

# HOSANNA

## Sermon at the Eucharist on Palm Sunday

Collect & Readings: Book of Common Prayer (Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent)

THE multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest’. So St Matthew describes the scene on Palm Sunday as Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah: ‘Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass’. There could not be a more striking statement of the claim of Jesus to be the King, the Christ, the Messiah. The shouts of the crowds echo other Old Testament passages, notably Psalm 118, which is a great acclamation of the King who was to come.

The word ‘Hosanna’ found its way into the Church’s liturgy, notably in the text we call the Sanctus, which begins ‘Holy, holy, holy’. In the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer, as we use it this morning, the word is submerged in the English words: ‘Glory be to thee, O Lord most high’. It reappears in its original Hebrew form in the modern liturgies. But whether in Hebrew or in English, when the prayer of consecration is recited, and the Lord’s words at the Last Supper are repeated, then we too greet our King as he comes – as he comes to us, not in the lowliness of riding an ass, but in the lowliness of bread and wine.

So we take him to ourselves this morning, as Christ our Lord, Christ our King. And just as on that first Palm Sunday he came to die for our salvation and rise again; so he comes to us today, crucified and risen, dwelling in us that we might dwell in him.

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Preached at the Eucharist in Worcester Cathedral  
on Sunday 2 April 2023.

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