

25th March 2018 (Palm Sunday, Year B)

(Mark 11:1-10);

Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 21(22):8-9,17-20,23-24; Philippians 2:6-11; Mark 14:1-15:47.

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

At the beginning of the gospel according to John, we hear John the Baptist point out to Jesus and declaring: "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (1:29) Perhaps one would be justified to wonder: why call Jesus a lamb?

At the time of Jesus, lambs were regularly slaughtered and offered to God as sin offerings in order to be reconciled with God. At the end of the gospel we see Jesus who offers himself on the cross in order to reconcile us to God.

As a believing community today we remember the moment when Jesus went up to Jerusalem like a docile lamb for the sacrifice. It was a few days before the feast of the Passover, the great feast the Jews celebrated annually to remember the great exodus from the land of Egypt. Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly as a king, not on a war horse as other kings do, but on a humble donkey. Jesus' kingdom is one of humility and service.

The crowds gather and welcome Jesus spreading their cloaks in front of him and waving palm branches. They recognise him as the son of David, their king. This same crowd will in a few days shout in front of Pilate: crucify him! crucify him!

Our celebration today takes us back to this moment when Jesus walk up to Jerusalem to offer himself in sacrifice. Palm Sunday, also referred to as Passion Sunday, also marks the beginning of the greatest week in our annual celebrations. During this week we will live once again the great moments when Jesus suffered and died for us so that on Sunday with him we can celebrate his resurrection.

Fr Mario