

## *Lent 2010*



### **Lenten Meditation # 7 - Palm Sunday**

#### **LENTEN GARDENS *GARDENS OF AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL***

Palm Sunday comes in the middle of two weeks known as Passiontide. Passion, which is intense emotion, can be love or suffering, joy or sorrow. In the two weeks that lead up to Easter, Jesus and his followers experienced them all.

Two gardens symbolize the contrast that Passiontide brings. On Palm Sunday we find ourselves not actually in a garden but on a road. We know that palm trees grew nearby, though, because people took palm branches, cut from the field, and scattered them before Jesus. Filled with joy at his triumphal entry into the city, they shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King, who comes in the name of the Lord." Joy, hope, victory and a sense of fulfillment filled the hearts of all who hailed him.

Fast forward to another garden on Thursday night, the garden of the high priest, to whom Jesus had been taken after his arrest by the Roman authorities. It was there that Peter, in anguish over what had happened and fearful of the authorities, denied even knowing Jesus and later went out and wept bitterly. He and the other disciples came the full circle from delight to despair.

Life brings us all kinds of gardens and all kinds of experiences. Though we walk with Jesus, there is no guarantee that we will have an easy time of it. Life is not "a rose garden". It makes a difference, though, to know that God in Christ is near. Somehow this always gives us hope. The One who "walked this lonesome valley" makes us less lonesome. He reminds us of the Psalmist's words that we walk not "in" the valley of the shadow of death, but "through" it. God's rod and staff comfort us.

These two Passiontide gardens call us to live life to the fullest, enjoying the wonderful things it has to offer and not despairing when the going is hard. When duty, or love, calls for risk or danger, dare to face it and move ahead. Trust in the one who is our constant companion.

