

St Thomas Church
Palm Sunday
April 14, 2019
rmcneely+

Hosanna to the Son of David
Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord
Oh 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 hand are the symbols of the Day.

They are of course, reminiscent of the palms laid at Jesus' feet when 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 wondered 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
May they ward off evil
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 His passion, death and resurrection
 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

The communion anthem

 Jesus last words in the garden

 Take this cup from my lips

 We should remember as the communion cup reaches
 you today

 We 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 "take away" of the Day
To the Epistle of the Communion Service
that Matthew Drake read so well today.
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 incarnated 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

But 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 questions is this:

“Sometimes it causes me to tremble

to tremble

to tremble”

Were we there?

Or perhaps a more difficult question

Are we there?

