

PALM SUNDAY 2010
SERMON - CHRIST CHURCH PARISH
FATHER JOHN ALTBURG
ZECHARIAH 9.9 MATTHEW 21.1 27.1
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JESUS GOES PUBLIC...MAKES PRIME TIME
SUBTITLE FOR PALM SUNDAY!

Jesus spent three years preparing for this day...

We spent five Lenten Weeks preparing for today...extra study, reconsideration of things we have long known but often become hazy in a year's time. Lent is the Church's way of being our parent...not in any nagging manner but reminding us of things we need to make life make sense...and better...!

Our Palm Sunday Procession brought into sharp focus the final days of His ministry...Jesus entered Jerusalem...500 years prior, Zechariah the Prophet said this would happen. Little is known about Zechariah but what **IS** known is that what he said came true!

Palm Sunday is marked by contrasting Gospel readings...Jesus the surprise King enters Jerusalem to cheering crowds...then the same crowd turns ugly...

Palm Sunday is indeed a depiction of ultimate contrasts...Jesus is hailed...then subjected to manipulated hatred. He is executed by the altered opinion of the very **SAME** people who declared him King only days before.

Jesus knew precisely why he was going and what was about to happen. His followers could not possibly comprehend the events that were to play out over the next seven days.

The people of Jerusalem, in like manner, had no idea what to expect. Their city of nominally 25,000 inhabitants was overwhelmed with the annual doubling of the population as visitors swarmed into the city to observe Passover.

The Temple authorities were prepared for the huge annual influx of pilgrims. Likewise the Temple Square was overfilled with moneychangers, merchants of the requisite sacrificial doves.

Why would he go to Jerusalem...he knew full well it was a dangerous decision. Two things took him there...Jesus was a devout Jew and it was in strict conformity he and his disciples went there for Passover...it was his obligation

to be there...in the same manner, as Catholic Christians we are here. As Christians, we often fail to comprehend the importance of Passover...Palm Sunday and the days of Holy Week brings Passover, the escape from enslavement by marking doorways with the blood of a spring lamb, into sharp and instructive focus.

Second, as the Son of God, he was on a mission...that of self-sacrifice of the Lamb of God...something for which he had spent three years preparing himself and his followers...something they could not conceivably comprehend.

Passing through Jericho, Jesus stopped for a private conversation with the twelve...*WHEN WE GET TO JERUSALEM SOMEONE WILL BETRAY ME AND I'LL BE KILLED...BUT I WILL RISE FROM MY GRAVE IN THREE DAYS...*

Jesus and the disciples proceeded through Jericho...they arrived in Bethphage...Jesus said there's a donkey in that village...go get it. Jesus got on...they started down the mountain...

News reached Jerusalem something was happening...crowds rushed to the street as they approached... "Hey...look...it's just a guy on a donkey...where's this 'King'...? Just a man on a donkey with a rag tag band wandering through Jerusalem waving palms...another group of religious extremists opportunistically appearing for Passover...

Upon reaching the Temple...the drama escalated precipitously...he threw the money changers/dove peddlers into the street. Next Jesus started healing people on the spot...the priests and the Pharisees were outraged. **JESUS HAD INDEED MADE PRIME TIME...MANY MORE UNIMAGINEABLE EVENTS WERE YET TO UNFOLD...**

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