Palm/Passion Sunday. Procession Gospel: Luke 19: 28-40 (April 10, 2022).

 The first part of today’s Gospel (Lk 19:28-40) describes the royal reception which Jesus received from his admirers. They paraded with him for two miles: from the Mount of Olives to the city of Jerusalem. Two-and-a-half million people were normally present to celebrate the Jewish feast of the Passover. Jesus permitted such a royal procession for two reasons: 1) to reveal to the public that he was the promised Messiah.

 And 2) to fulfill the prophecies of Zech. (9:9): “Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion…. see now your King comes to you; he is victorious, triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey…”), and Zeph. (3:16-19): “Fear not, O Zion, be not discouraged! The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a mighty Savior … He will … renew you in His love… I will save the lame, and assemble the outcasts … I will bring about their restoration.”

As we take part in this procession the main question I would like us to reflect on is: **“Are you a donkey with a Christian name only, or one carrying Christ?”** An interesting as well as challenging old fable tells of the colt that carried Jesus on Palm Sunday. The colt thought that the reception was organized to honor him. **“I am a unique donkey!”** this excited animal might have thought. When he asked his mother if he could walk down the same street alone the next day and be honored again, his mother said, **“No, you are nothing without Him who was riding you.**" Remember what Jesus himself said that: “I am the Vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing…” (John 15:5).

Five days later, the colt saw a huge crowd of people in the street. It was Good Friday, and the soldiers were taking Jesus to Calvary. **The colt could not resist the temptation of another royal reception. And so ignoring the warning of his mother, he ran to the street, but he had to flee for his life as soldiers chased him and people stoned him.**

Thus, the donkey finally learned the lesson that he was only a poor donkey without Jesus to ride on him. **Lesson:** -- **As we enter Holy Week, today’s readings challenge us to examine our lives to see whether we carry Jesus within us and bear witness to Him through our living, or are Christians in name only?**