**PALM SUNDAY [24th March, 2013]**

READINGS: Isaiah 50:4-7/ Phil. 2: 6-11/ Luke 22:14-23:56.

THEME: WAVE YOUR CHRISTIAN VICTORY FLAG

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

While we would wave our national flag if our national [football] team wins a championship, the Jews of the bible times would wave palm branches to celebrate their victories. For example, around 170BC, the Maccabees led some fellow Jews to defeat the Greeks who had earlier on taken over Jerusalem and desecrated the Temple. On the occasion of the purification of the Temple and the celebration of the victory, the Jews sang songs of praises to God while waving PALM and other branches (*cf*. 2 Macc. 10:7).

Thus, as Jesus entered Jerusalem on that faithful day – which we now call PALM Sunday – the jubilant crowd was celebrating the victories of the Jesus, their HERO! They were celebrating the victories of Jesus over evil:

* His victory over sickness [the many times he healed the sick, lame, blind…],
* His victory over evil possessions,
* His victory over hunger [e.g. feeding over 5,000 people with 5 loaves],
* His victory in raising the dead [the most recent of which was the raising of Lazarus; this made many people want to see who Jesus was].

Beloved, as the crowd celebrated the victories of Jesus, they didn’t, however, know that they were welcoming him to the “stadium” for the greatest of all his victories – his victory over Satan on the latter’s own home ground.

Let me put it in another way. Jesus had defeated Lucifer [Satan] in heaven; then the latter asked for a rematch on a neutral ground: earth. Jesus accepted the challenge and for 33 years he defeated Satan [e.g. after his conception by Mary, the evil one suggested to Joseph to divorce Mary but he was defeated; after his birth, Satan wanted to kill the child through Herod, but he was defeated; after his baptism, Satan tempted Jesus as he fasted but he was defeated; in his ministry of teaching, healing and miracles, Satan was defeated numerous times]. Now Satan called for a match on his home ground: hell. Jesus, confidently accepted the challenge, died and descended into “hell” and there defeated Satan 3 – 0, arising on the third day!

Beloved, Rev. 7:9-12 informs us that as the **saints in heaven**, with PALM branches in their hands, praised God and Christ, the Lamb of God, the **angels** responded by **prostrating** before the heavenly throne and worshipping with the words: ‘AMEN! BLESSING AND GLORY AND WISDOM, THANKSGIVING AND HONOUR AND POWER AND MIGHT, BE TO OUR GOD FOREVER AND EVER, AMEN!’

So we could say that as the crowds waved the PALM branches in Jerusalem, the **angels**, who had the fore-knowledge that it was the celebration of Jesus’ **anticipatedvictory** over Satan, were prostrating and worshipping in heaven!

Usually a victorious crowd has its victory song. The crowd in Jerusalem were shouting: ‘HOSANNA to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’ (Mk. 11:9-10). The ‘Hosanna’ in the victory song means ‘SAVE US!’ or ‘SALVATION’. The saints in heaven with PALM branches also sang a similar victory song: ‘SALVATION belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’ (Rev. 7:10).Therefore, let us join the saints to sing: ‘HOSANNA to the Son of David! … SALVATION belongs to our God and to the Lamb of God!’

Beloved, since the victory of Jesus for our salvation is an **everlasting** victory, let us **always** wave our VICTORY FLAG – let us wave, in the church and outside the church, our **PALM** branches:

* + **P** – Prayer
  + **A** – Adoration [worship God]
  + **L** – Lifestyle [good lifestyle]
  + **M** – Mercy [deeds of mercy and forgiveness; for Jesus says, it is mercy that God desires (Mt. 9:13)]

And, anytime we wave our PALM branches of PRAYER, ADORATION, good LIFESTYLE, and deeds of MERCY, may the angels respond with their worship in heaven! Amen! And may we one day be part of the heavenly saints with PALM branches and witness “LIVE” the angels prostrating before the throne of God and of the Lamb of God! Amen!