



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This Palm Sunday, we join Jerusalem as the people welcome our Lord with palm branches, crying out, *“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”* (John 12:13) It is such a bright day that St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians also joins in celebration, echoing prophecy as he begins: *“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near”* (Philippians 4:4-5).

The Lord is indeed near, because Jesus will enter the city on a donkey and her colt, fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy: *“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt the foal of a donkey”* (Zechariah 9:9). However, even as the people shout *“Hosanna! Lord, save!”* they misunderstand the meaning of His journey. They do not see that the path our Lord takes, from Bethpage to

Jerusalem, is also how the Passover Lamb is brought before its sacrifice. In all these ways, the Lamb of God shows the daughter of Zion that He is the Messiah—saving us, not through victory against the Romans on a horse of battle, but on humble beasts, symbolizing His victory over death by death.

We know that Holy Week will take us to the foot of the Cross, but like this joyful Feast, St. Paul’s words offer us a moment of comfort before we begin the journey to Golgotha: *“Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:6-7). Even when our hearts are tested by Judas’s Betrayal, Peter’s Denial and Christ’s Crucifixion, *“...brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you”* (Philippians 4:8-9).

May we begin Holy Week thinking of all the times our Lord demonstrates true humility: not only when the crowd praises Him, but also when He washes the feet of His Disciples—only for the Disciples to abandon Him, before the crowd calls for His death. Only when we know this kind of lamb-like servant’s spirit, will we be counted worthy to experience *“...the peace... which passes all understanding...”*, and then to rejoice together with the Risen Christ in His Heavenly Kingdom.

+SEVASTIANOS
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