

## A reading from the addresses of St Andrew of Crete (8th century AD)

Come, come, let us go up together to the Mount of Olives. Together let us meet Christ, who is returning today from Bethany and going of his own accord to that holy and blessed Passion to complete the mystery of our salvation.

And so he comes, willingly taking the road to Jerusalem, he who came down from the heights for us, to raise us who lie in the depths to exaltation with him, as the revealing word says, “above all authority and rule and power and above every name that is named.”

He comes without display, without boast. “He will not contend”, he says, “or shout out, and no one will hear His voice.” He is gentle and lowly, and his entrance is humble.

Come then let us run with him as he presses on to his passion. Let us imitate those who have gone out to meet him, not scattering olive branches or garments or palms in his path, but spreading ourselves before him as best we can, with humility of soul and upright purpose. So may we welcome the Word as he comes, so may God who cannot be contained within any bounds, be contained within us.

For he is pleased to have shown us this gentleness, he who is gentle and who “rides upon the setting sun”, which refers to our extreme lowliness. He is pleased to come and live with us and to raise us up or bring us back to him through his kinship with us.

As the first fruits of the whole batch of man he is said to “ride upon the heaven of heavens to the rising of the sun”, which I interpret as his own glory and divinity. But because of his love for man he will not cease until he has raised man’s nature from the ground, from one degree of glory to another, and has manifested it with himself on high.

So it is ourselves that we must spread under Christ’s feet, not coats or lifeless branches or shoots of trees, matter which wastes away and delights the eye only for a few brief hours. But we have clothed ourselves with Christ’s grace, or with the whole Christ - “for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” - so let us spread ourselves like coats under his feet.

As those who were formerly scarlet from sin but became white but became white as wool through the purification of saving baptism, let us offer not palm branches but the prizes of victory to the conqueror of death.

Today let us too give voice with the children to that sacred chant, as we wave the spiritual branches of our soul: “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.”