

7FE3 - Palm Sunday

INTRODUCTION:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey and a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

-Palm Sunday marks the beginning of the Holy week, and it is on this day that the highest honour and respect are paid to Jesus. The Psalms are sung in the Singarian tune, and the liturgy is said in the most joyous tune (eg. Evlogymenous)

-It is one of the Major feasts for Our Lord

-The events of Palm Sunday are recorded in all four Gospels and all four accounts are read in the Mass:

Matthew 21:1-17

Mark 11:1-11

Luke 19:29-48

John 12:12-19.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS:

The crowds of people who came to praise Christ upon His entry into Jerusalem had heard of the great miracle of Lazarus's resurrection from the dead. Crowds of people, gathered from everywhere for the feast of the Passover, went to meet Him. Many took off their outer garments and spread them on the road before Him. Others cut palm branches, carried them in their hands and spread them on the road. And all the people, who went before and who followed, cried out with joy, "*Hosanna (Salvation) to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord;*" — that is, worthy of praise is the One Who comes in the name of the Lord, sent from God. "*King of Israel! Hosanna in the highest!*"

"Hosanna" is an Aramaic word meaning "save us". At the time, the Jews expected an earthly king to come and save them from the Roman occupation, and thought that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah of their expectations. When they realized that this was not His intention, and that He had come to save them from the bondage of Satan, they cried out to Pilate saying "*Crucify Him, Crucify Him! His blood be on us and our children.*" **Zechariah the Prophet prophesized about this great event saying: "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey and a colt, the foal of a donkey.*"**

On this day also, the Lord Christ entered the Temple, driving away the merchants and overturning the tables of the moneychangers. This was clearly a sign of His anger towards using religion as a means of trade. He also overturned the seats of those who sold doves, casting them out of the Temple. Again, this was also a clear sign of His disapproval towards selling and devaluing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, since the doves symbolize the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Joy in Christ Our King:

- Palm Sunday is a day to rejoice in our Saviour which is why the church is decorated with branches and is celebrating Christ's entry into our heart.
- The journey of Great Lent is a journey to encounter our Lord Jesus Christ and grow in His knowledge. When Christ reigns over our hearts, He guides our life and directs it in accordance to His royal commandments. Thus, we can say with St. Paul, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). During Holy Lent, we experience this joyful experience of mortifying our egos so Christ can rule, and we even experience it with more depth during Pascha Week, in which we rejoice because Christ, the Lover of mankind, reigned as a King on the Cross, was victorious over death, and conquered it, giving us the new life by His glorious resurrection. We then proceed towards the Fifty Holy Days to experience the life in the Kingdom by celebrating daily Christ's resurrection.

Notes from Abouna Anthony Messeh's Sermon on Palm Sunday

- Palm Sunday is a bitter sweet day- many dualities occurred - The Lord although was praised by the people He did not seek this people's praise, and He ended the day with Christ weeping over Jerusalem.
- Why did Christ allow to be paraded when He knew that later He knew that these very same people would scream Crucify Him? **It wasn't because He was seeking Praise.** Palm Sunday is a day of Praise- the multitudes came to Praise not worship Him, Praise and worship work together, Worship is from the heart, Praise is from the mouth. Jesus is not seeking only Praise but Worship is due to Him. The people who were chanting Hosanna where only praising Him by mouth – they wanted to sing not to worship.
- St Paul describes worship as a living sacrifice:
"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (ROMANS 12:1)
Living Sacrifice = Worship implying death of the SELF
- Hence the General Funeral that is prayed on the entire congregation of the church not only for the chance if someone passes away- it is your funeral- your life should change – the life you had before the fast should end here, preparing to resurrect with him a NEW LIFE on the resurrection.
- Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord = Blessed is the man who follows the footsteps of the Lord.
- When the Lord says I am going to die, you should go with Him to die too.
- Worshipping God = bow down as a dead person- **"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead". (Rev. 1:17)**
- In Jerusalem not only is the Praise made but the Sacrifice has to be made –the psalmist says **"Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed. (Psalm 65:1)**
- Are you ready for the NEW LIFE?
- We do not want Christ to weep over us, like he did over Jerusalem.

Glory be to God forever Amen.