

The past weeks have been a time of preparation for the celebration of this most Holy Week. Today (Palm Sunday), we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the whole Church throughout the world. In particular today the Church celebrates Christ's triumphal entry into His own city, Jerusalem, to complete His work as Saviour, to suffer, to die and to rise again.

We come into the week where Jesus resolutely advances towards the completion of the will of His Father. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a colt, the foal of a donkey as a humble king. Jesus was fulfilling the Messianic prophecy in Zech 9:9: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of 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'. However, the crowds had a completely different idea of the Messiah. They believed that the Messiah would be a strong and powerful ruler who would ride upon his horse and destroy all the Romans and grant them relief from Roman rule. They were looking for a political Messiah who would ride in pomp and splendor and overthrow the Romans.

Jesus' own understanding of the Messiah's role was completely different. Reading and meditating on Isaiah 53 would have defined and influenced His role as the Suffering Servant. He was to be a Messiah who was to suffer and die, and rise again on the third day. He knew He had come to serve and not to be served and that he was going into Jerusalem to offer his life as a ransom for many.

Let us remember with thanksgiving his entrance on the first Palm Sunday and let us follow Jesus with faith and devotion. United with Him in His suffering on the cross and in the agonies of the world today, may we also share in His glorious resurrection and the new life that He offers to all.

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