



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

## **Palm Sunday Year B**

### ***Hosanna***

*Readings: Isaiah 50: 4-7, Ps 21, Philippians 2: 6-11, Mark 14: 1 – 15: 47*

The rubrics for this liturgy in the Missal instruct the priest to give a brief homily. I cannot see what I could possibly add to the glorious extended Gospel account of the central mystery of the salvation of the world, never mind briefly, but, as a loyal son of the Church, I will be obedient. In so doing I will concentrate on one simple thought alone.

At the triumphal entry of Christ Jesus into the Holy City, via the Golden Gate, the crowds strewed the road with their garments and the branches of palm. With one voice they cried, '*Hosanna*'.

Over time this great cry of intercession has morphed into a song of acclamation. I once heard a preacher tell a congregation that 'hosanna' meant 'hooray'.

'Hosanna' means, quite simply, '*Save us, we pray.*' It is addressed to the Messianic King, the only one who can restore the kingdom. It is addressed to the Son of David. It is an appeal to rescue us from our enemies. The voices that raised this shout outside the Holy City two thousand years ago were looking for liberation from the occupying power

of Rome and the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel through the Messiah, Jesus. The voices that have raised this shout in Christian liturgy ever since are claiming the sovereignty of Christ and His power. We are proclaiming the eternal kingdom of God. We are celebrating His triumph over sin and death. We are imploring His mercy upon us – we look to Him for salvation.

Our problem is that we live in the midst of a society that does not know its need of salvation. ‘Salvation from what?’ For many either God does not exist and neither does life after death. In their minds there is nothing beyond the world of matter, nothing beyond the scope of time.

Nonetheless, it is for them, as well as for you and me, that Christ died. But unless a man knows his need of salvation he is unlikely to seek it in Christ or anywhere else. Part of our task as evangelists, as proclaimers of the Messiah, is to bring people to a knowledge of their need of salvation. Only then will they stand with us, at the gate of the Holy City, and cry out, ‘Hosanna’ – ‘Save us, we pray’ - and begin the ascent to the Calvary where the occupying powers of sin and death are finally defeated.

‘Hosanna’ is the cry of the needy as well as the shout of eternal triumph.