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Commentary on the Gospel: Palm Sunday

Gospel for Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord (Cycle B), and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 11:1-10*)

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them,

“Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you

doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’”

And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go.

And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

Commentary

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord. We remember Christ's entry into Jerusalem seated on a colt, when he is received amid great acclaim.

Jerusalem is filled with pilgrims who have come from all over Israel to celebrate Passover. They travel in groups and enter the Holy City with festive songs of praise and gratitude.

Jesus for three years has awakened dreams and hopes in people's hearts. Above all, among the humble, poor and forgotten people, those who don't count for much in the eyes of the world.

He has shown great understanding for human miseries, making known the face of God's mercy and making himself a servant of all to heal their bodies and souls. This is Jesus. This is his Heart attentive to all our needs.

He sees our weaknesses, our sins, our loneliness, anguish and fear, our tears.

Jesus enters Jerusalem with his great love. It is a scene of great beauty, and so too he wants to enter our hearts.

Our joy, like the joy of our Lord's disciples, doesn't come from having many things, but from having found a Person, Jesus, the Son of the living God. The joy of the Christian comes from knowing that, with Christ, we are never alone, even in the most trying moments, when we encounter problems that seem insurmountable.

We draw close to Jesus, we accompany him, but above all we know that it is he who accompanies us and carries us on his shoulders. Herein lies our joy.

Jesus wants to be identified with a pack animal, with a donkey, because that is why he came, to carry us. The

donkey carries Jesus, but in reality it is he who carries all the weight. He draws close to us like this, with simplicity, with determination to take on his shoulders our defeats, our burdens, our inability to love.

The root of our joy lies here: God has become one like us. And he wants to take away our fears, the deepest wounds that prevent us from loving and accepting love without conditions. So that we can show everyone that our life is illuminated by our ardent love for the Risen Christ.

At the same time, Christ needs us. He wants us to bring to others the glory of his life wherever we are: in our homes, families, jobs. Jesus “unties us,” as he did that donkey, to make us sharers in his glory, in his unconditional self-giving. This is our destination in life, our wonderful adventure.

God had a plan for that donkey. In the same way he has a plan for each of us, a plan for freedom and glory.

During these days we will accompany Jesus closely. And we will always have his Mother, Mary, by our side.

We can tell our Lady that we too want to be close to her Son. We want to praise and thank him, to ask forgiveness for our sins and those of all mankind, to sacrifice ourselves for others and not be afraid of the Cross, and to show those we live alongside the joy that he puts in our hearts.