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PALM SUNDAY

Sunday, April 5, 2009

Gospel: Mark 11: 1-11

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples² and said to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it.³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ just say this, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.’”⁴ They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it,⁵ some of the bystanders said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?”⁶ They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it.⁷ Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it.⁸ Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields.⁹ Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

“Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Today is a special day – the first special day of a very special week. We call this Holy Week.

Holy Week is both sad and happy. At Christmas we celebrate the day that Jesus was born, but during Holy Week we celebrate the days leading up to Jesus’ death – and then on Easter, his “resurrection” or return from the dead.

The story of Jesus’ death is a hard one to hear – but it’s important to remember that the very reason that Jesus was sent to Earth was to die. It was all part of God’s plan. Jesus died for us – and for the forgiveness of our sins.

Today is Palm Sunday – which is the day we hear the story of Jesus’ arrival in Jerusalem.

In the days of Jesus’ life it was a custom to cover the ground when someone very important arrived. This was a sign of great respect. Instead of letting someone important walk on the dirty ground people would take their jackets or other items and place them on the ground to make a sort of carpeting.

In the Gospel of Mark it describes the people taking the leafy branches from palm trees and laying them in Jesus path. That’s why we call today, Palm Sunday.

This is a hard week, as we prepare for the story of Jesus death on Good Friday. But good news is on the way as we celebrate Easter.

Let's pray.

Dear God,

This week we remember the story of the suffering and death of your son Jesus and wait in joyful anticipation of his resurrection at Easter. Help us to be faithful followers during the week ahead.

Amen.

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