

Matthew 21:1-11

*Ad Te Levavi:* 1st Sunday in Advent

27 November 2016

St. John's, Chicago, IL

In the Name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Netflix series, "*The Crown*," has many people getting a taste of history from the 1950's. The care for detail in costuming and style, and reflecting actual history with the ongoing story is quite remarkable. As viewers see these details, they see the episode with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. On her way to Westminster Abbey, she is paraded through the streets of London in a golden coach that has served such state occasions since before her great-great grandmother, Queen Victoria.

On this First Sunday in Advent, we hear of another parade. The Son of David rides into Jerusalem for **His** coronation, just like **Solomon**, the Son of David, did when **he was coronated**. The Lord Jesus was watched and anticipated in this subtle but powerful imagery, quietly pointing out that He is the Anointed One, coming in the

Name of the Lord. And as they gather to get a glimpse of Jesus and sing their greetings, the people waited.

The people wait. And then he comes. The people of Jerusalem had waited. For generations. For centuries. Well over 500 years had passed since the prophet spoke of the Christ, the Son of David as the **"King coming to you, riding a donkey."**

In 1953, the people and ten choirs sang hymns like, "Old Hundredth," and the *Te Deum*. On Palm Sunday, preparing for **Jesus'** coronation, children sang their **"Hosannas,"** and cheered Him **"who comes in the name of the Lord."** Yet they did not quite understand what this King was going to do, or **how** He would reign. But then again, neither do you. Or rather, you do not always want to understand. You like a Jesus who shows off some earthly power, and can put others in their place. You want your King to come in and conquer! One who will just say the word and destroy godless dictators. The Champion who will crush the enemies of His Church. This is a **triumphal** entry; He needs to come in and show them who's boss! "Come on, Jesus! You should be riding some white stallion, or

have a King's golden coach pulled by a bunch of strong, regal white horses!"

We follow that pattern too. We want our coming Jesus who will snap His fingers and produce all that we want or desire. We want a Jesus who will make life easy and trouble-free and will simply take away any illnesses or accidents or hardships from us and our loved ones. We want a Jesus who will bless our parish, school, and extended care with lots of money and popularity. We want a Jesus who will give us an easy but high-paying job, a big house, expensive cars, and all the latest things that our friends have. We want a Jesus who – plain and simple – is **not Jesus!**

Repent. The people of Jerusalem may not have known any better. But **you do**. Lusting after the power, and glory of God in the image that **we** want Him to be, and trying to make that power and glory our own, has been a favorite sin ever since the Fall in the Garden of Eden. And imitating the ways of the world, as if **its** wisdom and ways

were desired more than God's, only leads to pain and judgment for the church.

Yet the Lord does not manipulate and remove trials from you. He does not wave a royal scepter like a wand and make you a force to be reckoned with, in the ways of the world. Instead, He surrounds you with His love and grace and forgiveness, as He bears your burdens and carries you through every trial and valley.

You offend the King of the Universe as you push your twisted opinions on Him. You push away the coming King, as you refuse His humility and argue against His lowliness.

But that will not stop Him. This King of kings **does** come humble and lowly. He comes serving. He comes, not to show off and exert His power in order to impress others and influence people because He can do cool tricks, but to spend His last week teaching His Holy Word and readying His disciples for His ultimate sacrifice.

He rides into Jerusalem on the humble donkey and foal, in order to suffer and die and rise for you. Now, He rides into this church -- indeed, into your ears and mouths, on the humble words of His preaching and the humble gifts of

bread and wine. No longer just earthly gifts, our Lord Jesus enters these means and comes to you in His own flesh and blood!

The King comes with pardon and forgiveness, removing your trespasses and paying your debts. We hear Him and receive Him week after week in His Word and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Jesus DOES come to us. And every Sunday – every Lord's Day – is a celebration of that presence.

That is why the Divine Service is the most important thing in any Christian's life, whether you realize it or not. It is **central** to our faith. It is the heartbeat of the Church. It is where God comes and gives Himself as a Gift! It is where the Lord feeds us so we have the strength and nourishment to continue in life. Whether you find it exciting or not, this is the most significant and important hour of your week! When people truly understand this, they desire to come to the Divine Service.

The devil and the world will tempt you. They will try to convince you how boring it is to come to the Divine Service. It is a tough battle, and Satan will try hard to

harass you. Even when you do come, the devil will try to convince you to let your heart and mind drift from the Holy Gifts that our Savior gives.

But our dear and blessed Savior is there. The same Jesus who hears our ***“Hosannas”*** and ***“Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!”*** is still there. He continues to forgive us, even as we drift during the Divine Service, through the very Gifts in that Service.

And with joy, we respond to that forgiveness, singing as His redeemed saints, who await His coming: ***“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!”*** Amen.