



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

*Palm Sunday:*

### IS CHRIST THE KING OF YOUR HEART?

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. Such is the everyday life of the Christians in the Holy Land: knowing the joy of the Gospel in their heart but facing the harsh realities of the daily struggle for basic human needs.

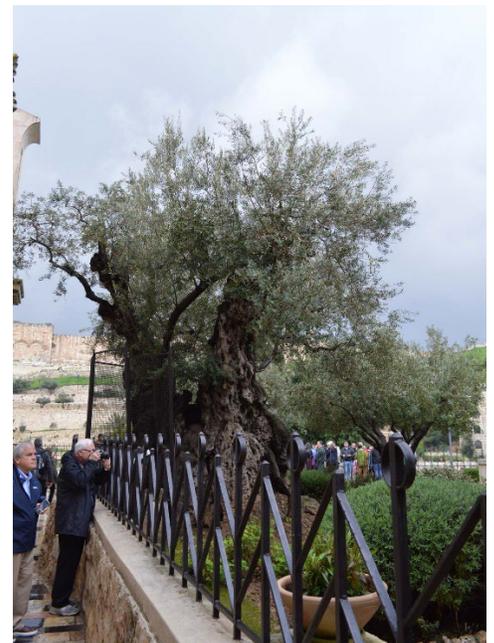
As we read in the Luke's account, Jesus made his way to Bethany and sent his disciples to prepare for his entry into Jerusalem, a mere two miles away. The crowds greet Him as a king, a detail exclusive to Luke, and the proclamation of "Peace in Heaven and glory in the highest" (Lk 19:38) echoes the angelic announcement of the angels at the birth of Jesus (Lk 2:14). He rides a colt, a young donkey, and enters in humility and in peace, pointing to what His Kingdom actually entails and fulfilling the words of Zechariah 500 years before, "A just savior is he, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech 9:9-10).

In a grim foreshadowing of the Passion to come, we see the Pharisees calling on Jesus to rebuke his followers. They now begin to actively plot His arrest and death, and the great drama of Holy Week starts to unfold.

When pilgrims go to the Holy Land and pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, they realize, being in the same place where he was that night, that Jesus would have seen the soldiers coming as they left the city walls and began their ascent up the Mount of Olives to arrest him. 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.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) once wrote, "How different the cries are that now are calling him 'King of Israel' and then in a few days' time will be saying, 'We have no king but Caesar!' What a contrast between the green olive branches and the cross, between the flowers and the thorns!" St. Bernard's point is for all of us: are we like the crowds in Jerusalem? Do we proclaim Him our King on Sunday and by the end of the week deny Him in our thoughts, our actions, and our own fear to live the Christian witness in our families, with our friends, and in the world? A wonderful opportunity for all of us to give Christian witness is to make a generous contribution on Good Friday to the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land that preserves the Holy Sites and the Christian presence in the Holy Land.



*The "Witness Tree" in the Garden of Gethsemane. This tree was alive and growing the night Jesus came to pray here after the Last Supper.*

## Help for Holy Land Christians

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