

Palm Sunday - C Cycle  
April 4, 2004

By Father Charles Bowes

Isaiah 50:4-7  
Philippians 2:6-11  
Luke 22:14-23:56

## *Notice something missing in Saint Luke's version of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday? No palms.*

Unlike the narratives in Saint Matthew's and Saint Mark's gospels, Saint Luke makes no mention of palm branches being waved or hosannas being sung (instead, the crowds repeat the song of the angels at Bethlehem to welcome the newborn king, "Glory in the highest/peace in heaven," that Saint Luke records at the beginning of his Gospel story).

In Saint Luke's account of Palm Sunday, the people place their single most important article of clothing - their cloaks - along Jesus' path. It was the most expensive article of clothing they possessed - most people only owned one that was constantly mended and never discarded. For the poorest of the poor, a cloak was more than an article of clothing - it was their shelter, their home. The holy poor of Saint Luke's narrative place all that they have at the disposal of the Messiah-king.

This Sunday of the Lord's Passion is about "emptying" oneself in order to be filled with the life and love of God. The people of Jerusalem "empty" themselves of their most precious possession to welcome into their midst the Anointed One of God and

his reign of peace; Christ "empties" himself of his very divinity in obedience to the Father's will that humanity should be reconciled to God through his passion, death and resurrection. To be disciples of the Messiah Jesus is to put aside our "cloaks" of comfort and self-absorption to embrace Christ's spirit of humility and selflessness, to "empty" ourselves of our pride and our own wants and needs to become vessels of God's life and love.

This is our "holy week," a time to enter into the saving mystery of Jesus' passage through death to life. The schedule is in the bulletin for Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, the Vigil, and for the Masses of Easter Sunday. Our Lenten fasting ends on Wednesday of this week and is replaced by the fast of anticipation - we're just too excited to eat much - eagerly awaiting the celebration of the Lord's resurrection throughout the days of Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Even if all of the rest of Lent has been missed - don't miss this week - we save the best for last.

Let us pray. Be not far from us, Lord, and hasten to our aid. As your son was obedient, even unto death, may we listen intently to your word and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen.

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