



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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ENTRY OF OUR LORD IN JERUSALEM ("Palm Sunday")

12 April 2020

FIRST ANTIPHON

I am filled with joy, for the Lord has heard the voice of my supplication. (R.:) Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! The anguish of death encompassed me, the perils of hell beset me. (R.:) I found tribulation and anguish, and I called upon the Name of the Lord. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

I believed and therefore have I spoken: but I was deeply humiliated. What shall I render to the Lord, for all His benefits to me? (R.:) Save us, O Son of God, Who didst sit upon the foal, as we chant to Thee, "Alleluia!" I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. (R.:) I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the presence of all His people. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

FESTAL TROPARION preceded by these verses:

- *O, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.*
- *Let the house of Israel now say that He is good; for His mercy endures forever.*
- *Let the house of Aaron now say that He is good: for His mercy endures forever.*
- *Let all that fear the Lord now say that He is good: for His mercy endures forever.*

LITTLE ENTRANCE

Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord: the Lord is God and has appeared to us. Save us, O Son of God, Who didst sit upon the foal, as we sing to Thee: Alleluia!

TROPARION OF LAZARUS (Tone 1): In confirming the common Resurrection, O Christ God, Thou didst raise up Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion. Wherefore, we also, like the children, bearing the symbols of victory, cry to Thee, the Vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!

KONTAKION OF PALM SUNDAY (Tone 6): Upborne upon the heavenly throne, and seated upon the earthly foal, O Christ our God, receive the praises of angels and the hymns.

SPECIAL THEOTOKION (Tone 4): God is the Lord and has appeared unto us! Let us celebrate the Feast, and let us rejoice and magnify Christ. With palms and branches let us raise our voices unto Him with praise, saying: “Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, our Savior!”

POST-COMMUNION: Instead of “We have seen the true light,” sing the Troparion of Lazarus.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

*Prokeimenon: Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord!
O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.*

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Philippians

(Phil. 4:4-9) **Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice! Your kindness should be known to all. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety at all, but in all things, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you.**

In his letter to the Philippians, Saint Paul keeps reminding us of something fundamental in our Christian faith: **“Rejoice! And again I say to you: rejoice!”** Let us remember that our faith is called “the good news” and that the first ones who received it—the Theotokos and the shepherds—were told to *rejoice* over it. Indeed, with the coming of Christ, creation was called, first of all, *to rejoice*. As the exclamation at the end of the our prayer before the icon of Christ say, “*Thou didst fill all things with joy*, our Savior, coming to save the world!”

In the midst of daily agitation, assaulted by all kinds of troubles, and aware, more and more, of our own flaws, we sometimes forget the broader picture and the deeper truth of our lives. It is a bit like Lent: we sometimes forget that the Great Fast is an avenue to Pascha. Likewise, we often forget that the course of our life is an opportunity to enter the Resurrection—or, as Scripture puts it, “to enter our Master’s *joy*” (Matt. 25:21). Our call is to be resurrected into a new and imperishable life, to be with Christ and with our loved ones, in a state of never-setting and ever-renewed *joy*; and to journey toward the Resurrection by gradually tasting more and more of it here and now.

Maybe it should be said again: it is not “life after death” that the Church is preaching, but a resurrection of soul and body, such that we would become like the Risen Christ—vessels of glory, clothed in God’s joyous light.

We have good reason to rejoice. Our Lord is good and gracious, and loves us unconditionally; God’s wise providence is all about restoring our lives and healing us; despite the brokenness that comes from the Fall, life is not pointless and we are not out of place here and now: living with Christ, our destination is a good one. Let us then *rejoice and keep rejoicing* as we move one step closer to the Resurrection.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to John

(John 12:1-18) Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for Him there, and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with Him. Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then Judas the Iscariot, one of his disciples, and the one who would betray Him, said, "Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days' wages and given to the poor?" He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the moneybag and used to steal the contributions. So Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of My burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me." The large crowd of Jews found out that he was there and came, not only because of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him. On the next day, when the great crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches 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." Jesus found an ass and sat upon it, as is written: "Fear no more, O daughter Zion; see, your King comes, seated upon an ass's colt." His disciples did not understand this at first, but when Jesus had been glorified they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done this for Him. So the crowd that was with Him when He called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from death continued to testify. This was also why the crowd went to meet Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

Today's Gospel prepares us for some of the main topics that the Scriptures and the services of Holy Week will revolve around. The woman who anoints Christ's feet; Judas, the hypocritical disciple who argues that the money for costly perfume should have been spent on charity, but ends up betraying his Master and selling him as one would sell a slave; Lazarus, the friend of Christ, raised miraculously from the dead; and the disciples of the Lord. We will hear more from and about them in the coming days.

For now, let us be mindful of the crowd. "The large crowd found out that He was there and came"; "when the great crowd heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet Him"; "the crowd was with Him when He called Lazarus from the tomb"; "the crowd went to meet Him." It is not by accident that "the crowd," as a collective character, is mentioned so often in today's Gospel. The atmosphere is festive, the air filled with enthusiasm, people are climbing up trees, cutting branches to make the Lord's entry into Jerusalem worthy of a king—and they actually make much noise about Jesus being the king of Israel who comes in the name of God, all of this to the despair of the Pharisees and priests in Jerusalem. Curiously, however, the Lord himself does not seem to share this enthusiasm.

The Gospel tells us that this was "the crowd that was with Him when He called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from death," those who had attended the feast in Bethany, to celebrate the raising of Lazarus. They've witnessed an amazing miracle and concluded that Jesus must be the messiah, the king of Israel. This is not very different from an earlier moment in the Gospel of John (Jn 6:14-15), when "after the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself."

The crowd is fickle. In less than a week, these people will be in a frenzy once again, shouting not, "Hosanna!" but, "Crucify Him!" Fickle also are the disciples: now they are following their Teacher, Who is welcomed into the city as King of the Jews; but in less than a week they will all desert Him, so that the Lord of Israel will be mocked and will die almost alone. And if we think we are better than that, we are mistaken. Peter bragged about the fact that, even though everybody else would desert Jesus, he would stay faithful; yet, he soon denied ever having known "this man" (Mk. 14:71). The fact is that faithfulness to Christ is difficult; only by cooperating with God's grace can we become and remain His disciples.

This Sunday's warning is also a call for next week. If we truly are and want to be Christians, then let us avoid the superficial and fleeting enthusiasm of the crowd; let us watch and pray with Him during His Passion, so that we may meet Him again at the Resurrection.

HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA

You are warmly invited to join us for **virtual Bridegroom Services**, beginning Sunday evening of Holy Week (4/12), 6 PM. We will be reading the services together **via Zoom**. Anyone on our email list will receive the zoom invitation and a copy of the service for that evening. If you or someone you know would like to join the group, please send a **message to our Facebook page** or **email Fr. Bogdan** (frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org).

SUNDAY, 4/12 **6 pm** Bridegroom Service

MONDAY, 4/13 **6 pm** Bridegroom Service

TUESDAY, 4/14 **6 pm** Bridegroom Service

WEDNESDAY, 4/15 **6 pm** Bridegroom Service

THURSDAY, 4/16 **6 pm** Bridegroom Service (The 12 Passion Gospels)

FRIDAY, 4/17 **6 pm** Bridegroom Service (Lamentations)

SATURDAY, 4/18 **10 pm** Paschal Matins and Liturgy. Ideally, everyone should pray together with the clergy until the end of Liturgy before breaking the fast. Given our current circumstances, these services are simplified—no processions, etc—so that we will bless the food before midnight.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

LIVING: Katherine (sick); Dollie; Don (Dollie's brother); Ann (Wilson), recovering after her new surgery; Nyal, Jean's son-in-law (motorcycle accident); Joseph Totin; Ion, Marius & Katherine (Stan); Serbanescu and Becker families; Gabriel; Karen (Jane Best's daughter); Charitini; Stella & Dimitrios; Christine (Abraham); Dollie; Venetia; Maura; Ann; Ed, Peter, John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; Kent, Bob, David (relatives of Jean); Stelian; Diane; Maura (Andronic); Susannah; Ed Sr (Totin).

DEPARTED: Frank (Seba's brother); Kurt (Melinda's father); Jackie (Rose Totin's mother); Maria (Stella Lyras' sister); Sula; Kurt (Diane's son); Viorica; Norma; Miltiades; Tim (Becker); Silviu; Ross (Chrissi's friend); Richard Johns; Viorica; Bishop Antoun; Vito (DiPento); Jim and Marion (Raimondi); Stephanie (Yazge); Job; George (Georgiades); Abie (Abraham); Bill (Thomas); Marta.