

Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion; Sermons By Email (Emmanuel, North York)  
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### Palm Sunday Meditation

In his Palm Sunday arrival in Jerusalem for the celebration of Passover, Jesus traced the coronation procession of King David's anointed son, Solomon, whose name incorporates the Hebrew word '*shalom*', and means, "Perfect Peace"! Escorted by his disciples, Jesus rode a donkey through the Kidron Valley into the Holy City where he was acclaimed King of Israel!

But there are some significant differences between the coronation of King David's *first* successor, Solomon, and his *final* successor, Jesus of Nazareth. The donkey on which Jesus rode was not selected from the royal stable of the king's palace, but borrowed from a rural stable like the one in which he had been born. And Jesus would not be anointed with oil consecrated by temple priests and administered in the presence of royalty; Jesus would be anointed by the hands of a powerless woman, whose name was the same as his own unwed mother's – to whom Angel Gabriel had given a similar promise to the one philandering King David gave Solomon's mother, Bathsheba: "You will bear a son and ... the Lord will give him the throne of his ancestor David ... and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33).

Jesus of Nazareth is indeed Israel's anointed king – "Messiah" in Hebrew; "Christ" in Greek. He comes in the name of the Lord, not as conquering hero but as suffering servant. Jesus is not a king like David and Solomon, or an emperor like Caesar, who establish peace by political power maintained with military force, but by self-giving love and sacrificial service. In our world, where God's will is often confused with patriotic duty, Jesus carefully choreographed his arrival in the Holy City to demonstrate how faithfulness to God may require the will to die for it, but never to kill in God's name.

Jesus' triumphant procession into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday at the beginning of Holy Week signals the end of the old world of sin, evil and death. The end of the world as we know it came, finally and fully, in Jesus' crucifixion, death and burial at the end of Holy Week. But the resurrection of Jesus on the first day of a new week signals the eighth day of Holy Week; the eighth day of creation –

that is the first day of God's new creation in Jesus Christ! And the very first thing God created on the first day of God's new creation was the Christian church!

The church, this very congregation, is the first fruits of God's new creation; the beginning of a new humanity, the very constitution of a new covenant community – people without borders – united in the Holy Communion of God's eternal life – conceived, established and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the one who came, who comes, and will come again, in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!