

# *Behold Your King*

## Lent 2023

*“Hosanna!*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,  
[even] the king of Israel.”*

John 12:13

The great crowd outside Jerusalem was filled with anticipation, Jesus was coming. They had hurried to the city gate carrying palm branches and on seeing him coming towards them on a donkey cried out full-throated, *"Hosanna,"* a word meaning “Save now!” and *“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel”* (Jn 12:13)! The promise they and their ancestors had sung for generations was now being fulfilled. In their minds their great oppressor, the Roman Empire, would now be cast down.

Yet, God’s kingdom is not like any kingdom of this world and Jesus did not come into the world to be another political leader. This was all illustrated by his riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. Contrary to popular understanding, riding in on a donkey was not simply a sign of Jesus’ humility. It was, instead, the fulfilment of an Old Testament promise. The prophet Zechariah would use this imagery saying, *“Exult greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout for joy, O daughter king<sup>2</sup> is coming to you, a just riding on a donkey, on a colt, Riding on a donkey, Jesus would show himself to be a mercy, one who days later his high office not a gilded crown of jewels, but instead a prickly crown of thorns and throne of gold, but the throne of an old rugged cross.*



This is our king, and he comes for the righteous, but for the poor. He comes not only for the rich, but especially for the poor. He comes not only for Jews, but for Gentiles as well. He comes for those who are outsiders, those who are strangers, those who are without hope, those who are lost and searching, those who are rejected and abandoned, and he comes for those who do not know God, even those who have rejected God. It is this all-inclusive King we honor and behold this Lent and Easter. It is this king whose sovereignty we come under.

As we undertake our Lenten Journey this year, we are encouraged, *Behold Your King* and to embark on a change of life that embraces his way of living, a sacrificial, merciful way of life. In

this we are being specifically challenged to *Behold Your King* in our neighbor by undertaking *40 Acts of Kindness in 40 Days*. These acts could include donating to a favorite charity, leaving a note in your mailbox for the mail carrier, sending a postcard to friends and family, donating old clothes, baking cookies for the local fire department, giving compliments to strangers, taking a neighbor's (or pastor's) dog for a walk, donating food to a food pantry and more. Be creative but commit to one random act of kindness every day of Lent, beholding in those you serve the face of your king, Jesus our Savior.

Lent is our annual opportunity to renew our commitment as subjects to the King of kings. With this as our goal, may we begin Lent ready to acknowledge Jesus as our king as well as the king of the universe.

***Let us embark on works of prayer, fasting and almsgiving all in honor of our king who loves us fully and sacrificed himself for us.***