

Saint Thomas and Saint Thomas of the Air Church
Palm Sunday
April 13, 2025
rmcneely+

Hosanna to the Son of David
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord
O King of Israel
Hosanna in the Highest

8 year old Tommie was so sick he stayed home from church with his mother. When his father came home, the boy asked his dad why he had a palm leaf in his hand. The Dad replied that when Jesus came, they laid palm branches in the road for him to walk on and the priest had handed out palms to everyone. The boy said. Ah rats! The one day I stay home from church and that's the day the Jesus comes back.

The blessed palms that you hold in your hands are the symbols of the Day.

They are of course, reminiscent of the palms laid at Jesus' feet as He made His triumphal entry to Jerusalem for the last time.

But they are much more.

They are a reminder of the blessing God gave to Noah,
his family
and the animals when they went forth on dry land from the ark: "go forth and multiply"

The palms are reminiscent of the Old Testament story
of the Palms of Elim,
The place where 12 water wells
And 70 date palms sustained the Jews
as they wandered the dessert

Where as they left, they grumbled and complained of Moses
 That at least in Egypt there was bread enough to eat.
 Saying they should rebel and return to slavery.

Moses told them
 At evening they should recognize
 God delivered them from slavery
 At morning they should rise to see the Glory of God
 It was then that God provided manna, the bread of heaven

In Passiontide, the palms remind us
 God gave us true bread from Heaven
 in Jesus, the Christ

So take your palms home today
 May they guard your heart and home with peace
 and be banners,
 Signs and reminders
 That your real city
 Your home and homeland
 Your resting place
 Is the city of God
 That heavenly City; Jerusalem

Through the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus
 We enter that Heavenly Jerusalem
 Where He will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

The liturgy of this day is packed with meaning
 and with the richness of Christianity itself.

The Palm Sunday rituals, the blessing of the palms
 And the Palm Sunday Communion
 Are rich in the psalms

The 22nd psalm

The plea to God from one in danger at the lions mouth
 The psalm from which Jesus quoted from the cross
 shortly before his death.

The 73rd psalm that startlingly prophesied the details of Jesus' crucifixion, His thirst, the vinegar,

St Matthew's Passion is moving, dramatic and climactic

As the communion cup reaches you today
 We should remember Jesus words in the garden

“Take this cup from my lips”
 ask ourselves

are we willing to be one with Him
 Both in joy and in sorrow?

Today's service is

and should be a long one
 and there is not the opportunity in this sermon to explore it
 all.

So permit me to go to the most important lesson of the Day

To the Epistle of the Communion Service.

To perhaps the most important lesson of the N.T.

To the theme of all of Holy Week .

Paul writes to his close friends in Philippi

It contains the theme:

Endure the sorrow

but

Look forward to the exaltation that followed

Know the humiliation

But, look forward to the glory that shone through

The shame.

Paul writes of the limitless generosity of Christ
Of how Jesus, gave to us all that He had
Not just his very life
Not just every ounce of His blood
But how He emptied Himself of everything
His heart
His soul.
He gave us His entire being
To save us from our sins
To save us from ourselves.

The Son of God
Humbled himself to be incarnate a human
The creator became the created
And not just a human
But a servant.
An obedient servant
Obedient To the Will of God
Even unto the humiliation and shame
Obedient to an agonizing death upon the cross
A punishment reserved to the most lowly.

His story became the essence of the Christian Gospel
Glory comes from shame
Exaltation comes from humiliation

So here is the take away;
The very theme of Holy Week
While we relive the sorrow
the resurrection is never far from our minds
And the theme is Triumph; Not tragedy

As Jesus rode through the gate of the stone walls into Jerusalem
 The people cheered him
 With calls of Hosannah
 Literally meaning: Save us
 With joy
 they called Him Messiah
 But in only 5 days those same people were crying for His
 Crucifixion

We who hold the palms in our hands must ask:
 Are we among those who strew them along the way?
 Or,
 Are we among those who cried for his death only days
 Later?
 Are we among those who welcome Him?
 Or among those who dissent Him?
 In a few moments
 We will sing a song written by people brought here
 As slaves
 In one of the few truly American Hymns in our Hymnal

We will ask:
 “were you there when they crucified our Lord?
 were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
 Were you then when they laid Him in the tomb?
 There may not be a dry eye within earshot, certainly not mine
 And the answer to each question is this:
 “Sometimes it causes me to tremble
 to tremble
 to tremble”

Were we there?
 Or perhaps a more difficult question
 Are we there?

