

Palm Sunday, Year B
Mark 11: 1-11
April 5, 2009

Trinity Episcopal Church
Sonoma, CA

We Cry Hosanna:
A Sermon Preached by the Rev. Susan Allison-Hatch

What is the picture that comes to mind when you hear the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem? Do you imagine crowds of people thronging the roadside? Do you picture children perched in the trees or peeking out from behind their mother's cloak? Do you feel the press of bodies in a crowd? All waving branches of palms. All crying out "Hosanna." All jubilant. All joyful.

We hear the word "Hosanna" and we think "Hooray." But that's not what Hosanna means. It means "Save us, we beseech you."

"Hosanna," a cry echoing across a road lined with the crosses the Romans put up to instill fear in the hearts of those they oppress.

"Save us." What courage it takes to make that cry!

"Hosanna." What compassion it takes to answer it.

Save us from our hunger and our fear.
Save us from the armies that march across our land.
Save us from those that claim our land and our lives.
"Save us," cried the people on that road to Jerusalem.

"Hosanna"—it's the cry of the overlooked and the cast aside.

"Hosanna"—a cry from the depths of despair, a cry from a people determined to hope against hope.

"Hosanna," a cry of those who pick up their cross and follow Jesus.

"Save us, we beseech you, save us."

Joining them we lift our branches of palms and cry out, "Hosanna," "Save us."

From the dark corners of our lives, we cry out "Hosanna."
Save us from our fear, our pain, our loneliness, our loss.
Save us from the demons that plague us.
Save us in this time of trial.
Save us.

But to cry “Hosanna” from and for our own individual lives alone is to miss a vital part of the day. “Hosanna”—it means save **us** not save **me**. “Hosanna”—a cry that calls us to solidarity with a community, a world, of suffering.

“Save us,” we cry with all who hunger and who stand in line for food.

“Save us,” we cry with all who are afraid of losing their homes or their jobs or the ones they love.

“Save us,” we cry with the great community of need—both here in Sonoma and throughout the world.

“Save us,” we cry with one another and with all who are in pain or fear or loneliness or loss.

“Hosanna--“Save us,” we cry to the one who comes to us on a donkey and who walks with us to the cross.

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.”