

Palm Sunday



Reading: St Mark 14:1 – 15:47

This is Palm Sunday, a day of glory, of Hosanna, of olive branches, of triumph.

It is generally presumed that Mary may have travelled to Bethlehem, to Elizabeth's house, to Egypt, and back again, on the back of a donkey. It is also part of the Christmas story that there was a donkey in the stable at Bethlehem. Just before Jesus faced crucifixion and death, he was given a triumphant entry into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. When I refer to our role as being somewhat like that of the donkey, what I am saying is that the donkey is present, and is providing a service, but is not expecting or demanding any plaudits or honours for doing so. Our vocation is one of service, whether that service is to God or to his people.

'The greatest in the kingdom are those who serve', said Jesus, as he washed the feet of the apostles. This is one of most beautiful secrets of the kingdom. The 'great' people in the world are those who lord it over others, and who have political, financial, or social clout. In God's kingdom, however, the greatest are the-basin-of-water-and-towel people. This is such a simple message that it's probably impossible to grasp.

When I speak about being a person of service, I am not speaking of some sort of natural goodness or generosity; something that, for the one who has it, wouldn't be able to act with arrogance, or pride. What I speak of here is a pure gift of the Holy Spirit. That is what I need if I am to become a person of service; a donkey, always at the disposal of the Lord.

Think of this humble donkey carrying Jesus. I may not have much to offer but the little sacrifices I make for the wellbeing of others makes me a carrier: not a carrier of virus but a carrier of Jesus the wounded healer.