

Robin Dodge
Holy Faith, Santa Fe
9 April 2017

Palm Sunday – Year A
Matthew 21.1-11

In the name of the one, true, and living God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

This is a schizophrenic day! Our shouts of “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!” will soon turn to shouts of “Crucify him! Crucify him!” We know what is to happen. We know that a change in mood will come. But let’s not rush. Let’s savor this moment. Let’s live in the moment. It’s all that God has given us just now. What is past is past. What will be will be. Right now we have this moment to savor – this moment of joy. Let’s pretend we don’t know what is to come. Let’s imagine we are in that crowd in Jerusalem welcoming Jesus into our city.

We see Jesus mounted on a donkey colt approaching from the Mount of Olives, east of the Temple Mount – sort of like coming from the Sangre de Cristos, east of the Palace of Governors – the direction, according to tradition, from where the Messiah was to appear, and fulfilling Zechariah’s prophecy that our king will come triumphantly, victoriously, and humbly riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. We rush out to place palm branches in Jesus’ path – or in our case we process in stately fashion to the middle of this plaza.

We shout, “Blessed is the one who come in the name of the Lord!” “Hosanna to the Son of David...Hosanna in the highest heaven!” Hosanna, literally meaning “save us,” and here a shout of praise. Ironically, our shouts of praise to the one we ask to

save us will soon turn to shouts of “Crucify him!” The one we ask to save us we will demand be killed and left to save himself.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken, asking, “Who is this?” – much like upon our entering this plaza all the tourists and curious bystanders are in amazement and ask, “What is this?” The crowds in Jerusalem were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.” What do we say? How do we explain why we’re here on a cool Sunday morning, all dressed up, and making a public display of our faith? My hope and prayer is that we boldly say, “We are the followers of Jesus the Christ!” And all the better that this city be shaken, like Jerusalem those many years ago, because of our public proclamation!

You see, in this broken world, in this divided country, in this struggling state, in this hurting city, where people desperately cry out, “Hosanna! Save us!”, we have a Savior to proclaim – Jesus Christ our Lord! Let’s not hide in our churches, waiting for people to cross our thresholds to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ. Let’s step out from our churches more often to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people where they are who desperately need to hear it. And not just bring the Good News of Jesus Christ with our words, but with our actions and resources as well.

In that way this city will be shaken up, just like Jerusalem was shaken up – shaken up for the love of Christ. In that way there will be even more people on this plaza next year, all for the love of Christ – shouting praise to God and saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Save us!” This is called evangelism – from the Greek word *evangelion* meaning “good news.” Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Sharing the love of Christ.

Our evangelism is renewed this Palm Sunday. Our sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ is strengthened today. Our sharing the love of Christ is deepened today. The Rt. Rev'd George Sumner, Episcopal Bishop of Dallas, recently stated, "All evangelism must come back to the taproot, which is King Jesus on the way to Jerusalem, in whose wake you and I are walking."¹ May you and I continue to walk in that wake this week as witnesses of and to Christ's love – right up to the foot of the cross, on which was hung the Savior of the world. "Hosanna – save us – Son of David! Hosanna – save us – in the highest!"

Amen.

¹ *The Living Church*, December 11, 2016, p.6