



ST. RAYMOND DE PEÑAFORT

Palm
Sunday **Reflections**

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Say to daughter Zion, "Behold, your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden."

These are the words of the prophet Zechariah, proclaimed over 500 years before they were fulfilled by Jesus that day he rode through the streets as people laid down their cloaks in his pathway, waved palms, and proclaimed his praises. They make it clear from the get-go that we are talking about a different kind of king. Kings were and are all about earthly power. They have never been known to be meek, and yet that's exactly what Jesus was, and riding in on a common beast of burden was the best way possible to outwardly show the glaring difference between Jesus and all other rulers.

As Jesus would soon tell Pilate on the day we call Good Friday, his kingdom is not of this world. His kingdom is love, and love is eternal. What is seen as weak: self-sacrifice, humility, and service to those forgotten and neglected by the power structures of this world, is what ultimately endures and is most meaningful about this life and, indeed, is the reason we are here on this earth. While the kingdoms, power, and treasures of this world are fleeting and temporary, Jesus' actions show us the way to what is true and lasting, and they were never clearer than those days leading up to his ultimate sacrifice and triumph, the days we call Holy Week. But there were many clues along the way, in the scriptures read at mass throughout Lent, such as these:

"If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

What profit is there for one to gain the whole world yet lose or forfeit himself?" – Luke 9: 23-25



But Jesus summoned them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." - Matthew 20:25-28

"The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted." – Matthew 23: 11-12

As the palms from last year's celebration are burned and the ashes smeared on our foreheads the following Ash Wednesday, every year we are shown the path of salvation, the path of love, the path of eternal life, by putting our trust, not in this world and its treasures and adulation, but in the power of God's never-ending love, the depths of which is revealed through the death and resurrection of God's son, Jesus, so that we may become more and more like him and fulfill our call and destiny as children of God. Every year, Lent is an invitation to draw closer to our loving creator by discovering that admittance of weakness and where we come up short in our own lives, and reliance on God is where true strength is found. In the end, we are always led to these final days. We now once again have that opportunity this Holy Week to walk with Christ on his road to that cross in the great three-day liturgy we call the Triduum- Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil. Let us walk that road together. Palm Sunday is just the beginning, friends!

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