



## PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO THE PONTIFICAL GOOD FRIDAY HOLY LAND COLLECTION

*Palm Sunday:*

### REJOICE O JERUSALEM, YOUR KING HAS COME!

On Palm Sunday, the faithful are confronted with the poignant contrast between the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the harrowing Gospel of the Passion that begins Holy Week.

As we read in the Matthew's account, Jesus instructs his disciples to prepare for his entry into Jerusalem, a mere two miles away. The crowds in front and behind him proclaim him as the "Son of David," a messianic title exclusive to the Jewish Messiah. He comes riding on a colt, the "foal of a beast of burden," and enters in humility and in peace, pointing to what His Kingdom actually entails and fulfilling the words of Zechariah 500 years before, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey." (Zech 9:9)

But despite his triumphal entry as Messiah, the forces of darkness that had been held at bay since Jesus' birth at Bethlehem finally begin to emerge from the shadows and plot to overwhelm him. In the first reading, Isaiah's prophecy foretells that the Christ would go like a sheep to the slaughter. Jesus lets the darkness come and lets it overwhelm, because that is the Father's will. He is betrayed by Judas and arrested by the Temple guards. All his disciples desert him. He is tried and condemned by the Sanhedrin and finally turned over to Pontius Pilate and crucified.

In the grim details of today's reading, the prophecy of Zechariah 13:7 comes to pass: "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." Jesus would have seen the soldiers coming as they left the Jerusalem gate and crossed the Kirdron Valley with torches, then entered the garden. There, we read the famous exchange between the guards and a waiting Jesus, who does not resist.



*The "Rock of Agony" where Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, today in the Church of All Nations.*

Pilgrims who come to the Holy Land can pray in the same Garden of Gethsemane in the same spot our Lord did on the night of his betrayal and arrest. The Church of All Nations next to the Garden, with its Rock of Agony where Jesus prayed and sweated blood, is owned and maintained by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, who receives financial support from the Good Friday Collection. The Franciscans also sponsor multiple apostolates that assist our brothers and sisters in Christ, many of whom are descended from the Christians of the first century.

It is a wonderful opportunity for all of us to give Christian witness by making a generous contribution on Good Friday to the Holy Land Collection that preserves the Holy Sites such as the Garden of Gethsemane, as well as supporting the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

## Help for Holy Land Christians

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