



Concerning Palm Sunday

When we celebrate Palm Sunday today we are following the tradition of the Christian congregation in Jerusalem. It is said that already around the year 400 this congregation would gather on the Mount of Olives and descend in procession into the city. The children were said to carry palm leaves and olive twigs in their hands on these occasions.

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In our celebrations of Palm Sunday, the focal point is the Lord Himself, who, according to the accounts of the Gospels, has made Himself known to all peoples as the Messiah and the Prince of Peace.

The feast of the Passover commemorates the liberation of the people of Israel from their captivity in Egypt and constitutes the most important celebration in the Jewish calendar. Since the time of King Josiah around 600 years before Christ, Jews were no longer to celebrate the Passover within the family only. As of that time, the (Paschal) lamb eaten during each family's festive meal had to be slaughtered in the temple of Jerusalem. Those who did not have a lamb that had been slaughtered in the temple could not fully celebrate the Passover meal (cf. 2 Kings 23: 21–23).

Jesus also wanted to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. He sent His disciples on ahead in order to prepare everything. Jesus described to them how they would find a mount for Him: »Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it. And if anyone says to you, “Why are you doing this?” say, “The Lord has need of it,” and immediately he will send it here. So they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it« (Mark 11: 2–4).

Jesus enters Jerusalem

Everything happened just as Jesus had told them. The Lord rode into Jerusalem on a young donkey. The crowds of people who welcomed Him would have consisted primarily of pilgrims. They spread their garments out on the path before Jesus, threw down palm branches and cried out, “Hosanna.” (cf. Mark 11: 7–10). Each of these few lines contains symbols that allude to the Messiah.

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29 March 2012

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