

The Sanctus – *Holy, Holy, Holy* - Part 2 (Jesus comes just like Palm Sunday!)

Last week we reflected on *The Sanctus* as leading us towards the holy of holies in the sense that we join with the angels and the saints in heaven who are worshipping around the throne of God as well as being a large host or army of spiritual soldiers for Christ as well (Isaiah 6:3 and Revelation 4:8-11). Heaven comes down to earth during each and every Catholic Mass, which is the spiritual reality we are trying to lift our minds up to as we continue to go deeper in the second half of the mass, *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*, and Jesus becoming present to us under the forms of bread and wine! What's more, if you were looking at every single word that we say during this prayer, you might notice that we only really commented on the first part of the *Holy, holy, holy* prayer. The second half of the prayer consists of the following words, "*Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.*" This should remind of a very important part of Jesus' life that we hear about in the Gospels, Jesus entering the city of Jerusalem on a donkey while the people shout praise and lay down palms for his pathway, which we now celebrate on Palm Sunday every single year as the beginning of Holy Week and the last week of the Lenten season before Easter (Matthew 21:1-11).

The background to Jesus getting on a donkey and riding into Jerusalem is very important. The words that the Jewish crowds use to praise and acclaim Jesus in this moment come from Psalm 118 in the Old Testament. Historically, these words were said during the time when Jewish people were walking or riding on pilgrimage to the city of Jerusalem for one of the big Jewish feasts of the year. There is only one Temple in the world for the Jewish people (synagogues developed into the weekly gathering location for sabbath worship), and most importantly, the Temple in Jerusalem is where God's presence dwelt. Now you can imagine why this pilgrimage to the Jewish temple was so important. In addition, the word *Hosanna* is a kind of translation of a Hebrew word that means "save us" or a way to praise God's saving love of His people. Finally, coming in to Jerusalem on a donkey was Jesus declaring to the Jewish crowds that he was fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9-10 ("*Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey*"). When we pray these words at Mass, we are once again preparing our hearts for the immense reality that is taking place before us. Jesus is coming to us, in a sense, just as truly and fully present and impactful as when he came to the Jewish crowds on that day coming into Jerusalem. He comes humbly under the form of bread and wine, but he also comes as our King to reign in our hearts, minds, and souls. May we ask God to help us understand this beautiful hymn and prayer of the Mass, and may we allow *The Sanctus* prayer to keep our minds lifted up to the great truth of God's love for us in worship, in His paschal mystery, and in the Eucharist.