

WEEKLY MEDITATION

The Lord is at hand. (Philippians 4:5)

This verse from the Epistle seems particularly appropriate today, for Palm Sunday is the feast of the entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. From the Gospel account we gather with what eagerness His coming to the city was anticipated and with what rejoicing He was greeted. In imitation of the 'children of the Hebrews' we too cry out: *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord! We take up our palms, branches and pussy-willows as a confession of faith in the Lordship of Christ, as emblems of our anticipation of His coming and our commitment to His kingdom.*

But on that first Holy Week, the excitement of the sense of the Lord being at hand soon turned into cynicism, and the voices that on Sunday had acclaimed Him cried out before the end of the week: *away with Him! away with Him! crucify Him, crucify Him!*

How easy it is to lose the sense that the Lord is at hand! How terrible this disenchantment is! Zeal becomes luke-warm, and even turns into contempt. The tension and dynamism of anticipation dissipates. Perhaps we feel our expectations are not being met. Perhaps we are distracted by other things. Our joy evaporates. Bitterness ensues. Such are the temptations that we face in life, and they are terrible.

May we take up our palms, branches and pussy-willows as an earnest expression of an inward desire to re-awaken and renew our sense that the Lord is everywhere and at every moment at hand. Our Lord and Master: yes. Our Judge: yes. Our Advocate and Friend: yes. The One who heals, has mercy, forgives, makes whole. The One who loves us and gives Himself to us. The One who enters into the gathering darkness of Holy Week for us and for our salvation.

~Fr. Andrew