



DAY 40: Meditation

PALM SUNDAY

Today's exercise marks the beginning of the Third week of the exercises, in which we focus now on the passion of Our Lord. It begins the same way that the Church begins holy week, with a meditation on Palm Sunday, the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem. Ignatius's meditation comes from #287.

1. Act of the Presence of God

2. Preparatory Prayer, as in #46

Lord, I ask that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of Your Divine Majesty. Amen.

3. Prelude 1: Composition of Place

Envision that moment on the Mount of Olives at the overlook- Jesus brings the donkey to a halt for a moment and looks over the city and tears roll down his cheeks. See the apprehension for a moment on his disciple's faces, who have just been loudly rejoicing, but feel for a moment the oncoming darkness of the passion.

4. Prelude 2: Petition

our petition will be the one proper to the beginning of the third week, the week where we remember Christ's sufferings, His passion. Ignatius writes in number #193 that we should "ask for sorrow, compassion, and shame because the Lord is going to His suffering for my sins."

5. Main Points for Meditation

First Point: "Our Lord sends for the ass and the foal, saying "Loose them and bring them to me, and if anyone say ought to you, you shall say 'The Lord hath need of them,' and straightaway he will let them go."

Second Point: "After the ass was covered with the garments of the Apostles, Jesus mounted it."

Third Point: "The people came forth to meet Jesus, and spread their garments and the branches of trees in the way, saying 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!'"

6. Developing the Main Points

One of the primary themes that comes through in the language and imagery of the gospel passage today is that Christ is a King, and is the true messiah that had been prophesied about since the beginning of the world. He is man who Melchizedek foreshadowed, both a King and a



priest. We can recall what Paul says about Melchizedek in the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 7: “Melchizedek first means “King of Justice,” and he was also “King of Salem,” that is, “King of Peace.”

Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey and her foal. It was ancient custom that kings rode upon horses during times of war, and on donkeys during times of peace, and thus Christ the King of Peace enters into His city in the proper fashion. That’s the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you, He is just and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” In light of this royal imagery we can pause and ask “What is a King?” The Greek word for King is “Monarch,” derived from monos, meaning “one” and “arkhe,” meaning “rule” or “government.” A monarch has two prerogatives: a supreme authority over society, and a hereditary right to this authority.

Christ possesses both of these in a surpassing way. Firstly, Christ is king because He is God, the firstborn of all creation, co-eternal with God the Father. Secondly because with His blood He purchased for God men of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, and he has made of this people a kingdom of priests to reign upon the earth for the Glory of God. He has participated what is His own: He is a king, he has extended His kingdom to us. Thirdly, because he has said it Himself. In the Praetorium Pilate asked “Are you the King of the Jews?” and Christ responded “My kingdom is not of the world.” This gave Pilate pause, and he said “Then you are a King? And Christ affirmed it in that Hebrew way by saying “You say that I am a king.”

The liturgy connects the triumphal entry to the Passion, revealing that Christ’s kingship is defined by the Cross. While the crowds exulted, Jesus wept over the city, saying, **“Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hid from your eyes.”** Jerusalem represents the human soul, where Jesus desires to reign using “living stones.”

We often reject His reign because His methods are alien to us. The world expected a political liberator to bring prosperity, but Jesus refused that earthly crown. Instead, He accepted a purple cloak over open wounds, a crown of thorns for a diadem, and a reed for a scepter. His throne was the Cross, where the title **“Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews”** certified His reign. He does not force His kingdom; He offers it through meekness.

Despite human resistance, St. Paul declares, **“He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”** In 1925, Pope Pius XI instituted the feast of Christ the King to combat Liberalism and Secularism—errors that seek to make man the sole determiner of his destiny. These errors are echoed in Psalm 2:

“Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed, saying, “Let us burst their bonds asunder, and cast their cords



from us.” ... Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, with trembling kiss his feet, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way; for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.”

When we side with the sentiment "we will have no objective morality," we effectively crown Jesus with thorns. If pleasure replaces Him, we scourge Him. When His law does not guide our actions, we pierce His hands; when we push Him from our hearts, we open His side with the lance.

7. Colloquy

We can finish, then with a colloquy to our King, as though we were walking alongside Him as he rides towards Jerusalem. Ask him for the grace to be firm in the resolutions you have taken, the grace to always remember His adorable face that was so marred in the passion, and to brook no retreat in the battles that lie ahead. And we can finish, then, with **Soul of Christ prayer**.