

Palm Sunday



What's in a word? 'Hosanna' is a word of greeting and welcome which means 'May God Save'. In Christianity, it is used as a cry of praise and in Judaism, an appeal for Divine help.

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him shouting Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord - the King of Israel. (John 12:13)

On Palm or Passion Sunday every year, we listen to the bittersweet story of Jesus' ride to Jerusalem where he is triumphantly greeted and hailed as King, all the while knowing that he's going there to die.

We think of the tremendous hurt that begins for our Lord on Palm Sunday: Judas criticising Mary for anointing Jesus feet with expensive oil, his best mate Peter denying him three times and then Judas hatching a plan with the Chief Priests for 30 pieces of silver that led to Jesus' arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. We know these stories well and where they lead.

Why were so many against our Lord? He'd lived a life of love and service, performed miracles, and respected the dignity of those he met regardless of their socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or religion. However, Jesus did hold others to account for their hypocrisy and wrongdoing, specifically those who held positions of power in the temple like the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They considered

Jesus to be a dangerous radical who was making them look bad. So they were out to get him and the crowd, like the bunch of sheep they were, went along with it. No more 'Hosanna' rather 'Crucify him!'.

Next time you shout 'Hosanna' and sing 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord', know that you are not just remembering a historical event. You are greeting the Risen Christ who is alive and with us every time we gather as a people of faith to share in the sacred meal of the Eucharist.

Maybe in these troubled times of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian War in Ukraine, we too might like to cry out 'Hosanna' as an appeal for Divine help in our world.

Holy Week 2022 is our chance to be there with Jesus - to remember and reenact His story and choose ways to welcome the Risen Christ into our own lives. Let's start by welcoming Jesus by giving others a warm welcome too. Hosanna!

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