

Palm Sunday

Triumphant Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem

April 28, 2024

*On Sunday, April 28th, we commemorate:
Apostles Jason and Sosipater of the Seventy.
Martyrs Dada, Maximus, and Quintilian.*



Icon of the Triumphal Entrance into Jerusalem

Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission

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Divine Liturgy, Sunday Mornings at 9:30 am

Great Vespers, Saturday Evenings at 6:00 pm

Presanctified Divine Liturgy, Wednesday Evenings at 6:00 pm

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*Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission
is a parish in the Diocese of the West
of the Orthodox Church in America
under the spiritual and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of
Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West*



SUNDAY EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

2

Philippians 4:4-9

BRETHREN, Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

John 12:1-18

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!" Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. Therefore, the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason, the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

The Raising of Lazarus and Palm Sunday

The solemnities of Great Week are preceded by a two-day festival: the Saturday commemoration of the Resurrection of Lazarus and the Triumphal Entry of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. These two events emphasize the divine authority of Christ, and at the same time they precipitate His death by causing the final eruption of the unrelenting hostility of His enemies.

In both the resurrection of Lazarus and the Triumphal Entry, Christ is revealed as the Source of all life and the promised Messiah. For this reason, the interlude which separates the forty-day Great Fast (Lent) from Great and Holy Week is Paschal in character. It brings the first hint of Christ's victory over death and the coming of His Kingdom into the life of the world.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our King: the only-begotten Word of God made flesh. We behold Him as the One Who is always present in His Church, coming ceaselessly to us in power and glory at every Eucharist, in every prayer and Sacrament, and in every act of love, kindness, and mercy.

He comes to free us from all fear and insecurity, to solemnly enliven of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart. He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His own death and resurrection, but also to make us capable of attaining the most perfect fellowship or union with Him. He is the King, Who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death.

*Palm Sunday summons us to behold our King:
the Vanquisher of death and the Giver of life.*

Palm Sunday invites us to accept the rule and the kingdom of God as the goal and content of our Christian life. We draw our true and genuine identity only from Christ and His Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is within us when God reigns in us, when the soul in its depths confesses God as its Master and is obedient to Him in all its powers.

Palm Sunday also summons us to behold our King as the Suffering Servant for we cannot understand His Kingship apart from His suffering and death. Filled with infinite love for the Father and the Holy Spirit, and for creation, in His inexpressible humility Jesus accepted the infinite abasement of the Cross. He bore our grief and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions and made Himself an offering for sin (*Isaiah 53*). His victorious glorification which was accomplished by the Resurrection and the Ascension was achieved through the Cross.

In the fleeting moments of exuberance that marked Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the world received its King. Thus, with our souls cleansed and in spirit carrying branches, with faith let us sing Christ's praises like the children, crying with a loud voice to the Master: Blessed are You, O Savior, Who came into the world to save us!

Palm Sunday

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Today the Maker of the Universe, He Who is seated upon the Cherubim and is worshipped by the Seraphim surrounded by all the heavenly army, enters Jerusalem.

He is seated not on a white stallion with 100,000 soldiers to escort Him like the King of Babylon. He is seated on a young donkey, a lowly creature, and He is escorted by street children who proclaim Him to be the King of Jerusalem.

Indeed, He is not the King of Babylon, a king of war and power and pride and riches. Rather, He is the King of Jerusalem, the King of Peace and Humility. And this is only right, for "Jerusalem" means "City of Peace." Christ alone, the King of Peace, is therefore its rightful King.

Children greet Him with palms, the symbols of victory, and they cry "Hosanna," which means "Save, we pray." Their cries and their actions are greater than they realize, for in their innocence they speak and declare truth. Christ alone saves us, if we pray to Him; the palm branches are indeed tokens of the Victory which comes by the Tree of the Cross.

This is not merely a historic event, but one that can be repeated at every Eucharist. For whenever we seek peace crying as innocent children, "Save, we pray," and whenever we practice humility, as if seated on a donkey, then Christ enters our souls and makes it a Jerusalem within us.

However, in Jerusalem there were not only children, "babes and sucklings," who greeted Him, but there were also others: Scribes and Pharisees who, as the Gospels say, "were displeased." They are those who wanted a worldly leader, a man of violence, a rival to the Romans. In their confused minds they will lead Christ to Golgotha, preferring an unrepentant thief to the Son of God. Within a few days our Lord will suffer because He is innocent and all the innocent suffering of the world, of which we have seen so much in our own days, is taken up in Him.

The division between, babes and sucklings (i.e., nursing infants) on the one hand, and the worldly Scribes and Pharisees on the other hand, is a division which is repeated through time and space. In fact, all of us have at some time or another been on both sides. For whenever we sin, we are on the side of the Scribes and Pharisees, and whenever we are innocent, we are on the side of the babes and sucklings.

But whose side are we on today and whose side will we be on this coming week? We will declare it ourselves by our actions in these next few days.

Continued on page 5 ☞

Continued from page 4 ☞ In this coming Great and Holy Week, Passion Week, the Church calls us to follow Christ. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, we begin to relive the dramatic events in Jerusalem of the last Week of our Lord's earthly life. These are commemorated in the morning Presanctified Liturgies and the Evening Bridegroom Matins Services.

On Thursday morning we participate in the celebration of the Mystical Supper, which is the First Liturgy. On Thursday evening we attend the beautiful Service of the Twelve Gospels when the Church tells us all the details of Judas' betrayal, of Christ's trial, of Pilate's cowardice, of Christ's scourging and Crucifixion.

On Friday afternoon Christ taken down from the Cross and on Friday evening He is buried, and we shall sing together the Lamentations around His Tomb.

On Saturday morning, we shall witness the First Resurrection, the "leading out" or "exodus" of the righteous from Hades, as we participate in the Divine Liturgy.

On Saturday at midnight, we will witness Christ shining the light of His Resurrection on all the world. This, by tradition, is the moment when Christ returns to earth, and we feel His presence among us most clearly.

How can we not come to these services and yet still call ourselves Orthodox Christians? How can we not follow Christ through all the events of this Great Week which changed the history of the whole world?

Let us be as babes and sucklings, let us put away our worldly calculations and free ourselves from our laziness, let us be with the family of God in our church, and let us follow Christ to the Cross, so that we may then follow Him to His Resurrection, to Victory and Triumph, and so be resurrected in spirit together with Him.

Amen.

*The Reverend Andrew Phillips, Pastor
Saint John's Orthodox Church, Colchester, England*



Synaxarion (Calendar)

By Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos

On this day, the Sunday of Palms, we celebrate the radiant and glorious Feast of the Entry of our Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem.

*Sitting on a foal, He Who stretched out the Heavens
By a word seeketh to loose mortals from irrationality.*

After Lazarus had been raised from the dead, many, on beholding this event, came to believe in Christ. And indeed, a resolution was passed by the Jewish synagogue that Christ, and Lazarus himself, should be killed. Jesus, therefore, departed, letting evil run its course, and the Jews meditated how they might kill Him on the Feast of Passover.

Sometime after His flight, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, and there, after a supper had been made, Lazarus ate with Him; his sister Mary poured out ointment on Christ's feet.

On the following day, He sent His Disciples to fetch the ass and the foal. He Who has Heaven for His throne entered Jerusalem, riding on the foal of an ass.

The children of the Hebrews themselves spread their garments under Him and, cutting down palm branches, threw some of them in the way and carried others in their arms, and they cried out as they escorted Him: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel."

This took place because the All-Holy Spirit moved their tongues to praise and laud Christ. Through the palms (váia, the name given by the Hebrews to the tender branches) they signified Christ's victory over death. For it was customary for the victors of athletic contests and wars to be honored and borne about with branches of evergreen trees.

The foal signified us, the people of the Gentiles, sitting and resting on whom Christ is proclaimed victor, conqueror, and King of all the earth.

About this Feast the Prophet Zacharias said: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; for behold, thy King is coming to thee, meek and riding on an ass and the foal of an ass." And again, about the children, David says: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou perfected praise."

When Christ entered the city, the whole of Jerusalem quaked and, goaded on by the High Priests to defend it, the crowds *Continued on page 7* ☞

Continued from page 6 ☞ sought to do away with Him. He eluded them by hiding, and when He did appear, He spoke to them through parables.

By Thine ineffable compassion, O Christ our God,
 Make us victors over irrational passions, and
 Vouchsafe us to behold Thy clear victory over death,
 Thy radiant and life-bearing Resurrection,
 And have mercy on us.
 Amen.

The Significance of Palm Sunday for Us

This Sunday we behold the Word of God, the Giver of Life, the Vanquisher of Death, triumphantly entering into the Holy City of Jerusalem despite knowing full well the rejection, hatred, and suffering He will endure there. We thus know that He is ever present among us, and will remain always with us no matter what – even to the end of the world (cf. *Matthew 28:20*).

In His Church He ceaselessly comes to us in power and glory at every Eucharist, in every prayer and Mystery (Sacrament), and in every act of love, kindness, and mercy. He comes as our triumphant King, liberating us from the darkness of sin and freeing us from bondage to death. And, much more than this, He comes to make it possible for us to attain the likeness of God, perfect communion in Him, and life with Him forever.

He came in peace, filled with infinite love for the Father and the Holy Spirit, and for creation. He came to accept the infinite humiliation of the Cross, to accomplish the mission set for Him by the Father. He came to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. He came to be wounded for our transgressions, and to be made an offering for sin (cf. *Isaiah 53*). Through the Cross, He came to be glorified by the resurrection and the ascension – not for His own sake but so that we might inherit, and live in, His Heavenly Kingdom.

On this Sunday we are called to see the Kingdom of God as the goal of our Christian life. Jesus came as a triumphant King, He came to enter His Kingdom: He came to open His Kingdom to us.

Our very identity is in Christ and His Kingdom: we are all *created* in God's image and the very intent of our creation is to *become* like God and to *dwell* with God.

But note this very carefully: His Kingdom does not lie somewhere, or sometime, in the distant future. His Kingdom is both a *present* reality as well as a *future* realization (cf. *Matthew 6:10*) and, most importantly, His Kingdom is *within us* (cf. *Luke 17:21*).

Palm Sunday in Scripture and Prophecy

The Triumphant Entry as Fulfillment of Old Testament Prophecy

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The Triumphant Entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem is described according to the Old Testament Hebrew tradition as taking place six days before Passover (*John 12:1*). In AD 33, the year of our Lord's death and resurrection, Passover (in Hebrew *Pésach*, and in Greek *Páscha*) fell on the Sabbath (Saturday). Thus, this sacred event is celebrated in the Christian era on the Sunday six days prior to Holy Saturday – Palm Sunday.

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew states that this happened in fulfillment of the prophecy about Sion's King, "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey*" (*Zechariah 9:9*).

In doing so, Jesus proclaims to those that know and understand that *He* is the prophesied King of Sion and, moreover, the King of Peace. In the prevailing Eastern culture and tradition of the Holy Land, the donkey was regarded as an animal of peace, unlike the horse which was the animal of war. A king would have ridden on a horse to indicate coming to engage in war, and on a donkey to symbolize his arrival in peace.

As Jesus rode on a donkey into Jerusalem, laid down their cloaks and small branches of trees before Him, singing in praise of God for His everlasting mercy, "*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever ... Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord!*" (*Psalms 117:1, 26*).

It was also the tradition of the ancient Near East to cover in some way the path of someone thought worthy of the highest honor – as we read of King Jehu, son of Jehoshaphat, who was treated this way (cf. *2 Kings 9:13*).

Jesus was accorded this high honor. The Gospels of the Apostles Matthew, Mark, and Luke state that the people laid their garments and cut branches on the street, and the Gospel of the Apostle John specifies that laid down fronds of palm (Hebrew *váia*, Greek *foínix*).

In the Hebrew tradition, palm branches are featured in the Autumn harvest celebrations of the "seventh month" (the month of *Tishrei*). According to the Old Testament Law of Moses, the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month with a Sabbath rest on which "*the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook*" were taken to rejoice before the Lord (cf. *Leviticus 23:33-43*).

Continued on page 9 ☞

Continued from page 8 ☞ In the Greco-Roman culture of the Roman Empire the palm branch was a symbol of triumph and victory. Thus, for Roman observers the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem would have resembled the custom of a victorious military leader laying down his weapons and uniform in exchange for the civilian toga, a garment of peace ornamented with emblems of the palm, to enter a city in triumph.

In ancient Egyptian religion, a palm branch was carried in funeral processions to represent eternal life. This pagan practice seems to also be a prophetic image of the forthcoming death and resurrection of the Lord.

In Christian culture, a palm branch – a “martyr’s palm – symbolized Christian martyrs and their spiritual victory – or triumph – over death. Moreover, in the highly figurative language of the Apocalypse, a white-clad multitude stands before the throne and Lamb holding palm branches (*Revelation 7:9*).

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Finally, in the highly figurative language of the Apocalypse, a white-clad multitude stands before the throne and Lamb holding palm branches (*Revelation 7:9*).



Palm Sunday, April 29

6:00 pm – Matins of the Bridegroom



Holy Monday, April 29

6:00 pm – Matins of the Bridegroom



Holy Tuesday, April 30

6:00 pm – Matins of the Bridegroom



Holy Wednesday, May 1

6:00 pm – Mystery of Holy Unction



Holy Thursday, May 2

8:30 am – Vespertal Divine Liturgy

6:00 pm – Matins of the Crucifixion



Holy Friday, May 3

8:30 am – Imperial Hours

4:00 pm – Vespers: Descent from Cross

6:00 pm – Matins of the Lamentations



Holy Saturday, May 4

9:30 am – Vespertal Divine Liturgy



Sunday of Pascha, May 5

Late Saturday Evening

11:30 pm – Pannychida

Midnight – Resurrection Service

Following – Resurrection Matins & Liturgy

Late Sunday Morning

11:00 am – Vespers of Agape

Noon – Pascha Picnic, Sherwood Park



The First Antiphon

REFRAIN: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

The Second Antiphon

REFRAIN: O Son of God, seated on the colt of an ass, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

THEN: Only-begotten Son and Word of God...

The Third Antiphon, Tone 1, Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, • Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God. • Like the children with the palms of victory, • we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death: • “Hosanna in the highest. • Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.”

Entrance Verse

PRIEST: Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. God is the Lord and He has revealed Himself to us.

After the Entrance, Tone 1, Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion...

Tone 4, Troparion

When we were buried with Thee in baptism, O Christ God, • we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection. • Now we praise Thee and sing: • “Hosanna in the highest. • Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.”

Tone 6, Kontakion

Glory..., both... Sitting on Thy throne in Heaven, • carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God, • accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing: • “Blessed is He Who comes to recall Adam.”

Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing:

God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. • Celebrate the feast and come with gladness. • Let us magnify Christ with palms and branches, • singing: “Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord, our Savior.”

Communion Hymn

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord. God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.



May 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<p>1 <i>Fast Day</i></p> <p>6:00 pm Mystery of Holy Unction</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9:00 am Vesperal Liturgy of the Mystical Supper</p> <p>6:00 pm Crucifixion Matins</p>	<p>3 <i>Fast Day</i></p> <p>9:00 am Imperial Hours</p> <p>4:00 pm Vespers - Taking Down from the Cross</p> <p>6:00 pm Lamentation Matins</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:00 am Vesperal Liturgy - Harrowing of Hades</p> <p>11:30 pm Nocturns</p> <p>Midnight: Resurrection, Matins, Divine Liturgy</p>
<p>5 <i>Fast Free</i></p> <p>SUNDAY OF PASCHA [11:30 pm Nocturns Midnight: Resurrection, Matins, Divine Liturgy]</p> <p>11:00 am Agape Vespers Midday Pascha Picnic</p>	<p>6 <i>Fast Free</i> <i>Bright Week</i></p>	<p>7 <i>Fast Free</i> <i>Bright Week</i></p>	<p>8 <i>Fast Free</i> <i>Bright Week</i></p>	<p>9 <i>Fast Free</i> <i>Bright Week</i></p>	<p>10 <i>Fast Free</i> <i>Bright Week</i></p>	<p>11 <i>Fast Free</i> <i>Bright Week</i></p> <p>5:00 pm Choir Practice 6:00 pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Second Sunday of Pascha <i>First Sun After Pascha</i> <i>Sunday of Saint Thomas</i></p> <p>9:05 am 3rd & 6th Hours 9:30 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15 <i>Fast Day</i></p> <p>6:00 pm Paraklesis</p>	<p>16</p> <p>6:00 pm Discovering Orth</p>	<p>17 <i>Fast Day</i></p>	<p>18</p> <p>5:00 pm Choir Practice 6:00 pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Third Sunday of Pascha <i>Second Sun After Pascha</i> <i>Sunday of the Myrrhbearers</i></p> <p>9:05 am 3rd & 6th Hours 9:30 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 <i>Fast Day</i></p> <p>6:00 pm Paraklesis</p>	<p>23</p> <p>6:30 pm Parish Council</p>	<p>24 <i>Fast Day</i></p>	<p>25</p> <p>5:00 pm Choir Practice 6:00 pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>26</p> <p>Fourth Sunday of Pascha <i>Third Sun After Pascha</i> <i>Sunday of the Paralytic</i></p> <p>9:05 am 3rd & 6th Hours 9:30 am Divine Liturgy</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p><i>Father Alexander Pastoral Visit</i></p> <p>6:00 pm Great Vespers</p>	<p>29 <i>Fast Day</i></p> <p>Midfeast of Pentecost <i>Father Alexander Visit</i></p> <p>8:05 am 3rd & 6th Hours 8:30 am Divine Liturgy</p> <p>6:30 pm Parish Council</p>	<p>30</p> <p>6:00 pm Discovering Orth</p>	<p>31 <i>Fast Day</i></p>	

The Fasting Tradition of the Orthodox Church

The Great Fast: The Great Fast is a forty-day period in 2024 from Monday, March 18th thru Friday, April 26th. It is followed by the Fast of Great and Holy Week, 2024 from April 28th through May 4th.

Fast Day: During both the Great Fast as well as the Fast of Great and Holy Week we abstain from (a) all vertebrate products, including meat, dairy items, and fish (by “fish” we mean vertebrate fish; shellfish, however, may be consumed on any day), (b) olive oil, and (c) wine (as well as all alcoholic beverages).

Fast Day 🍇 🍇 🍇 On **Saturdays** and **Sundays** of the Great Fast, the Fast is relaxed to consume olive oil and wine.

Fast Day 🐟 🍇 🍇 On Certain **Feast Days** of the Great Fast, the Fast is relaxed to consume fish, olive oil, and wine.

Holy Wisdom
Orthodox Church



Grand Junction,
Colorado

Revised 2024-03-28

Holy Week in the Orthodox Christian Church

Great and Holy Week is a week that is absolutely set apart from all other weeks of the Church Year.

The 40 days of the Great Fast (or Great Lent) end on Friday. At the Divine Services of the next day, Lazarus Saturday, we chant, *“Having fulfilled the Forty Days... we ask to see the Holy Week of Thy Passion.”*

With these words sung one week before Pascha our entry into Holy Week begins as we *“enter into the annual commemoration of Christ’s suffering, death, and Resurrection,”* as the late Father Alexander Schmemmann wrote.

Through the Holy Week Services, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit we truly enter into Christ’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, His subsequent betrayal, suffering, crucifixion, descent into Hades, and His glorious Resurrection.

This entering into of Holy Week cannot be adequately explained in words. Just like a “life lived in Christ” can never be fully articulated so too Holy Week worship can only be understood through experience.

We must absolutely make every effort to attend the services provided for us by the Orthodox Church!

On Holy Thursday we turn to the last events of our Lord and His Passion. The morning begins with the Divine Liturgy commemorating the Mystical Supper at which the Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist. In the evening the service of the Twelve Passion Gospels commemorates the deeply profound and solemn time of our Lord’s Crucifixion.

On Holy Friday morning we contemplate the death, descent from the Cross, and burial of our Lord. In the morning at the Imperial (Royal) Hours we read the accounts and hymns concerning the crucifixion. In the afternoon we celebrate the Vesper service of the descent from the life-giving Cross. In the evening, we chant the beautiful Lamentations of Christ’s burial in a service that begins in a solemn manner but in the end joyously anticipates the Resurrection.

Holy Saturday is a day of hopeful anticipation. In the morning Liturgy we commemorate Christ’s descent into Hades to free the faithful of the Old Covenant. At midnight this amazing Great and Holy Week culminates with the Holy and Glorious Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

This is celebration of the Christian Passover – translated “Pascha.” We chant verses from Psalm 69, *“Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee from before his face!”* and we sing, *“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and granting life to those in the tombs!”*

Thus our spiritual struggle the Lenten season and the blessed journey through Holy Week is accomplished, and the Joy of the Resurrection is inexplicably palpable for all who have participated in this grace-filled journey.

In truth, the services of Holy Week have transformed us *“into eyewitnesses and direct participants in the awesome events of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*



Евангелие

За шесть дней до Пасхи пришёл Иисус в Вифанию, где был Лазарь умерший, которого Он воскресил из мёртвых. Там приготовили Ему вечерю, и Марфа служила, и Лазарь был одним из возлежавших с Ним. Мария же, взяв фунт нардового чистого драгоценного мира, помазала ноги Иисуса и отёрла волосами своими ноги Его; и дом наполнился благоуханием от мира. Тогда один из учеников Его, Иуда Симонов Искарот, который хотел предать Его, сказал: Для чего бы не продать это миро за триста динариев и не раздать нищим? Сказал же он это не потому, чтобы заботился о нищих, но потому что был вор. Он имел при себе денежный ящик и носил, что туда опускали. Иисус же сказал: оставьте её; она сберегла это на день погребения Моего. Ибо нищих всегда имеете с собою, а Меня не всегда. Многие из Иудеев узнали, что Он там, и пришли не только для Иисуса, но чтобы видеть и Лазаря, которого Он воскресил из мёртвых. Первосвященники же положили убить и Лазаря, потому что ради него многие из Иудеев приходили и веровали в Иисуса. На другой день множество народа, пришедшего на праздник, услышав, что Иисус идёт в Иерусалим, взяли пальмовые ветви, вышли навстречу Ему и восклицали: осанна! благословен грядущий во имя Господне, Царь Израилев! Иисус же, найдя молодого осла, сел на него, как написано: Не бойся, дочь Сионова! се, Царь твой грядёт, сидя на молодом осле. Ученики Его сперва не поняли этого; но когда прославился Иисус, тогда вспомнили, что та'к было о Нём написано, и это сделали Ему. Народ, бывший с Ним прежде, свидетельствовал, что Он вызвал из гроба Лазаря и воскресил его из мёртвых. Потому и встретил Его народ, ибо слышал, что Он сотворил это чудо (Ин. 12, 1-18).



Митрополит Антоний Сурожский

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.

Какое торжество и какое горе в этом празднике! Люди, слышавшие о том, как Христос воскресил от мертвых Лазаря, толпами собрались на Его пути, встречали Его, как царя, пели «Осанна». Осанна - слово

1 ☞ еврейское, которое значит: «Спаси, молим Тебя об этом!» - и такие слова могли быть обращены не к земному только царю, но к ожидаемому помазаннику Божию, - к Мессии, к Тому, Кто в представлении этих толп должен был освободить Свой народ от рабства и восстановить Царство Израилево. И эта толпа встречала Его, потому что несмотря на всё: на Его проповедь, на Его личность, на свидетельство Ветхого Завета, не понимала, что **Царство Божие - не торжество одного народа над другим, не победа земного Израиля, а установление нового Царства, Царства любви, и что это Царство можно установить, только отдавая свою жизнь до конца, жертвуя всем - и жизнью, и смертью.**

В одном из тропарей вчерашней службы говорится, что Христос въезжал в Иерусалим не на коне, как победитель, а укрощая ярость и гордыню царскую, Он въезжал туда с кротостью, на спасение людей. **И Царства Своего Он достиг не силой, а жертвой.** Править может каждый, - сказал в одной из своих проповедей свт. Иоанн Златоустый, - но только царь может отдать свою жизнь за свой народ; потому что только царь до конца, всецело его представляет, и только царь, как символ этого народа, может положить свою душу, свою жизнь для спасения всех.

И в этом торжестве, в сердцевине этого торжества такая грусть. Потому что Тот, к Кому обращены такие восторженные крики, знает, что не на то Он пришел, что встречают Его по недоразумению, и что пройдет немного дней, как та же толпа, разочарованная в своей земной надежде, будет перед Пилатом кричать: Распни, распни Его! Он обманул нашу надежду, Он не тот, которого мы ожидали, Он нам не нужен! Его проповедь о любви, это проповедь для нас порабощения, не свободы, Он нам не нужен - распни Его!..

И вот перед чем мы находимся сегодня. Мы встречаем Христа криками той толпы: «Осанна! Благословен грядый во имя Господне! Осанна в вышних!» И одновременно мы знаем, Кого мы встречаем; мы не ошибаемся. **Мы встречаем Того, Который Свою жизнь и Свою смерть подарил каждому из нас, всей земле, всей вселенной для того, чтобы зло, смерть, рознь были побеждены и чтобы начался новый век, началось новое Царство, - Царство Божие, Царство любви.** Такой любви, о которой только Христос мог провозгласить, когда Он сказал: Никто большей любви не имеет, как тот, который свою жизнь и душу свою отдаст, положит за братьев, за друзей своих...

Вдумаемся в это начало страстных дней. Это начало страстей Господних, это начало того ужаса одиночества, отверженности, которое найдет свою вершину в самом страшном

28 апреля 2024 г.

3

2 ☞ одиночестве, когда распятый Христос воскликнет: *Боже Мой! Боже Мой! Зачем Ты меня оставил?* .. Одиночество полное, беспросветное, одиночество, куда и Бог Отец не захотел проникнуть для того, чтобы жертва Христова была совершенна; чтобы ничем, никаким утешением, никакой поддержкой не подорвать, не запятнать эту совершенную жертву.

Задумаемся над этим, потому что эта жертва принесена ради каждого из нас, не только ради всего человечества, не огульно. **Если только один из нас был бы грешен, то Христос всю Свою жизнь, всю Свою смерть, всё Свое одиночество, Богооставленность, отверженность отдал бы нам на спасение.**

Вот Бог, Которому мы поклоняемся, вот Бог, Которого мы можем любить, потому что мы можем дивиться Его любви, и мы можем почитать Его, а не страшиться: Он пришел не судить, а спасти - и какой ценой!

Аминь.

Протоиерей Вячеслав Резников

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.



Господь Иисус Христос за три года земной жизни совершил много чудес. Апостол Иоанн Богослов пишет, что *«если бы писать о том подробно, то, думаю, и самому миру не вместить бы написанных книг»* (Ин. 21, 25). Господь являл Свою власть и над силами природы, и над стихиями, и над бесами. Это всегда вызывало восхищение и благодарность у тех, кто был рядом.

Но вот настал день, когда вся слава, все восхищение, вся благодарность собрались воедино, и как бы хлынули из берегов. Это - вход Господень в Иерусалим. В этот день *«весь город пришел в движение, и говорили: кто Сей?»* ? Господь въезжал в город, сидя на молодом осле. А множество *«народа постилали свои одежды по дороге, а другие резали ветви с дерев и постилали по дороге»* . Другие же *«взяли пальмовые ветви, вышли навстречу Ему и восклицали: осанна! Благословен грядущий во имя Господне, Царь Израилев»* ! Мало того: даже *«из уст младенцев и грудных детей»* раздавалась хвала.

В этот день и Святым Духом, и людьми торжественно провозглашалась справедливая оценка земных трудов Господа Иисуса Христа. Его земная жизнь достигла вершины славы, вершины успеха. Завтра она уже перевалит за этот пик, и будет стремительно падать, пока не достигнет страстной пятницы. То, что накапливалось ☞ 4

4

28 апреля 2024 г.

3 ☞ три года, расточится за несколько дней. А пока - с какой надеждой переживают ученики славу своего Учителя! Какие планы строят на будущее! Но вскоре и они в страхе разбегутся и оставят Его одного и перед судом, и на кресте.

Но именно эти последние, скорбные и бесславные дни окажутся несравненно более великими. Вглядываясь в эти дни, Господь говорит: *«если пшеничное зерно, падши в землю, не умрет, то останется одно; а если умрет, то принесет много плода»* (Ин. 12, 24).

Так и в жизни каждого человека время заката несравненно важнее. Все, что мы в расцвете творческих сил даем людям, - все это Господь мог бы дать и через кого-то другого. Он даже и из камней мог бы создать детей Аврааму (Мф. 3, 9). Но вот нести крест своего одиночества, бессилия и болезней может только сам человек, и никто за него этого сделать не может. **Поэтому пик своего торжества мы должны переживать с величайшим смирением, с ощущением непрочности, зыбкости человеческой славы. А вот начала своего страстного времени мы должны ждать с надеждой истинного блага, истинного торжества и победы, которых уже никто не разрушит и не отнимет.**

Когда приближается страстная седмица нашей жизни, мы должны смотреть вперед, как смотришь вперед в юности: с радостным замиранием сердца. Все - впереди. Вся жизнь, еще неизведанная, но такая заманчивая и полная счастья! Ведь сколько уже лет мы в церкви, сколько уже мы пережили Великих постов, и должны же мы, наконец, убедиться, что за страстной седмицей всегда и неизбежно следует Пасха, Светлое Христово Воскресение!

Аминь.

