

April 5, 2026
Palm Sunday

The Triumphant Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem

*On April 5th we commemorate:
Martyrs Theodulus the Reader and Agathopodes the Deacon,
and Those with Them.*



Icon of the Triumphant Entrance into Jerusalem

Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission

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Great Vespers, Saturday Evenings at 6:00 pm
Divine Liturgy, Sunday Mornings at 9:30 am (Hours at 9:05 am)
Paraklesis, Most Wednesday Evenings at 6:00 pm
Very Reverend Archpriest Luke Uhl, Retired, Interim Rector

*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
Bishop Vasily of San Francisco and the West*



SUNDAY EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

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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 (*cf. 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.

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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 Sion; 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*).



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE 2026

Palm Sunday, April 5

6:00 pm – Matins of the Bridegroom



Holy Monday, April 6

6:00 pm – Matins of the Bridegroom



Holy Tuesday, April 7

6:00 pm – Matins of the Bridegroom



Holy Wednesday, April 8

6:00 pm – Mystery of Holy Unction



Holy Thursday, April 9

9:00 am – Vespertal Divine Liturgy

6:00 pm – Matins of the Crucifixion



Holy Friday, April 10

9:00 am – Imperial Hours

4:00 pm – Vespers: Descent from Cross

6:00 pm – Matins of the Lamentations



Holy Saturday, April 11

9:00 am – Vespertal Divine Liturgy



Sunday of Pascha, April 12

Late Saturday Evening

11:30 pm – Nocturns

Midnight – Resurrection Service

Following – Resurrection Matins & Liturgy



Late Sunday Morning

11:00 am – Vespers of Agape

Noon – Pascha Picnic, Sherwood Park



HYMNS AT THE DIVINE LITURGY

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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

Glory..., 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

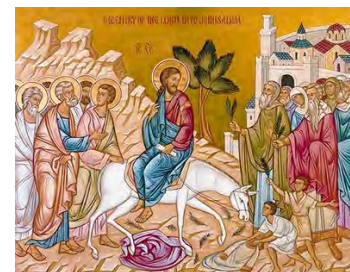
Both... Sitting on Thy throne in Heaven, • carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God, • accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing: • “Blessed is He Who comes to recall Adam.”

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.



Symbolism of the Events on Palm Sunday

In the Gospel of Saint John we read, “*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!’” (John 12:12-13).

Saint Matthew records the event in these words, “*And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’*” (Matthew 21:8-9).

What was in the minds of the Hebrew people when they “cried out: Hosanna!”? And why did they “cut down branches from the trees” and took “branches of palm trees”? Indeed, these are words and actions with profound Messianic meaning and great emotional impact.

Hosanna!

The word *Hosanna* (Latin *osanna*, Greek *ὡσαννά*, *hōsanná*) is written in Hebrew *הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא* (*hōšî‘â-nā*) and in Aramaic *ܘܫܢܐܢܐ* (*‘ōsha ‘nā*) and means save, rescue, or savior.

It appears in the Old Testament only once, in Psalm 117 (LXX) where it is used to mean “*Save now!*”:

v. 25 Save now [**Hosanna**], I pray, O Lord;
O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity.

v. 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
We have blessed you from the house of the Lord.

Within the context of Psalm 117, these verses are revolutionary for they imply the victory of God’s people over their adversaries and oppressors.

Had the Romans heard and understood what was being said as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, they would have rightly feared an imminent uprising of the Jewish people in Jerusalem. The priests and Pharisees certainly understood the people, and they used this event to tell Pontius Pilate that Jesus was leading a rebellion against Emperor Caesar.

Branches of Trees

Waving tree branches have a very specific meaning in Scripture and in Hebrew culture. It is one of several distinct traditions during the Autumn Feast of *Sukkot*, beginning five days after *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.

Sukkot is a joyous seven-day “Festival of Booths” which celebrates the autumn harvest and commemorates the forty-year Exodus when the Israelites dwelt in temporary shelters in the wilderness. One tradition is building, decorating, and eating meals in a temporary, roofed structure called a *sukkah* (booth) where families eat, sleep, and provide hospitality.

Another key ritual involves waving four plants together in six directions (forward, right, back, left, up, down) to represent God’s presence everywhere. This is ordained in Leviticus 23:40: “*On the first day (of Sukkot) you shall take the product of hadar (goodly) trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.*”

Later rabbinical literature provided the interpretation and specification of the “four species” to be used:

“*Fruit of goodly trees*” is the *etrog* (citron fruit).

“*Branches of palm trees*” are the *lulav* (date palm frond).

“*Boughs of leafy trees*” are the *hadass* (myrtle bough).

“*Willows of the brook*” are the *aravot* or *hoshanot* (willow branch).

It is a mitzvah (commandment) to shake or wave the Four Species on each of the seven days of Sukkot, usually before or during *Shacharit* (the Morning Service). While facing towards Jerusalem, the lulav is shaken in six directions to indicate God's presence throughout the world. This action is also symbolic of the completion of the yearly cycle, or freedom, and of peace and harmony.

These four species are additionally understood as alluding to the four-letter Hebrew name of God, יהוה (commonly transliterated as Yahweh or YHWH from the pronunciation of the letters, as read from right to left, Yod-He-Vav-He).

These form the *Tetragrammaton* (Greek, meaning “four letters”), the holy name of God which He spoke to Moses (*cf. Exodus 3:14*), «*Εγώ εἰμι Ὁ Ὄν*» – “I am the One Who Is” or “I am the Existing One”.

Moreover, each species has a particular reference to God, according to a Midrash in Leviticus Rabbah, 83:

The etrog is symbolic of Psalm 104:1: “*You are clothed in glory and majesty.*”

The palm is spoken of in Psalm 92:13: “*The righteous bloom like the date-palm.*”

The myrtle is found in Zechariah 1:8: “*And he stood among the myrtle-trees.*”

The willow is significant because it is mentioned in Psalm 68:5: “*Extol Him Who rides on the clouds (aravot), the Lord is His name.*”

The lulav – four species bound together – symbolize taste and smell.

While the etrog has taste and smell.

The lulav has taste but no smell.

The myrtle has smell but no taste.

The willow has neither smell nor taste.

The lulav is thus a depiction of every type of man: each being different, though as a community they stand together.

Each of the four species signifies a limb of the body:

The etrog refers to the heart.

The lulav the upright backbone.

The myrtle the eyes.

The willow the lips.

Each of our limbs is a means through which man serves God.

There is also a masculine-feminine theme inherent in the four species.”

The lulav represents masculinity.

The etrog is seen as feminine, in its form.

As symbols of divinity, they must be perfect in every way and thus the branches are chosen with care.

The four species celebrate the diversity of man and the many different forms of God's presence.

They are bound together and referred to as a *lulav*. It stays together in a special holder made from the leaves of a lulav.

The two willow branches are placed to the left of the lulav, and the three myrtle branches to the right.

The etrog, however, remains separate.



Orthodox Holy Week

Orthodox Holy Week is a solemn, immersive, liturgical journey experiencing the final week of our Lord's earthly ministry which culminated in His suffering, death, and resurrection.

The Divine Services are characterized by profound prayer, unique hymns, and darkness turning into light. They move from the Bridegroom Matins of early week to the Crucifixion and Burial Matins on Thursday and Friday, culminating in the triumphant midnight Resurrection Matins and Liturgy on Sunday.

Interestingly, many of the services are celebrated about half a day "in anticipation" (Matins in the evening and Vespers in the morning) so that they constitute a "vigil" by which we contemplate upon the events in watchful anticipation.

Key Services of Holy Week

- **Lazarus Saturday** (Prior to Holy Week): Celebrates Christ raising Lazarus from the dead, signaling the universal resurrection. After the Divine Liturgy, the faithful prepare palms, pussy willows, and bay leaves for Palm Sunday.
- **Palm Sunday Morning** (Preceding to Holy Week): Celebrates Jesus entering Jerusalem, introducing Holy Week. The joy of this day, celebrated with branches, indicates the joy that will follow at the end of the Week of Our Lord's Passion.
- **Palm Sunday, Holy Monday, and Holy Tuesday Evenings:** Bridegroom Matins of each following day focusing on Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church.
 - **Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday:** Focus on our Lord's final teachings, and on our need for repentance and népsis (watchfulness).
- **Holy Wednesday Evening:** Mystery (Sacrament) of Holy Unction, the Anointing with Consecrated Oil for the forgiveness of sins and for the healing of soul and body. It emphasizes that in Christ those who mourn shall be comforted and that the pure in heart shall see God.
- **Holy Thursday:** A day focusing on the relationship of the Mystical Supper – the sacramental Body and Blood of Jesus Christ – and His death on the Cross.



Orthodox Holy Week



- **Holy Thursday Morning:** Vespers Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil celebrating the Mystical Supper, the institution of the Holy Eucharist, and the disgraceful betrayal.
- **Holy Thursday Evening:** Matins of Holy Friday during which the crucifixion accounts of all four evangelists are proclaimed in 12 Gospel readings.
- **Holy Friday:** A strict fast day focusing on the passion, death, and burial of Christ.
 - **Holy Friday Morning:** Imperial (or Royal) Hours during recall the Gospel readings of the previous evening.
 - **Holy Friday Afternoon:** Vespers commemorates the final hours and death on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ as well as the taking-down of His Body from the Cross.
 - **Holy Friday Evening:** Lamentation Matins presents the death of our Lord, followed by the funeral procession, dirges (laments), and burial of His Sacred Body.
- **Holy Saturday Morning:** Vespers Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil celebrating the descent of the Jesus into Hades, shattering it forever, and leading out the souls of Adam and Eve and all generations thereafter into heaven.
- **Holy Saturday Night:** Nocturns (Midnight) Service beginning at the darkest moment of the night, leading to the bright dawn of the Resurrection.
 - The church is plunged into darkness, symbolizing the tomb.
 - A single light – Christ – appears in the darkness, which is passed to everyone's candles, lighting the church.

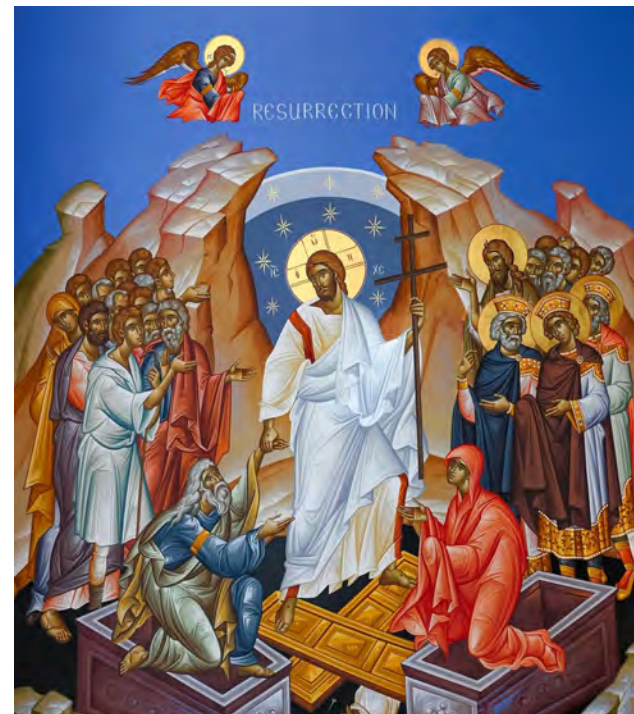
Pascha (Passover): The new Passover of the Lamb of God.

- **The Resurrection Service:** Outside the church we gather to hear the Gospel of the Resurrection, and the first proclamation of “*Christ is Risen!*”
- The glorious singing of “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!”
- The greeting “*Christ is Risen!*” and its response, “*Truly He is Risen!*” is used by the faithful, replacing all other greetings, for the next 40 days.

- **Resurrection Matins:** Our exultant “Morning Prayer” proclaiming the Great Mystery of our salvation.
- **Resurrection Divine Liturgy:** A joyful Liturgy at the end of which our Pascha baskets containing celebratory foods are blessed.

Key Themes and Traditions

- **Not Just Memory, But Participation:** Services are designed to permit us to experience, and to actively participate in, the events celebrated.
- **Fasting:** A somber fast is kept throughout the week, intensifying towards Good Friday.
- **Light and Darkness:** Services move from darkness (sorrow and despair) to light (joy and hope in the Resurrection).
- **Icons:** Specific icons are central, such as the Bridegroom icon at Matins on Monday through Wednesday and the Shroud – Epitáfion, Plashchanítsa (tomb covering) – on Friday.





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

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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

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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.



The Children's Word

"Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them, for to such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Mark 10:14

Sunday, April 5, 2026

Volume 14, Issue 14

Whose side are you on?



Have you ever cheered for a team? Did you ever feel you were *on* a team, even when you weren't playing for the team? The fans are important too, aren't they?

Today is Palm Sunday, the day that Christ entered Jerusalem. In the icon, you can see the children greeting Him;

they even put their clothes on the ground so Jesus could ride on them. They waved palm branches to cheer Him on. They were on His team!

But this coming Holy Week, we will also remember the people who were NOT on Christ's side—the people who made fun of Him, the people who crucified Him, the people who killed Him. Ever since Christ was born, He had people who loved Him, and He had people who hated Him.

Not too long ago, a theologian, St. Justin, said that everybody makes a choice: "to be with Christ, or to be against Him." Everybody will either "be a lover of Christ or a fighter of Christ." There isn't a third choice!

Have you made that choice? Have you chosen to love Christ with all your heart? This week, we can show we love our Lord by being with Him in prayer. We can show we love Him by learning about Him in the Bible readings. We can show we love Him by doing something special for another of His children! Always remember: You are on Christ's side!

WORD SEARCH

Can you find these words in the jumble?

- Beloved
- Blessed
- Branches
- Egypt
- Hosanna
- Jerusalem
- Joseph
- Palms
- Patriarch

H	R	U	Y	K	D	H	D	J	S	J	I	Q	L	H
L	F	C	C	X	P	N	E	G	W	M	Y	X	H	C
M	H	C	F	H	I	R	V	G	W	A	L	J	Z	R
C	L	J	H	Q	U	E	O	F	Y	Z	D	A	J	A
Y	H	K	H	S	I	D	L	Z	A	P	F	H	P	I
S	H	B	A	V	E	C	E	J	B	C	T	O	Z	R
L	L	L	H	S	X	D	B	J	P	Q	M	S	M	T
R	E	O	S	W	X	Q	N	Z	T	V	E	A	I	A
M	Y	E	B	R	A	N	C	H	E	S	R	N	D	P
H	L	B	K	N	X	D	S	P	L	U	T	N	P	T
B	H	P	E	S	O	J	M	Y	T	M	S	A	A	R
Y	K	U	Q	W	D	E	D	Z	S	E	N	Z	O	P
M	O	C	A	W	V	G	L	J	W	Y	R	Z	X	G
F	W	W	R	Q	P	N	T	M	T	O	G	M	H	G
P	O	Z	P	O	I	D	F	S	R	K	M	J	Q	N

WHAT'S IN THE ICON?

In this icon, Saint Joseph looks like he's from Egypt!

That's because he was sold as a slave and lived in Egypt as the pharaoh's helper.



**BLESSED JOSEPH
WHO FORGAVE HIS BROTHERS**

Have you ever forgiven somebody for something?

Even for something big? Tomorrow we begin Holy Week, and on each day of Holy Week we remember something or somebody different. Tomorrow, on Holy Monday, we remember Blessed Joseph.

Have you heard the story of St. Joseph—not the one who took care of Mary, the Theotokos? This is the Joseph from the Old Testament, the one who lived more than a thousand years before Christ was born.



Joseph had eleven brothers. They were jealous of Joseph because their father, Jacob, loved him so much. The brothers took Joseph one day, threw him in a pit, and then sold him into slavery! But many years later, the brothers found Joseph, and they didn't recognize him. Joseph forgave his brothers, even though they had treated him so horribly. He saved his brothers from a bad famine.

Why do we remember Blessed Joseph tomorrow, on Holy Monday? Because when we think of Joseph's story, we think of our Lord, Jesus Christ's story. His own people treated Him so horribly too. But in the end, He forgives all, and He wants to save us all too!

We remember Blessed Joseph tomorrow, Holy Monday.

Hosanna in the highest!

