

## This Palm Sunday we ask: "Who IS a 'disciple'?"

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We've been reading how *Unleash the Gospel* proclaims:

"Jesus Christ makes all things new! He himself is at work to renew his Church in the Archdiocese of Detroit. He is pouring out his Holy Spirit anew so that every member of the Church may be formed and sent forth as a **joyful missionary disciple.**"

That's Pope Francis' phrase for how we ought to live as followers of Christ.

"**Joyful**" we get.

"**Missionary?**" We're always learning how to share the Good News.

But being a "**Disciple?**" That may be the hard part.

We may see ourselves like the people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. In many ways we are. We love Jesus, worship Him and pray to Him. We cheer "Hosanna!" crying out in joyful adoration.

When the Jews saw Jesus riding in on a donkey, they saw Him as the returning king, as Solomon had entered the city 1000 years before. We too, proclaim Christ our King. The Jews also recognized Jesus as the High Priest ascending to the Temple altar. That is why they waved palm branches and sang "Halleluiah!" (Psalm 118:24-27). We too, raise palms today to welcome Christ our High Priest.

*But are waving palms and shouting the acts of disciples, or of fair-weather "fans"?* Those who show up only when it looks like Jesus' team is winning? Indeed, in a few days most in the cheering throng in Jerusalem turned into a jeering mob as Jesus ascended the hill at Calvary.

The irony is that no one then saw how the Cross *was* Christ's throne. No fan and only a few disciples were with Jesus when, as High Priest *and* Lamb, He consummated His perfect sacrifice on the altar of the Cross, dying to redeem us all.

### So, who IS a "disciple"?

We are, when we follow Jesus closely.

When we take up our crosses and stand with Him at Calvary.

When we are faithful to the Law Jesus has written within our hearts.

When we return to Him as Peter did even after he denied Jesus three times.

We are disciples when we sustain the *disciplines* of prayer, fasting and almsgiving we have sharpened this Lent.

When we, sent forth from each Mass, actually **do** share the Good News with our lives, showing courage enough to speak the truth, standing up against injustice, and being a witness to love in the face of intolerance or disrespect of our neighbors, or of life.

As Lent comes to an end, let us keep our promises to follow Jesus, uniting with Him in His Passion and death, unleashing the Gospel with our lives, and singing "Halleluiah" at Easter as **joyful missionary disciples!**