

**Homily preached on Palm Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> March St. Mary's Wimbledon, 8 a.m.**  
**BCP service, by Rev'd. Cynthia Jackson.**

Ask children what they remember about Palm Sunday and of course it is the donkey! Jesus did not ride triumphantly into Jerusalem on a beautiful white charger like a warrior King but on a humble colt, the foal of a donkey as foretold by the Prophet Zechariah:

*“Rejoice greatly O daughter Zion!  
 Shout aloud O daughter Jerusalem!  
 Lo, your king comes to you;  
     triumphant and victorious is he,  
 humble and riding on a donkey,  
     on a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zech.9.9.)*

Jesus had walked along the long dusty road from Jericho to Jerusalem, and finally he reached the Mount of Olives above Jerusalem, knowing that he is destined to die a cruel death. Jesus knew too that his disciples still did not understand that he was called to sacrifice his life for the sins of the world. It is hard for us to understand and believe that today.

But as Jesus mounted the colt, and began the descent from the Mount of Olives the people spread their cloaks in the road, as they waved palm branches and sang to praise God in the Passover Psalm :

*“Blessed is the King who comes in  
     the name of the Lord!  
 Peace in heaven,  
     and glory in the highest  
     heaven! (Psalm. 118: 26)*

Palms symbols of goodness and victory.

The excitement built up as the people cheered Jesus as King. In contrast the same crowd on Good Friday would cry out Crucify him, Crucify him.

We too celebrate this Palm Sunday, hailing Jesus as the promised Messiah but knowing that this is the beginning of the end of Jesus' earthly life. This Holy Week we are called to be with Jesus on Maundy Thursday at his Last Supper with his disciples as he took on the role of a servant and washed their feet.

We are called to watch with Jesus in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Our Watch of Prayer lasts from the end of the service until 11 p.m. and we will have a special altar set up for the Watch. How good it is to pray silently with other people imagining ourselves being with Jesus in his agony in the garden. We stay as long as we are able. We are called to watch as Jesus is betrayed by Judas, deserted by his disciples and denied by Peter and to be at the foot of the cross on Good Friday. We cannot celebrate Jesus' Resurrection unless we have walked with him these last days of Holy Week and prayed with him during his last hours of life.

But we know that Good Friday was not the end. We look forward to Jesus' victory over death as on Easter Day we celebrate once again Our Lord Jesus Christ's Resurrection from the dead joining in the joyful acclamation:

*Christ is Risen, He is risen indeed Alleluia!*

*Amen.*