**THE COLLECT**    
Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious Majesty, to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever.  Amen.

In today’s Gospel, we see the Triumphal Entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. He tells his two of his disciples to go into a village and to get a donkey and a colt that Jesus may ride in on them so the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 might be fulfilled. This prophecy declares that the King, which is the basic concept of the messiah in fact many times the kings are called messiahs, will ride in lowly on a donkey. Thus, fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy that he would be born low and we would esteem Him not. The people are waving palm branches before him, which if we know about Judaism then we know that these were normally waved at the feast of sukkot, or the feast of tabernacles, one of the required feast days of obligation that a Jewish person would be required to attend. While the text does not specify this, it is certainly a possible explanation for the event. Then, they proclaim him as the saving one, Hosanna. They ask for his identity and they are told that he is the Prophet from Nazareth. At the end of the reading, we see that He is angry at the moneychangers who are making His house a den of thieves.

This Gospel reading is powerful, for it tells us that the righteous king has come as the prophet Jeremiah preached to us last week in the Sunday Next Before Advent. He is the true king, but more than that. This week it proclaims Him to be God. God has tabernacled among us as it says in the Last Gospel (St. John 1:1-18) sometimes called the Prologue. God comes not in prominence with the finest mare, but He comes with a lowly donkey and colt. The King of Kings comes as a lowly servant. He is the descendent of David, that lowly shepherd whose father did not think he was worthy to bring before the prophet Samuel as a possibility as king. In the same way, Jesus comes not as the king that they wanted but the king that they needed. A king that would be born in a lowly manger.

What is the season of Advent? Advent is the season where we celebrate the coming of our Lord to redeem the world from our sin. However, as much as a blessing it is to receive this gift of redemption, we must always remember that it is because of our sin that Jesus must come in this humble form to give his life for our sins. In the epistle today, we are reminded of the Law specifically the ten commandments and we can see that we have strayed from them and as St. James and St. Paul say, if we have broken one then we are guilty of the whole law.

This was one of the great changes from the 1549 Book of Common Prayer to the 1552 Book of Common Prayer. We said it today, the celebrant declared each of them to us and we said, “Incline our hearts to keep this law.” Jesus came to sacrifice Himself for a people who were against Him and wanted to kill Him. As the great Dietrich Bonhoeffer once said, “The only way for the human logos to live is for the counter- logos to die.” The human thought, in other words, is threatened by Christ, the counter-logos, because He defies our mortal ways for he does not revenge, but sacrifices Himself for us.

The Reformers added the cleansing of the temple that we see later in the Gospel from this Sunday. Now, how is this connected? It says he overthrew money-changers and those that sold doves. We all most likely remember this story from our youth. However, why is this part about doves? In the Gospel of Luke, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph being Jesus to the temple and give the sacrifice of two doves. Why was this the case? In the Old Testament, specifically in the book of Leviticus, God gives a mercy to those who are poor and does not reject their offering because they could not bring the expensive sacrifice of rams but instead allows them to give two doves. These money-changers and extorting the people and telling them that their sacrifices were not good enough and that they had to buy their particular “Grade A” sacrifices. God is upset with this, for they have made his House a profit center. The counter-logos, Jesus, does not need profits, but instead He being the lowly sacrifice that was like the peoples’s sacrifice not even thought to be worthy comes and gives Himself for us.

Then, Jesus lastly speaks of the temple as His house, well at this moment the revelation is nearly complete for all knew that the temple did not belong to the High Priest, Caiaphas, but to God Himself. As our comfortable words tell us today, Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you.” You see my dear friends Jesus does not come to us on his majestic horse that makes Him inaccessible, but He came as the lowest of us. He dwelt with us and tabernacled today. The blessing of Advent is the gift of redemption. It is not that we have sinned or that because of our current state that we cannot come to God. He is not requiring a disgusting indulgence fee for us to access them as the See of Rome was proclaiming that we needed. However, it is the realization that He has come for each of us today.

How do we come to Jesus? The apostate Paul Tillich once talked about the idea of Justification by Faith as an archaic idea that had no meaning for us, which C.S. Lewis would counter with the concept that it is not invalid but we just have not done well in telling about it. Jesus not only came to us but is here and we know this because of the sanctuary lamp is lit, the light that assures us that His Real Presence is indeed here for us. The Church has always taught that He is here present. If we truly repent of our sins and are in charity with our neighbor and intend to lead a new life then we may draw near with faith and take this Holy Sacrament. We get to be joined with Jesus today not only by hearkening unto His Word but being joined together with Him today in the Sacrament.

In the Sacrament, He comes to us in this unleavened simple form just as He came to us on a donkey and colt. He does not require that one comes with anything other than your repentance and our saying, “Lord, forgive me for I am a sinner.” He will edify us with His Body and Blood and through this great mystery empower us to continue in His ministry to spread His Holy Gospel. Jesus does not care who we were in the past but only our repentance. He does not require an entrance fee, but instead He says to us that He was that entrance fee. He paid the toll. He lowered Himself from His glorious throne and came to give us all that chance for redemption.

May we all remember this during the Advent Season and come to Him in Word and Sacrament and remember the Gospel: That God was in Christ Jesus, reconciling the whole world to Himself. The Counter-Logos Jesus has overcome the world and bids us not to refuse to come forth as one of the exhortations in the prayer book says, but that He has called us all to come to Him.