
- What kind of reception would Jesus get: (a) if he rode into your town today? (b) After the people there heard his message?
- When have you seen someone who was enthusiastic for God in public? What was your reaction to that enthusiasm? When have you shown enthusiasm yourself for him in public? How do you think God looks upon those who are unashamed to show their love for him in front of others (Luke 9:26; Mark 8:38)?

**Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 557, 559-560**

## **Closing prayer**

*"O Blessed Jesus, give me stillness of soul in you. Let your mighty calmness reign in me. Rule me, O you, King of gentleness; King of Peace." --St. John of the Cross*

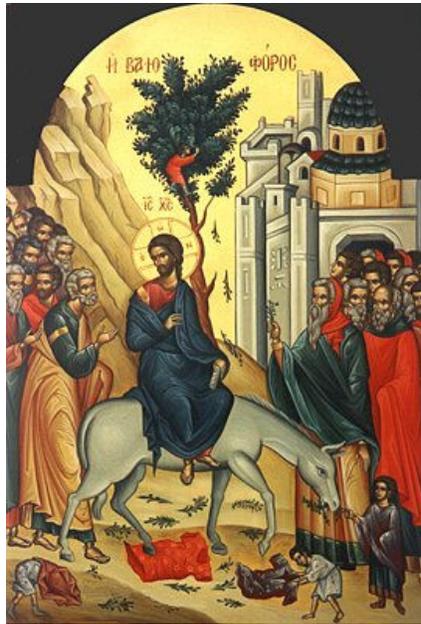
**Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings this week!**

# "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord"

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 19:28-40

*And when he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he drew near to Beth'phage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village opposite, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat; untie it and bring it here. If any one asks you, 'Why are you untying it?'" you shall say this, 'The Lord has need of it.'" So those who were sent went away and found it as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" And they said, "The Lord has need of it." And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their garments on the colt they set Jesus upon it. And as he rode along, they spread their garments on the road. As he was now drawing near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."*

**Meditation:** Does the King of glory find a welcome entry in your home and heart? Jesus went to Jerusalem knowing full well what awaited him -- betrayal, rejection, and crucifixion. The people of Jerusalem, however, were ready to



hail him as their Messianic King! Little did they know what it would cost this king to usher in his kingdom. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem astride a colt was a direct fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy of Zechariah (9:9): *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, and riding on an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass.* The colt was a sign of peace. Jesus enters Jerusalem in meekness and humility, as the Messianic King who offers victory and peace to his people. That victory and peace would be secured in the cross and resurrection which would soon take place at the time of Passover.

St. Augustine of Hippo comments on the significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem: "The master of humility is Christ who humbled himself and became obedient even to death, even the death of the

cross. Thus he does not lose his divinity when he teaches us humility. ..What great thing was it to the king of the ages to become the king of humanity? For Christ was not the king of Israel so that he might exact a tax or equip an army with weaponry and visibly vanquish an enemy. He was the king of Israel in that he rules minds, in that he gives counsel for eternity, in that he leads into the kingdom of heaven for those who believe, hope, and love. It is a condescension, not an advancement for one who is the Son of God, equal to the Father, the Word through whom all things were made, to become king of Israel. It is an indication of pity, not an increase in power." [Tractates on John 51.3-4]

Psalm 24 is another prophetic passage which echoes this triumphal procession of the King of glory: *Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in.* Jesus Christ came to bring us the kingdom of God. He is the true King who offers peace, joy, and everlasting life for those who accept his kingship. Does the King of glory find a welcome entry in your heart and home? And do your walls echo with the praise of his glory?

*"Lord Jesus, be the King and Ruler of my heart, mind, life, and home. May my life reflect your meekness and humility that you may be honored as the King of glory!"*

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