

Why John 12, Mark 15 March 25, 2018 Passion Sunday

Today, we ask why we go from Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel! John 12 to And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." and we hear Jesus even more poignant question "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" always why?

Dear friends in Christ, today is a day of celebration in the Church, the day when Christ comes to his people and they acknowledge him as king. The day the shout Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel! And it is good that we too shout our hosannas, because today he comes not just to Jerusalem but to us as well. Christ is our king.

But the church service doesn't stop there - it didn't stop after the first 10 minutes. If the first commandment is you shall have no other Gods, why does the passion, the suffering, of our Lord come? Why isn't it enough that he be acknowledged as king?

When Israel first wanted a king, they wanted to be like the nations around them. To have someone else worry about their enemies to fight them for him, to let them have the spoils. They wanted the goodies. They still wanted that. The people acknowledged him as king - he was the miracle worker who would heal their diseases, feed them, teach them, and maybe kick out the Romans too. So yes, even to the sinful self, that says I want to be healthy, I want to eat, I'll let this guy be king. It's like the people who are happy to eat with you as long as you are picking up the check. It's like the children who think you are the best parent ever if you feed them pizza, if you feed them ice cream, if you let them play video games. They are happy to be in charge if they can get what they want. So they'll say you are the best parent ever, and they chose Jesus as king.

But the question isn't about who gets to be in charge. It isn't about who gets the praises. You care for your kids and they won't be healthy or happy if they do nothing but eat pizza and ice cream and play video games all day. You want better for them. You make them eat a balanced meal so they are fed what is good for them. You make them go to family outings because they need to get out as part of the family. Now the kids won't love or acknowledge you for that, at least not right away. They will argue and fight. Kids are kids. And sinful people are sinful people. And the people are dead in their sins. They prove it when they yell crucify him. They prove it when they mock him as king when he is on the cross, and not giving them the pizza and ice cream and video games they want. They only wanted king or the goodies. Yet Christ still cares for them. He desires not the death of sinners. He wants them to live as his people. Far more than that sinful men acknowledge him, he wants them to live as his people. They don't make him king, he makes them his people. And so the story continues after Palm Sunday. Where the cries change, but Christ does not. Where he takes the sin and abuse of the people in his own flesh. Where he proves himself a king for the people, who defeats not earthly foes but sin and death. Who takes the sin of the people so that he feels the rejection of God that the people would be saved. That is the story of the king. He is the one who enters the pains of death and rejection so that he may carry the people out from them. He leaves no misery we face unredeemed but even faces the fathers rejection for us. And on that cross he shows himself more as king than on Palm Sunday.

So today honor the king, not for the celebration, but for the life he brings. Today he comes lowly on a donkey bringing peace, bringing life. For he makes us his people.