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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

Matthew 21: 1-9

Douay Rheims Version

Christ rides into Jerusalem upon an ass. He casts the buyers and sellers out of the temple, curses the fig tree and puts to silence the priests and scribes.

1. And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem and were come to Bethphage, unto mount Olivet, then Jesus sent two disciples,
2. Saying to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you: and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to me.
3. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them. And forthwith he will let them go.
4. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

transitory salvation from man; but divine, heavenly, and eternal from God, viz., that God would divinely save Him, and give Him the power of saying others; that, indeed, Christ by His grace would lead all His faithful and holy ones to the eternal salvation, felicity, kingdom, and glory. Hence Origen explains *Hosanna* to mean restitution to life eternal. For this is intimated by the words, *in the highest*, or as he himself reads, *in the lofty*, that in truth this salvation must be sought for not on earth, but in Heaven. Again, S. Jerome says, "The advent of Christ is shown to be the salvation of the whole world, joining earthly things to heavenly." The *Gloss* adds, *in the Lofty*, because Christ is the salvation even of the angels, whose number He fills up. Whence Emm. Sa adds that even the angels who are in the high places are here invited to the triumph and praise of Christ Messiah. Wherefore S. Luke (xix. 38), instead of *Hosanna*, has *peace in heaven*, that is, safety, prosperity, and every good thing (for this is what peace denotes to the Hebrews) be from Heaven to Messiah, and through Him may they flow, and rain from God upon us; and *glory on high* (supply) may there be to God, the giver to Messiah. Or rather, *glory*, viz., of the kingdom, firm, great and constant, this is a glorious kingdom; in, i.e., *from on high*, understand, from Heaven let there be divinely given to our Messiah. So Franc. Lucas. Again, more loftily, *Peace in Heaven* (let there be), namely, that God, until now angry with men, may be propitious to Christ, and through Christ to us; and may He reconcile angels to men, Heaven to earth, God to the synagogue. "Hence some," says S. Chrysostom, "interpret *Hosanna*, *glory*—others, the *Resurrection*; for also glory is due to Him, and redemption belongs to Him who all hath redeemed." Meaning, let glory and praise be to the God of all things who is on high. The angels sang the same at the birth of Christ. But *Hosanna* properly signifies not glory, but salvation. But our salvation through Christ was the glory of God. In another sense, in the preface of the Sacrifice of the Mass, at the Trisagion, Holy, Holy, Holy, is added. "Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord," that, indeed, we should pray not for Christ, but for ourselves, through Christ, for salvation, by asking that He also may by all be blessed, worshipped, praised, and may in turn copiously pour forth His blessings and graces upon us. Luke adds (xix. 41), *And when He drew near, beholding the city, He wept over it, saying, because thou shouldst have known, even thou, &c.* Because He foresaw and foretold its dreadful punishment and destruction by Titus and Vespasian.

5. Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek and sitting upon an ass and a colt, the foal of her that is used to the yoke.
6. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them.
7. And they brought the ass and the colt and laid their garments upon them and made him sit thereon.
8. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: and others cut boughs from the trees and strewed them in the way.
9. And the multitudes that went before and that followed cried, saying: Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.
10. And when he was come into Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this?
11. And the people said: This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.
12. And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple and overthrew the tables of the money changers and the chairs of them that sold doves.
13. And he saith to them: It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.
14. And there came to him the blind and the lame in the temple: and he healed them.
15. And the chief priests and scribes, seeing the wonderful things that he did and the children crying in the temple and saying: Hosanna to the son of David, were moved with indignation,
16. And said to him: Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus said to them: Yea, have you never read: Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings thou hast perfected praise?
17. And leaving them, he went out of the city into Bethania and remained here.
18. And in the morning, returning into the city, he was hungry.
19. And seeing a certain fig tree by the way side, he came to it and found nothing on it but leaves only. And he saith to it: May no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away.
20. And the disciples seeing it wondered, saying: How is it presently withered away?
21. And Jesus answering, said to them: Amen, I say to you, if you shall have faith and stagger not, not only this of the fig tree shall you do, but also if you shall say to this mountain, Take up and cast thyself into the sea, it shall be done.
22. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer believing, you shall receive.
23. And when he was come into the temple, there came to him, as he was teaching, the chief priests and ancients of the people, saying: By what authority dost thou these things? And who hath given thee this authority?
24. Jesus answering, said to them: I also will ask you one word, which if you shall tell me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.

25. The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men? But they thought within themselves, saying:

26. If we shall say, from heaven, he will say to us: Why then did you not believe him? But if we shall say, from men, we are afraid of the multitude: for all held John as a prophet.

27. And answering Jesus, they said: We know not. He also said to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

28. But what think you? A certain man had two sons: and coming to the first, he said: Son, go work to day in my vineyard.

29. And he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went.

30. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering said: I go, Sir. And he went not.

31. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to him: The first. Jesus saith to them: Amen I say to you that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you.

32. For John came to you in the way of justice: and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him: but you, seeing it, did not even afterwards repent, that you might believe him.

33. Hear ye another parable. There was a man, an householder, who planted a vineyard and made a hedge round about it and dug in it a press and built a tower and let it out to husbandmen and went into a strange country.

34. And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent his servants to the husbandmen that they might receive the fruits thereof.

35. And the husbandmen laying hands on his servants, beat one and killed another and stoned another.

36. Again he sent other servants, more than the former; and they did to them in like manner.

37. And last of all he sent to them his son, saying: They will reverence my son.

38. But the husbandmen seeing the son, said among themselves: This is the heir: come, let us kill him, and we shall have his inheritance.

39. And taking him, they cast him forth out of the vineyard and killed him.

40. When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen?

41. They say to him: He will bring those evil men to an evil end and let out his vineyard to other husbandmen that shall render him the fruit in due season.

42. Jesus saith to them: Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? By the Lord this has been done; and it is wonderful in our eyes.

43. Therefore I say to you that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof.

44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.

45. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they knew that he spoke of them.

46. And seeking to lay hands on him, they feared the multitudes, because they held him as a prophet.

Here, therefore, Christ as the glorious, powerful and triumphant King of Israel, whom none can resist, is as it were installed in Jerusalem, the royal city, in which formerly David and Solomon the ancestors of Christ had gloriously reigned, that He might restore their fallen kingdom, yea perfect it; and instead of its being earthly, make it heavenly; divine, instead of human; eternal, instead of temporal. Him furthermore the people by Hosanna partly applaud, partly pray for salvation for Him, *i.e.*, felicity and every good thing. This is what Mark says (xi. 9, 10). "And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Moreover Christ as it were entered into this His kingdom of the Church, five days afterwards, on the day before the Passover, when He triumphed on the Cross over sin, the world, the devil and hell, and delivered all nations from their power as far as He was concerned, and subjugated them. Wherefore the Church in her Votive Mass of the Passion of Christ, sings to Him, "To Thee be glory, Hosanna; to Thee triumph and victory: to Thee the crown of highest praise and honour, Alleluia." Hence too the Church in the Benediction of Palms prays to God that, "carrying palms and branches of olives, we may with good deeds run to meet Christ and may through Him enter into eternal joy."

Blessed (supply, *may He be*) *who cometh* (Greek, ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *i.e.*, *He coming, viz., who was about to come, who was expected*) in the name of the Lord. It means, may God bless, further, prosper, and make glorious the Kingdom of Messiah, our King. For He cometh to us *in the name of the Lord*, *i.e.*, He is authorised, sent, and endowed by the Lord. Thus in Jeremiah (iv. 16) it is said, "Thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord," *i.e.*, by the commandment, authority, and in the place of God. And (chap. iii. 17), "All nations shall be gathered together unto it (Jerusalem) in the name of the Lord." There is an allusion to Psalm xlv. 3, "Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most Mighty," &c., "Press forward, proceed prosperously, and reign." "For Christ is the King of Israel," says S. Augustine (in *Joan. cap. xii. 23*), "in that He rules minds; that He counsels for eternity; that He leads those who believe, hope, and love, to the Kingdom of Heaven."

Tropologically, Remigius: Christ, he says, *comes in the name of the Lord*, because in all His good works He sought not His own glory, but the glory of the Father.

Hosanna in the highest: Jansen explains it as though it were said, "Thou, O Lord, who art, and who dwellest in the highest Heavens, save Messiah." Better Franc. Lucas, Maldonatus, and others, take the preposition *ἰν*, for *ἰν*, *amin*, *i.e.*, *from*, according to the Hebrew construction, as though it were said, "Thou, O Lord, from Heaven, yea from the highest top of Heaven, save and prosper King Messiah." For they prayed for Messiah, not earthly and

Son of David, *i.e.*, to Christ, *Save me*, who am thy people, O Son of David, *i.e.*, Messiah, our King.

But I say that *Hosanna to the Son of David*, means the same thing as, *Save, I beseech thee, Son of David*. For so it should be rendered according to the Latin syntax. But the Greek interpreter, equally with the Latin, followed the Hebraism. For the Hebrew verb *hoscha*, *save*, is constructed with *lamed*, which is the sign of the dative case, and sometimes of the accusative. The multitude therefore besought God to save and prosper Messiah, that they might all be safe, and live happily under Him. Or still better and more simply, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, let that solemn *Hosanna* be made to Jesus sprung from David, whom we acknowledge to be the promised, and up to this time expected Son of David. Let Him be, let Him happen, let Him be acclaimed unanimously by us. This is the voice and the acclamation of the people by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, acknowledging Jesus as the Son of David, *i.e.*, the Messiah, and congratulating Him, as it were entering upon the kingdom of His father David, the restoration of which by Him had been so long expected; in fine, praying for health, prosperity and all propitious things for Him from God, and joyfully promising the same to themselves through Him. For where Christ is called the Son of David, there there is reference to the restitution of David's kingdom. So Franciscus Lucas.

Moreover Caninius in the place already quoted from, thus expounds, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, *i.e.*, in our hands we beat *Hosannas*, that is branches of palms, to the *Son of David*, that indeed we may honour Him as the King Messiah, and in triumph accompany Him as a victor and triumphing. Or, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, that is, cut ye down boughs, which as *Hosanna* ye may offer to the Son of David. As the Poet says, "Give ye lilies with full hands." But one thing was the *Hosanna* of the Feast of Tabernacles, namely like a certain Litany, another thing that of the crowd here by *Hosanna* to Christ, proclaiming and congratulating His triumph, as I have said a little before.

More plainly and fully you may say, that by the people it was here cried to Christ, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, meaning thus: "O Lord save not only our Messiah, David's Son and Heir, but grant also to Him the power of saving all the faithful believing in Him, and subject unto Him, that Thy Divine salvation may be so abundantly derived from Thee to Christ that He may cause the same to emanate and flow forth unto us. For verbs of the conjugation *Hiphil* have a specially active force, whence they often signify a double action. *Hosca* therefore, *i.e.*, *save*, signifies, *save Christ*, and at the same time cause that He should save His subjects, that in truth, even as He is called, so He may verily be *Jesus*, *i.e.*, the Saviour of the World, For *Jesus* is derived from *ישע* *iasca*, *i.e.*, *he hath saved*, which in *Hiphil*, the action being augmented, makes *הושע* *hosca*. From this cause the translator gives, *to the Son of David*, in the dative, whereas otherwise it might be translated, *the Son of David*, in the accusative. For the dative signifies, that salvation, *i.e.*, the power of saving all men, as it were, appropriated to Him alone was given to Christ by God. Note this, because as far as I know it has not been observed by any one.

Verse 1- *And when they were come nigh*, &c. Mark has (xi. 1), "And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, He sendeth forth two of His disciples," and Luke adds (xix. 29), "And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, He sent two of His disciples." But Mark and Luke are speaking generally, because Bethphage, Jerusalem, and Bethany are all nigh to each other. For coming to particulars it is clear from S. John (xii. 1, 12) that on the preceding Sabbath Christ supped, and passed the night at Bethany, and on the following day, or Palm Sunday, He came nearer to Jerusalem, that is to say, to Bethphage, and from thence sent His disciples to fetch the ass with her colt. For Bethphage was nearer to Jerusalem. Whence from Bethany through Bethphage, the Mount of Olives and the valley of Jehoshaphat was the road to Jerusalem. The valley of Jehoshaphat is close to Jerusalem. The brook Kedron flows through it. After this valley you come to the mount of Olives, then to the village of Bethphage, and then to Bethany.

Bethphage, in Hebrew, means the *house of the mouth*, or, *at the mouth of the valley*. *Beth* is a *house*, *phe*, the *mouth*, *ge*, a *valley*. For this village of Bethphage was seated at the foot of Mount Olivet, in a sort of cleft, or as it were *mouth* of the hill. Again this village was situated, as we may say, at the mouth, or entrance of the valley of Jehoshaphat. And this entrance is extremely narrow, as you come from Bethphage into the valley, and so on through the golden gate to the Temple. Whence it is very probable, as Jansen and Adrichomius say, that Bethphage was a village of the priests, in which lambs, goats, and oxen were kept ready for the temple sacrifices. Thus from Bethphage the priests were wont to fetch the paschal lambs, and other victims to the temple. From this cause too, when Christ willed to be brought in triumph from Bethphage through the golden gate unto Jerusalem, He would show that He was the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world, prefigured by the paschal lambs.

Again, He wished in His triumphal entry to pass through the valley of Jehoshaphat, in order to intimate, that in that same valley He will, in the day of Judgment, pass His tremendous judgment upon all men. Now therefore He rides through the valley in triumph to Jerusalem, as her Lord and King, and, thus, as it were, takes possession of His kingdom, which He will bring to a glorious consummation in the Day of Judgment. It is as if He said, "Acknowledge Me, O ye Jews, to be your Messiah, believe and obey Me, that in the day of Judgment, which I will accomplish in this valley, I may award you Heaven. But if ye persist in your unbelief, I shall adjudge you to hell. Wherefore also, I come from Bethany, where a few days since I raised up Lazarus from the dead, which ye have all seen and wondered at, that by it, and My other miracles ye may know that I am your Messiah, the Saviour of the world."

Then Jesus sent, &c. S. Hilary, Bede, and the *Gloss* think that these two were Peter and Philip; but Origen and Theophylact think they were Peter and Paul—that is, typically, in such sort that the two who were sent represented Peter and Paul; the one, who was about to be the Apostle of the Jews, the other, who was to become the Apostle of the Gentiles. For Paul was not as yet converted to Christ. With greater probability, Jansen thinks these two were Peter and John: for soon after this Christ sent them to prepare the paschal lamb. But nothing is certain.

Verse 2- Saying, &c. Greek, *εἰς κώμην κατένατι ὑμῶν, i.e.*, into the village which is opposite to you. From whence it is plain that it is not Jerusalem which is meant, as Lyra thinks, but either Bethphage, as Jansen supposes, or some village opposite to Bethphage, as Adrichomius thinks. For Christ had already come to Bethphage, as I have said in verse 1; unless you prefer to understand *when He came to Bethphage*, when He was *coming to* or *approaching* Bethany.

And straightway ye shall find, &c. Christ here beheld things absent, the ass and her colt, as though they were present. He surely made them known to His Apostles by the gift of prophecy, which His Divinity bestowed upon His humanity. Thus He here gave a proof of His Divinity.

Hear how blessed Peter Damian *tropologically* applies all the circumstances of this journey to the conversion of a sinner. (*Hom in Dom. Palm.*) “Bethphage is interpreted to mean, *the house of the mouth*; and it is *the understanding of the priests*, by which confession is meant. Thither the Lord cometh, because He kindles the heart to make confession. The *castle* (as the Latin has instead of *village*), which is opposite to the Lord and His disciples, is a mind obstinately bent upon its own will. The *two disciples* who are sent to it are *Hope* and *Fear*. The *ass* and her *colt tied* are *Humility* and *Simplicity*. For the mind of such a person sometimes knows what humility and simplicity are, and how he ought to live humbly and simply. But he, as it were, *binds* them, and *sets them aside*, when he is not willing to live accordingly. This man fear terrifies, when he draws back from evil, threatening him with torments. Hope comforts him if he repents, by the promise of rewards. By these two the mind is pricked. The *ass and the colt are loosed*, when meeting the Lord in the way to Bethphage, he confesses that he hath sinned, and promises that he will live humbly and simply for the time to come. And thus he who aforesaid was a castle of the devil becomes Sion, the city of our strength. The Saviour is placed in it for a wall and a bulwark. The wall is humility, the bulwark is patience. Therefore, dearly beloved, let us go forth to meet the Lord at Bethphage, pricked with fear of punishment, and strengthened by the hope of heavenly life, confessing our sins with humility and simplicity, treading down the garments of our carnality, that the Lord may deign to sit upon us, and to bring us with Himself into the Heavenly Jerusalem.”

Verse 3- And if any man, &c. The Lord: for I am indeed Messiah, the Lord and God of all things. Christ did not wish that the ass and her colt should be taken away against the owner’s will. For as His Providence worketh mightily, so also sweetly. By the power of His Divinity He influenced their minds, so that they should assent to the

beseech.” The Hebrew is, *Anna Jehovah, hoscia na; anna Jehovah, hatslicha na, i.e., O Lord, save, I beseech; O Lord, prosper I beseech*, our King David and his antitype, Messiah. Give him a happy beginning of his reign, a happier progress in it, and a most happy conclusion. *Hosanna*, then, is an acclamation to the new king of Israel, at his proclamation, as we say, *God save the King*.

Hence, too, we have in the same Psalm, “This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it” (ver. 24): and the reason is given in the two previous verses, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.” Where the Chaldee (paraphrase) applies it to David. David being first rejected, and afterwards made king, was, as it were, a corner stone, binding to himself Judah and Jerusalem, *i.e.*, the two, as well as the ten tribes. Still better does S. Matthew explain it of Christ, thus, Christ being rejected by the Jews in life, and crucified in death, became the corner stone of the Church after His resurrection, as containing and connecting the whole edifice of the Church by uniting both Jews and Gentiles in the one bosom of His Church; and thus it is that we sing Hosanna unto Him.

Some think *Hosanna* was taken from the Feast of Tabernacles, when the Jews, rejoicing with boughs of trees, were wont frequently to cry *Hosanna*. And in prayers and litanies to God, the whole multitude used to respond with the same word, *Hosanna*, *i.e.*, *save us*. As Christians in their litanies at each of the suffrages relating to pestilence, famine, war, and so on, respond, *Good Lord, deliver us*. Wherefore also the Jews were accustomed to call the boughs themselves *Hosanna*, as Angelus Caninius shows from the Chaldee, the Talmud, and Elias (*Tract. de nomin. Heb. c. 4*). But this *Hosanna* of the Chaldee paraphrase and the Talmudists was subsequent to our Christian *Hosanna*, so that it was rather taken from ours than theirs. Besides, the *Hosanna* of the Feast of Tabernacles was one of affliction and deprecation, but the *Hosanna* in this place of Christ was one of jubilation and triumph.

This multitude, therefore, broke forth by God’s inspiration into this joyful shout of *Hosanna*, in honour of Christ, even as the children did in verse 15. Although the occasion of it was the remembrance of that great miracle, *viz.*, the raising of Lazarus, which had been performed shortly before by Christ in Bethany, as is plain from John xi. 15, and xii. 9, 17.

To the Son of David: many of the ancients refer these words to the multitude, as if they asked for salvation from their own Messiah. *Hosanna to the Son of David*, *i.e.*, our salvation is from the Son of David. Or, let salvation come to us from the Son of David. So Origen, S. Jerome, Bede, &c. Others refer *Son of David* not to *Hosanna*, but to *saying*. They said to the

King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord”—that is, Messias, whom, as the Divine king, we have been expecting for so many thousand years. The multitude went out to meet Him with palms, as a conqueror, because formerly victors in the games were crowned with palms. Thus the Church expounds when, in the Benediction of Palms, she chants thus: “Therefore the branches of palms anticipate the triumph over the king of death; the sprays of olives verily, as it were, cry aloud that the spiritual anointing has come. For even then that blessed multitude of people understood that it was prefigured that the Redeemer, grieving for the misery of the human race, was about to fight with the prince of death for the life of the whole world, and to triumph by dying. Therefore they obediently rendered such services, which should set forth in Him both the triumphs of His victory and the riches of His mercy.” For although the multitude did not know that in four days Christ was about to suffer upon the Cross, He knew it, and therefore He willed that this His triumph should be foreshown by the multitude with palms. And they brought Christ, as it were the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world, who was to be offered for its salvation upon the following Friday. For although they were at this time ignorant of the mystery of which the paschal lambs were types and figures, God, who foreknows all things, ordained them for the glory of Christ. Zechariah had predicted them, and so had David (Psalm cxviii. 25, &c.); and therefore the Jews, who would not believe in Christ, were without excuse. All this bringing the paschal lamb to Jerusalem was done in accordance with the law (Exodus xii. 3, 6), where the paschal lamb is ordered to be chosen on the tenth day of the first month. The tenth of Nisan fell that year on Palm Sunday, which was—according to our computation—that year the twentieth of March.

Hosanna. So the Egyptian and Arabic. The Syrian has *Ouschano*, the Ethiopic *Husanna*, the Persian *Husiana*. You will ask what is the meaning of Hosanna? 1 S. Hilary, on this passage, and from him S. Ambrose, think that Hosanna signifies *the redemption of the house of David*. But S. Jerone (*Epist. ad. Dam.*) shows that this is a mistake.

2. S. Austin (*Tract. 51 in Joan.*) thinks Hosanna is an interjection of joy and supplication, like *well done! bravo!*

3. Euthymius says Hosanna means *praise*, being derived from *ἰσχυρῶς*—i.e., *strength*, which the Vulgate and LXX sometimes translates *praise*—and *חַנּוּחַ*, i.e. *grace*. Whence also the Greeks represent *Ho sanna* by two words.

But I say with S. Jerome, Theophylact, Pagninus, Jansen, and others that *Hosanna* is compounded of *הוֹשִׁיעַ* *hoscha*, *save*, and *נָא* *na*, i.e., *I beseech*. Hosanna is therefore, *save, I beseech, or save now*. Hoscanna has been changed into Hosanna for the sake of euphony.

There is an allusion to Psalm cxviii. 25, 26, “Save me,” though the word *me* is not in the Hebrew (for it seems to be not the voice of Christ but of the people praying for salvation from Christ), “O Lord, send now prosperity. Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Symmachus translates, “I beseech, O Lord, save me, I

Apostles loosing the ass, yea that they should co-operate with them. Christ, Who for three years had always gone on foot, and thus, had traversed the whole of Judæa, wished to show that He was the King of Judæa, the Messiah, the Son of David. Therefore does He enter Jerusalem, which was the metropolis of Judæa, in regal pomp. But He is not carried on a horse with splendid trappings, or in a gilded chariot, with an accompanying multitude of noble knights, with trumpets sounding, resplendent in purple robes, as the kings of the earth are wont to do. But He is carried on an ass, to show that His kingdom is of another sort, spiritual and heavenly, and therefore meek and lowly, despising pomp. Nevertheless asses in Judæa are better and stronger than our asses, more like mules. The sons of princes were accustomed to ride on asses. (See Judg. xii. 14.) “Christ,” says *Auctor Imperfecti*, “sits upon the ass of tranquility and peace, which is most patient to bear labours and burdens. You see not round about Him glittering swords, or the other ornaments of dreadful arms. But what do you see? leafy boughs, the tokens of affection. He came in meekness that he might not be dreaded because of His power, but that he might be loved for His gentleness.”

Verse 4- *All this was done, &c. The prophet, Zechariah. Tell ye the daughter of Sion.* Some think these words are a quotation from Isaiah lxii. 11, as though Matthew put the quotation together from Isaiah and Zechariah. More simply, F. Lucas and others think Christ cited Zechariah only, but his meaning, not his exact words. *Tell ye therefore the daughter of Sion* is the same as, *exult greatly* (the Hebrew *meod* is *very much*), *O daughter of Sion, shout O daughter of Jerusalem*, as Zechariah has (ix. 9), for thy King Messias is coming to thee to save thee. Zechariah is exhorting the citizens of Jerusalem to receive with eagerness their Messiah and Saviour riding on an ass.

Observe: Jerusalem is called the *daughter of Sion*, either by synecdoche, in that from Sion, the higher part of the city, the whole was called Sion; or else by a metaphor, in that the city of Jerusalem, lying below Mount Sion, and protected by it, and reposing like a daughter on her mother’s bosom, was called *the daughter of Sion*. Moreover by Jerusalem are to be understood the citizens and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Mystically, these things are true in the Christian Church, which as Jerusalem and the daughter of Sion is *the vision of peace*, and therefore always rejoices with Christ.

Verse 5- *Behold thy king, &c. Zechariah has, son of an ass*, the Vulgate has *subjugalis, under the yoke*, because it bears the yoke of the man riding upon it.

I have explained the other things pertaining to this prophecy on Zechariah ix. 9.

Verse 6- *His disciples went, &c.* The prompt obedience of the disciples should be remarked, which deserved the prompt compliance of the owner of the ass, so that he suffered his ass to be taken away together with her foal, as Christ had predicted. He doubted not that they would be brought back to him.

Verse 7- *And they brought, &c. spread their clothes, Gr. ἱμάτια, i.e., their cloaks, or outer garments, as it were in adornment. Placed Him thereon:* many existing MSS. together with the Syriac have, *He sat upon him, i.e., the colt.* It is most probable that Christ sat both upon the ass as well as her colt in succession. First He made use of the ass, then of the colt. The colt perchance was not strong enough to bear a rider in the descent and ascent of the mountain: the ass was not so becoming for the entry into the city. But it was chiefly because of the mystery implied that He willed to make use of both the beasts, that he might signify that He should reign not over those only to whom He had been promised, i.e., the Jews, but over the two sorts of people of which the world is made up—the Jews, accustomed to the yoke of the Mosaic law, who were represented by the ass; and the Gentiles, living up to this time without the Law of God, and who were denoted by the colt. “For, as sinners,” says *Auctor Imperfecti*, “are the horses of the devil, so are the saints said to be the horses of Christ, although Christ loves mild asses, rather than fierce and proud horses.”

These disciples, together with the multitude, were inspired and acted upon by the Holy Ghost, or else by Christ’s own Divinity to make the adornment of this royal pomp. They clothed the ass with their garments as with regal trappings; and they made Christ to sit thereon, that they might render Him homage as the Messiah, and inaugurate His reign as King of Jerusalem. Christ instigated and directed it all, that He might give an idea of His kingdom, united, however, with poverty and humility, for which reason he rode upon a despised and lowly ass.

Observe. Christ wished to adorn His royal entrance into Jerusalem with this unaccustomed pomp for various reasons. The first was that he might give an indication of His royal power and magnificence, because the Jews thought that He would come in such a manner, like another Solomon. Christ therefore presented Himself to them with this appearance of pomp, that they might not despise and reject Him as they had hitherto done. And yet He acted in such a manner as to show them that Messiah’s kingdom was spiritual rather than temporal. And He willed that all these things should be foretold by Zechariah, lest the Jews should despise this King when He came without royal dignity. So S. Chrysostom and Eusebius (*lib. 8, demonst. c. 4*). The second and accompanying reason was that Christ would present Himself to the Scribes and Pharisees in His royal entrance, that they might, as they ought to, be able to recognise Him by this means to be the Messiah, forasmuch as He had been so prophesied of by Zechariah. The third reason was, that He might correspond to the type of the Paschal Lamb. For it, on the tenth day of the first month, was brought with solemn pomp into the city, that it might be sacrificed on the fourteenth day. So Christ, as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, entered into Jerusalem on the tenth, or Palm Sunday. And He entered in pomp and with the auspicious acclamations of the multitude, forasmuch as He was certain of triumphing

over death and sin and hell, and so made His triumph to precede His battle, and in triumph He entered on His contest.

The fourth reason was *tropological*—viz., that He might by this deed deride the world’s glory; forasmuch as He knew that five days after He would be crucified by those by whom He had been honoured at this entry, and that those who were now crying out *Hosanna to the Son of David* would cry before Pilate’s judgment-seat, *Crucify Him, crucify Him*; and, therefore, that this city would be utterly destroyed by the Romans, under Titus. Wherefore, even in this joyful entry, foreseeing this, He wept, as Luke says (xix. 41). Again, He would teach that His kingdom consists in this life of suffering and the cross, and that we must not turn away from them, but embrace them and come to them with a joyful mind and with solemn pomp. Wherefore, the martyrs, as followers of Christ, went to their martyrdom as to a banquet—yea, to a kingdom and a triumph—with white robes, and attended with throngs of the faithful. Thus did S. Agatha, S. Cecilia, S. Agnes, S. Laurence, &c.

Verse 8- *A great multitude, &c.; branches, of palms, olives, and other fruit trees, in which the Mount of Olives abounds, as S. Jerome says:* for this multitude, not having carpets (which are accustomed to be laid down for royal progresses), laid down their garments for Christ, stripping themselves as a notable mark of their reverence for Him. These things happened on the twentieth of March; for in Palestine, which is a hot country, the trees are then in full leaf.

Tropologically. Remigius says: “The Lord came to Jerusalem sitting upon an ass, because He presides over the holy Church and the faithful soul, and rules it in this life, and afterwards introduces it to the vision of the celestial country. The Apostles and other Doctors placed their garments upon the ass, because they gave to the Gentiles the glory which they had received from Christ. But the multitude spread their garments in the way, because those of the circumcision who believed despised the glory which they had from the Law. And they cut down branches from the trees, because they received testimonies from the prophets, who flourished, as it were, from Christ, the Tree. Or the multitude which strawed their garments in the way signifies the martyrs, who gave their bodies, the garments of their souls, to martyrdom for the sake of Christ. Or they who tame their bodies by abstinence are signified. But they who cut down branches from the trees are those who search for the sayings and examples of the holy Fathers, for the salvation of themselves and of their children.”

Verse 9- *But the multitudes which went before, &c.* S. John (xii. 12) says *On the morrow—i.e., Palm Sunday, or the day after the Sabbath, on which Jesus had come to Bethany—*“much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the