

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
Palm Sunday, Cycle A

Is 50, 4-7; Ps 22; Phil 2, 6-11; Mt 21, 1-11; Mt 26, 14-27, 66
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Let Us Prove Our Identity

The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on “Palm Sunday” is filled with signs that help us to understand the person of Jesus and His resolve. He proved Himself that day, maintaining the clarity of His condition as both servant and Lord.¹

Those who received Him were His disciples and the multitude that had heard of His impressive reputation. These people were looking for a political leader who would put an end to their oppression. Matthew has written that the

¹ “After Peter’s confession of faith in Caesarea Philippi, in the northernmost part of the Holy Land, Jesus set out as a pilgrim towards Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. He was journeying towards the Temple in the Holy City, towards that place which for Israel ensured in a particular way God’s closeness to his people. He was making his way towards the common feast of Passover, the memorial of Israel’s liberation from Egypt and the sign of its hope of definitive liberation. He knew that what awaited him was a new Passover and that he himself would take the place of the sacrificial lambs by offering himself on the cross. He knew that in the mysterious gifts of bread and wine he would give himself for ever to his own, and that he would open to them the door to a new path of liberation, to fellowship with the living God. He was making his way to the heights of the Cross, to the moment of self-giving love. The ultimate goal of his pilgrimage was the heights of God himself; to those heights he wanted to lift every human being.

city was shaken² as in an earthquake, not of the land but of persons, as a way of telling us that the people expected a great event.

If we place ourselves in the scene, we will discover that here the entry door opens wide to the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus; it opens so that we can enter along with those who accompanied Him.

We will also spread out our cloaks as our Master and Lord passes by. But with an intensity distinct from those who want to proclaim Him a political or social leader. We will spread out our cloaks in order to enter the Jerusalem of our time, just as was done by those in the time of Jesus. And we will prove our own identity as followers not of the king of Israel, but of the Messiah, the Son of God.

We distinguish these two big groups at the entrance to the holy city: the group of the foolish people who are hoping for a warlike king who would violently subdue everyone and would overthrow the established power. (We don't belong to this group.) And the second, the group of the friends of Jesus, the group of His true followers, the

² Matthew uses the verb *èseite*/to shake, as in an earthquake. The people tremble because they intuit that the moment has arrived in which something unique will happen, something truly important, something that will change everything. For that reason, they ask themselves, "Who is this?" So many know him or have heard of His fame, like those who came out of curiosity because of the crowds that are following him, spreading their cloaks in the road, hoping that He will accept their approbation and take the staff as the leader who will represent them and rule Jerusalem.

group that is beginning to understand the humble way of Jesus, the servant who gives life.

If Jesus enters riding on a donkey, it is because He is not making claims to greatness. He doesn't come as the son of David, that is to say, as a triumphant and violent king, but as the son of God who gives up His life.

But how do we stay firm in the identity of Jesus the Messiah, the servant who gives up His life, when we are attracted by glory and ambition for power?

Let us try three attitudes:

1-Let us listen to the Word without resistance.

Many people who are dispirited need to be comforted. It is not easy to remain attentive to the word of God because whoever is guided by it is regularly treated harshly, insulted, and spit upon. In the face of this kind of rejection, it is normal to experience confusion. Jesus Himself will go through this in the judgment after He is arrested in the garden.

We need to open our ears to more profound understandings: if they come from God, no matter how difficult they may be to understand, they will give us peace. Let us not offer resistance to the implications of the Word of God.

2-Let us obey, humbling ourselves.

Acting without superiority, without grasping for honors, we must empty ourselves. That is the way that Jesus proved Himself. When we discover that God's plan is

superior to ours, we must humble ourselves so that others will know that we depend on Him. That is the way that people will recognize the identity of Jesus and the identity of those of us who follow Him.

3-Let us maintain our identity as children of God.

In the most critical moments of our existence, there is nothing more important than this vital condition. Jesus remained firm during the accusations against Him and through the trial and condemnation. Though He could have turned back and accepted a comfortable position, He maintained His identity and His determination.

Certainly, we are not Jesus, but we are “other Christs.” In order to maintain our identity as children of God, we can make our way close to Jesus and accept our own cross and the condemnation. In the end, we will confirm that we were not made to dominate, but to give ourselves just as Jesus did.