**Palm Sunday.2019, Cycle.C.**

Today, we join the universal Catholic Church to celebrate **Palm Sunday or Passion** **Sunday** leading us into **Holy We**ek. We begin with the blessing of the palms, remembering the historical ride of Jesus on a donkey and his victorious entry into Jerusalem city followed by a crowded procession of people **singing songs of Hosann**a. The Gospels that describe this event speak of large crowds laying palm branches on the road before **Jesus and proclaiming him as king.** Here is a man with Charisma, with **a stirring message**! But in a matter of days, before the weekend, the praise and glory were trampled, he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies and crucified. A hard reality but cannot fully assimilate.

**This jolt is actually quite understan**dable. Jerusalem is a paradoxical “**center stage”** in all of scripture. In Jewish tradition, Jerusalem, the city of **Yahweh, was not a place of blessing for the prophets of Isra**el. It was the place of their martyrdom. Jesus knew this when he went to Jerusalem. Still he was determined to go there and was crucified there. **The Palm Sunday highlights the paradox of Christ’s kingship.** Our palms represent his victory: but a victory that only comes through suffering and self-sacrifice. Jesus helps us to understand power and glory in a new way- the way of humility and enduring love. **The Passion of Jesus** challenges us to appreciate gratefully the price Jesus paid for our salvation.

**In today’s First Reading we** hear Isaiah’s words: **“I did not look backward…..I have set my face like flint**”. Lukes’ Gospel refers to Jesus setting his face towards Jerusalem and his commitment to an ethic of mercy and compassion, which brings him to his passion, death and resurrection. Images such as these reflect his clear determination. St. Paul advices us today, “***Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus”.***

The road that Jesus trod on Palm Sunday was the same road he had always walked. ***It was the road of humility, of love, of patience, of hope and of encouragement. It was the way of salvation, not the way of empire. It was the way of the kingdom, not of the king. It was the road to glory, not to govt. It was the way of righteousness, not of Rome.***

Jerusalem is not limited to the geography and symbolism of Israel. Jerusalem is wherever prophets are rejected; it is wherever God’s boundless compassion is rejected by rebellious people. **The liturgy of Palm Su**nday is **meant to jolt u**s, it asks us whether we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is Israel’s Messiah and the Son of God, and whether the death of this man **in Jerusalem means salvation for all who believe in him.**