

Yesterday we celebrated Lazaros Saturday, the day on which the Resurrection, the resurrection of man from the dead, is talked about. But in the time of Jesus , the miracle of raising a man who had been dead for four days had naturally spread like wildfire . People talked about it and naturally wanted to see that miracle worker. And Christ makes it so that all can come to know him. His journey from Bethanie to Jerusalem turns into a triumphal journey. He asks his disciples to untie a young donkey so that he can ride it to Jerusalem. And the people applaud him, and spread their garments and also palm branches on the road where he went, and so he enters Jerusalem.

The surprising thing about all this is that those same people who are now praising him will be shouting "crucify him" in five days. Those were the Jews whom the scholars and political leaders held in high esteem and who were misled and incited by them. The fathers are clear that the donkey that Jesus asked to let loose and on which Jesus rode, represents the Gentiles, the people who so called knew nothing. Who had nothing to be proud of. Together with the Jews they celebrate Christ. The garments they laid on the road represent their possessions, their identity, their own opinion of the things , over which they let Christ ride, which they offer to Christ. The donkey represents man, who in all his petulance is still willing to serve Christ and Christ leads him, that petulant man, to the heavenly Jerusalem. The Jews will later realize that Christ is not coming to cast out the Romans and become a worldly king and so he is crucified.

There is a huge warning in the Gospel reading of this day, Palm Sunday. And that is that we can praise, adore, venerate Christ, but if He does not meet our expectations, we can also crucify Him. Well, not many of us will actually persecute Him, but turn our backs on Him because things don't go the way we think is right. We applaud Christ because our heart is touched and we want to reach the Heavenly Jerusalem with Him, but that way goes via the cross. As we will see next week, the way to our resurrection is through the cross. That is, we will have to do something about our impure heart. An impure heart is a heart that loves not only Christ but other things as well. On a day like today Christ shows who He is, He raised Lazaros from the dead, and so He can also raise us from the dead; and He wants to take us to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The enthusiasm of a day like today can carry us along and make us feel that it is Christ what we want, but there are also other loves in our hearts that have taken deep root. Pulling out those roots goes with the cross, we can only go with Christ if we carry our cross, even embrace it. Because it is the cross that enables us to love only Christ. Let's not be like Judas who loved Christ but also loved money, as becomes clear again in this gospel reading. Let the glad tidings of Palm Sunday give us the enthusiasm to love only Christ. Hosanna, Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.