



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

Address: PO Box 134, 108 E Main St, Clinton,
CT 06413-0134

Phone: 860-664-9434

Web: <http://www.stalexischurch.org>

Email: stalexis@ dneoca.org

Fr Steven Hosking

Rector

Phone: 860-322-2906 Message)

Email: frsteve@stalexischurch.org

Dn Timothy Skuby

Attached

Phone: (808) 341-1813

Email: dntimothy@stalexischurch.org

Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

Bulletin for Sunday, April 28, 2024

Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every

time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against

racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

Members of our Parish Council are:

Greg Jankura - Vice President
Susan Davis- President
Sharon Hanson - Member at Large
Luba Martins - Member at Large
Susan Egan - Treasurer
Dn Timothy Skuby - Secretary

Pastoral Care - General Information

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any

time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

Announcements

Please note: my message phone number Of 860-866-5802 will be discontinued. The new number is 860.322.2906

Holy Week Schedule

The schedule has been posted on the parish calendar; all services will be "live" as well as streamed on Zoom as well. I will continue to hear confessions before each of these services, if time permits.

Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many Years! to Sarah Senetcen, Cathy Martins, and Anne Hosking on the occasion of their birthdays; and to John Skrobat on the anniversary of his tonsoring as a Reader.

Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to

illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

- All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalize, those who have no one to pray for them;
- All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
- All those who have perished due to hatred, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

Please let Fr. Steven know via email if you have more names for which to pray.

- Departed: Gregory
- Clergy and their families: Dn Timothy & Maureen
- Catechumen: Robert, Abbie, Matthew, Joseph, Mary, Kevin and Lynn

- Individuals and Families: Susan, Luba, Suzanne, Gail Galina, Evelyn, Rosemary, John, Karen, Oleg, Lucia, Victor, Melissa, Christine, Sebastian, Olga, Daniel & Dayna, Gretchen
- Birthdays and Name's Days this Month: Maureen Skuby, Nina Naumenko, Christine Jankura, Valery Danilack-Fekete, Sarah Senetcen
- Anniversaries this Month:
- Expecting and Newborn: Anastasia, Malcolm and their unborn child
- Traveling:
- Sick and those in distress: Mabel, Thomas

ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO

JERUSALEM. Palm Sunday. Apostles Jason and Sospater of the Seventy, the Virgin Kerkyra, and those with them (1st c.). Martyrs Dada, Maximus, and Quinctilian, at Dorostolum (286). St. Cyril, Bishop of Túrov (1183).

- Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.
- Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the wars in Ukraine and in the Middle East.
- Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine and the Middle East, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

Parish Calendar

Schedule of Services and Events

April 28 to May 6, 2024

Sunday, April 28

☩ Palm Sunday
9:30AM Divine Liturgy of Palm Sun
4:00PM Bridegroom Matins

Monday, April 29

Cathy Martins
☩ Holy Monday
6:00PM Bridegroom Matins of Holy Tuesday

Tuesday, April 30

Tonsoring of John Skrobat
☩ Holy Tuesday
Krawchuk
6:00PM Bridegroom Matins of Holy Wednesday

Wednesday, May 1

☩ Holy Wednesday
6:00PM Bridegroom Matins of Holy Thursday

Thursday, May 2

☩ Holy Thursday
10:30AM Divine Liturgy of Holy Thursday
6:00PM Matins w/ the Passion Gospels

Friday, May 3

☩ Holy Friday
Alex Page
8:00AM Royal Hours
2:30PM Vespers of the Entombment
6:00PM Matins of Holy Saturday

Saturday, May 4

Holy New Martyr Archpriest Vasily Martysz
‡☐ Holy Saturday
Anne Hosking
9:30AM Divine Liturgy of Holy Saturday
10:30PM Paschal Nocturns, Matins & Divine Liturgy

Sunday, May 5

Great and Holy Pascha
12:30PM Paschal Vespers

Monday, May 6

Sharon Marie Watson
Renewal Monday

Saints and Feasts

April 28

Palm Sunday

On Sunday, five days before the Passover of the Law, the Lord came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Sending two of His disciples to bring Him a foal of an ass, He sat thereon and entered into the city. When the multitude there heard that Jesus was coming, they straightway took up the branches of palm trees in their hands, and went forth to meet Him. Others spread their garments on the ground, and yet others cut branches from the trees and strewed them in the way that Jesus was to pass; and all of them together, especially the children, went before and after Him, crying out: "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel" (John 12:13). This is the radiant and glorious festival

of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem that we celebrate today.

The branches of the palm trees symbolize Christ's victory over the devil and death. The word Hosanna means "Save, I pray," or "Save, now." The foal of an ass, and Jesus' sitting thereon, and the fact that this animal was untamed and considered unclean according to the Law, signified the former uncleanness and wildness of the nations, and their subjection thereafter to the holy Law of the Gospel.

April 29

Holy Monday

The holy Passion of our Saviour begins today, presenting Joseph the all-comely as a prefiguring of Christ. He was the eleventh son of Jacob, and his first son by Rachel; because he was so beloved of his father, his own brethren came to envy him and cast him into a pit. Later they sold him to foreigners for thirty pieces of silver, who later sold him again in Egypt. Because of his virtue, his master gave him much authority in governing his house; because he was fair of countenance, his master's wife sought to draw him into sin with her; because of his chastity, he refused her, and through her slanders was cast into prison. Finally, he was led forth again with great glory and was honoured as a king. He became lord over all Egypt and a provider of wheat for all the people. Through all this, he typifies in himself the betrayal, Passion, death, and glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ (see Gen., chapters 37, 39 41).

To the commemoration of Patriarch Joseph is added also the narration concerning the fig tree, which on this day was cursed and subsequently dried up because of its unfruitfulness. It portrayed the Jewish synagogue, which had not produced the fruit demanded of it, that is, obedience to God and faith in Him and which was stripped of all spiritual grace by means of the curse (Matt. 21:18-20).

April 30

Holy Tuesday

Today we bring to mind the parable of the ten virgins, which our Saviour related as He was coming to His Passion. This parable teaches us that the accomplishment of the great work of virginity should not make us careless in other matters, especially in almsgiving, wherewith the lamp of virginity is made radiant. Furthermore, it teaches us that we should not be remiss about the end of our life, but should be prepared for it at every moment, like the wise virgins, so that we may meet the Bridegroom, lest He come suddenly and the doors of the heavenly bridechamber be shut, and we also, like the foolish virgins, hear that dread sentence: "Amen, I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. 25:1-13).

May 01

Holy Wednesday

Two women - say the more discerning interpreters of the Gospel - anointed

the Lord with myrrh; the one, a long time before His Passion; the other, a few days before. One was a harlot and sinner; the other, chaste and virtuous. The Church commemorates this reverent act today. While mentioning herein the person of the harlot, it also mentions Judas' betrayal; for, according to the account in Matthew, both of these deeds took place two days before the Passover, on Wednesday.

That woman, then, anointed Jesus' head and feet with very precious myrrh, and wiped them with the tresses of her hair. The disciples, especially the avaricious Judas, were scandalized, supposedly because of the waste of the myrrh, which could be sold for a great price and given to the poor. The Lord Jesus reproved them and told them not to trouble the woman. Indignant, Judas went to the high priests, who were gathered in the court of Caiaphas and were already taking counsel against Jesus. On agreeing with them to betray his Teacher for thirty pieces of silver, Judas sought from that time opportunity to betray Him (Matt. 26:14-16). Because the betrayal took place on Wednesday, we have received the tradition from Apostolic times to fast on Wednesday throughout the year.

May 02

Holy Thursday

On the evening of this day, which was the eve of the feast of unleavened bread (that is, the Passover), our Redeemer supped with His twelve disciples in the city. He blessed the bread and the wine, and gave

us the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. He washed the feet of the disciples as an example of humility. He said openly that one of them was about to betray Him, and He pointed out the betrayer by revealing that it was he "that dipped his hand with Me in the dish." And after Judas had straightway gone forth, Jesus gave the disciples His final and sublime instructions, which are contained in the first Gospel Reading of the Holy Passion (John 13:31-18:1 known as the Gospel of the Testament). After this the God-man went forth to the Mount of Olives, and there He began to be sorrowful and in anguish. He went off alone, and bending the knees He prayed fervently. From His great anguish, His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. As soon as He had completed that anguished prayer, lo, Judas came with a multitude of soldiers and a great crowd; on greeting the Teacher guile fully with a kiss, he betrayed Him.

The Lord Jesus was then apprehended and taken prisoner to the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. The disciples were scattered, but Peter, who was more fervent than the others, followed Him even into the court of the high priest, but in the end denied thrice that he was His disciple.

Then our divine Teacher was brought before the lawless Sanhedrin and was interrogated concerning His disciples and His teaching. The high priest adjured Him before God that He tell them whether He was truly the Christ. And having spoken the truth, He was judged guilty of death, supposedly as one who had blasphemed. Then they spat in His face, beat Him, smote Him with the palms of their hands, and mocked Him in every

way, throughout the whole night until the morning.

May 03

Holy Friday

When Friday dawned, Christ was sent bound from Caiaphas to Pontius Pilate, who was then Governor of Judea. Pilate interrogated Him in many ways, and once and again acknowledged that He was innocent, but to please the Jews, he later passed the sentence of death against Him. After scourging the Lord of all as though He were a runaway slave, he surrendered Him to be crucified.

Thus the Lord Jesus was handed over to the soldiers, was stripped of His garments, was clothed in a purple robe, was crowned with a wreath of thorns, had a reed placed in His hand as though it were a sceptre, was bowed before in mockery, was spat upon, and was buffeted in the face and on the head. Then they again clothed Him in His own garments, and bearing the cross, He came to Golgotha, a place of condemnation, and there, about the third hour, He was crucified between two thieves. Although both blasphemed Him at the first, the thief at His right hand repented, and said: "Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom," to which our Saviour answered, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." As He hung upon the Cross, He was blasphemed by those who were passing by, was mocked by the high priests, and by the soldiers was given vinegar to drink mixed with gall. About the ninth hour,

He cried out with a loud voice, saying, "It is finished." And the Lamb of God "Which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) expired on the day when the moon was full, and at the hour when, according to the Law, was slain the Passover lamb, which was established as a type of Him in the time of Moses.

Even lifeless creation mourned the death of the Master, and it trembled and was altered out of fear. Yet, even though the Maker of creation was already dead, they pierced Him in His immaculate side, and forthwith came there out Blood and Water. Finally, at about the setting of the sun, Joseph of Arimathea came with Nicodemus (both of them had been secret disciples of Jesus), and they took down the all-holy Body of the Teacher from the Cross and anointed it with aromatic spices, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. When they had buried Him in a new tomb, they rolled a great stone over its entrance.

Such are the dread and saving sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ commemorated today, and in remembrance of them, we have received the Apostolic commandment that a fast be observed every Friday.

May 04

Holy Saturday

On Saturday, the high priests and Pharisees gathered together before Pilate and asked him to have Jesus' tomb sealed until the third day; because, as those enemies of God said, "We suspect that His disciples will

come and steal His buried body by night, and then proclaim to the people that His resurrection is true, as that deceiver Himself foretold while He was yet alive; and then the last deception shall be worse than the first." After they had said these things to Pilate and received his permission, they went and sealed the tomb, and assigned a watch for security, that is, guards from among the soldiers under the supervision of the high priests (Matt. 27:62-66). While commemorating the entombment of the holy Body of our Lord today, we also celebrate His dread descent with His soul, whereby He destroyed the gates and bars of Hades, and made His light to shine where only darkness had reigned (Job 38 : 17; Esaias 49:9; 1 Peter 3:18-20); death was put to death, Hades was stripped of all its captives, our first parents and all the righteous who died from the beginning of time ran to Him Whom they had awaited, and the holy angelic orders glorified God for the restoration of our fallen race.

May 05

Great and Holy Pascha

Mary Magdalene, and the other women who were present at the burial of our Saviour on Friday evening, returned from Golgotha to the city and prepared fragrant spices and myrrh, so that they might anoint the body of Jesus. On the morrow, because of the law which forbids work on the day of the Sabbath, they rested for the whole day. But at early dawn on the Sunday that followed, almost thirty-six hours since the death of the Life-giving Redeemer, they came to the

sepulchre with the spices to anoint His body. While they were considering the difficulty of rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, there was a fearful earthquake; and an Angel, whose countenance shone like lightning and whose garment was white as snow, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The guards that were there became as dead from fear and took to flight. The women, however, went into the sepulchre, but did not find the Lord's body. Instead, they saw two other Angels in the form of youths clothed in white, who told them that the Saviour was risen, and they sent forth the women, who ran to proclaim to the disciples these gladsome tidings. Then Peter and John arrived, having learned from Mary Magdalene what had come to pass, and when they entered the tomb, they found only the winding sheets. Therefore, they returned again to the city with joy, as heralds now of the supernatural Resurrection of Christ, Who in truth was seen alive by the disciples on this day on five occasions.

Our Lord, then, was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, before the setting of the sun, which was the first of His "three days" in the grave; observing the mystical Sabbath, that "seventh day" in which it is said that the Lord "rested from all His works" (Gen. 2:2-3), He passed all of Saturday in the grave; and He arose "while it was yet dark, very early in the morning" on Sunday, the third day, which, according to the Hebrew reckoning, began after sunset on Saturday.

As we celebrate today this joyous Resurrection, we greet and embrace

one another in Christ, thereby demonstrating our Saviour's victory over death and corruption, and the destruction of our ancient enmity with God, and His reconciliation toward us, and our inheritance of life everlasting. The feast itself is called Pascha, which is derived from the Hebrew word which means "passover"; because Christ, Who suffered and arose, has made us to pass over from the curse of Adam and slavery to the devil and death unto our primal freedom and blessedness. In addition, this day of this particular week, which is the first of all the rest, is dedicated to the honour of the Lord; in honour and remembrance of the Resurrection, the Apostles transferred to this day the rest from labour that was formerly assigned to the Sabbath of the ancient Law.

All foods allowed during Renewal Week.

Hymns of the Day



The First Antiphon

I love the Lord because
He has heard the voice
of my supplication.
Refrain: Through the
prayers of the
Theotokos, O Savior,
save us!

Because He inclined His ear to me, therefore I
will call on Him as long as I live.
Refrain: Through the prayers of the
Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of hell laid hold on me.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

I suffered distress and anguish, then I called on the Name of the Lord.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

The Second Antiphon

I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted."

Refrain: O Son of God, seated on the colt of an ass, save us who sing ☩ to You: Alleluia!

What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He has given me?

Refrain: O Son of God, seated on the colt of an ass, save us who sing ☩ to You: Alleluia!

I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.

Refrain: O Son of God, seated on the colt of an ass, save us who sing ☩ to You: Alleluia!

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.

Refrain: O Son of God, seated on the colt of an ass, save us who sing ☩ to You: Alleluia!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

("Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God...")

The Third Antiphon

Reader: O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Choir: Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your Passion,

You confirmed the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of Death: "Hosanna in the highest!//

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."

Reader: Let the house of Israel say that He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Choir: Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your Passion,

You confirmed the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of Death: "Hosanna in the highest!//

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."

Reader: Let the house of Aaron say that He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Choir: Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your Passion,
You confirmed the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,
we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of Death:
“Hosanna in the highest!//
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.”

Reader: Let those who fear the Lord say that He is good; for His mercy endures forever.

Choir: Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your Passion,
You confirmed the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,
we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of Death:
“Hosanna in the highest!//
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.”

Deacon: 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.

Choir: Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, O Son of God, who rose from the dead, save us who sing to You. Alleluia.

Choir: Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your Passion,
You confirmed the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,
we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of Death:
“Hosanna in the highest!//
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

Choir: Tone 4 Troparion

When we were buried with You in baptism, O Christ God,
we were made worthy of eternal life by Your Resurrection.

Now we praise You and sing:
“Hosanna in the highest!//
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!”

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion

Sitting on Your 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!”

HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

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!

Gospel and Epistle Readings

Epistle Reading

Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Psalm 117.26,1.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Verse: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.
His mercy endures forever.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4-9.

BRETHREN, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

Gospel Reading

Palm Sunday

The Reading is from John 12:1-18

Six days before Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazaros was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazaros was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said "Why was this ointment 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 as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazaros, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazaros also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus

was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazaros out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

Wisdom of the Fathers

But observe the wisdom of the Evangelist, how he is not ashamed to parade their former ignorance. That it was written they knew, that it was written of Him they knew not. For it would have offended them if He being a King were about to suffer such things, and be so betrayed.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 66 on John 12, 2. B#58, p.245., 4th Century

Besides, they could not at once have taken in the knowledge of the Kingdom of which He spake; for another Evangelist saith, that they thought the words were spoken of a kingdom of this world. (Matt. xx. 21.)

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 66 on John 12, 2. B#58, p.245., 4th Century

Beyond the Sermon



Six days before Passover, the Lord Jesus enters the final week on His way to the Cross. Passover was the most important Jewish feast, which points back to the deliver-

ance of the Jews from Egypt. At that time, lambs were sacrificed for the salvation of the Jewish people from captivity, as the angel of God kept their children safe by passing over them and ultimately delivering them from the Egyptians. Since then, once a year, they celebrate the feast of Passover, which in Hebrew is called "Pesach," from where the word

Pascha is derived.

On Saturday before Passover, Jesus goes to Bethany, to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazaros. This family loved the Lord, and they were close friends with Him. The Lord had dined with the sisters before (Luke 10:38-42), and He had raised their brother Lazaros from the dead (John 11:1-44) as a foreshadowing to His own Resurrection. Mary and

Martha were deeply grateful to the Lord, and they are making Him supper. This meal with friends anticipates the Mystical (Last) Supper, which we commemorate on Holy Thursday. Lazaros is sitting at the table with Jesus. In this respect, Saint Cyril of Alexandria

remarks that “in amazement the Evangelist says that he who had been four days dead [Lazaros] was eating with the Christ, to remind us of His God-befitting power. And he adds

that Martha, out of her love towards Christ, served, and ministered at the labors of the table.”

With Jesus’s disciples present, Mary anoints the feet of the Lord with costly ointment as an act of worship and wipes them with her hair as an act of love. Judas, who will betray the Lord, objects to the use of costly spices — not because he cared about frugality — but because he was stealing from the treasury and desired the money for himself. The Lord rebukes Judas for his greed and prophesies that Mary’s anointing is a preparation for His burial, which was to take place six days later. Judas is not just one person, but represents each and every one of us. When we allow our passions to rule over us, we become spiritually blind, our hearts harden, and we betray the Lord because we love the things of this world more than we love Him.

The next day, a great crowd who had come to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem heard that Jesus was on the way there from Bethany, which was less than two miles away. They take branches of palm trees and meet Him, shouting with praise: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” Saint John Chrysostom says that the words show us the divinity of Christ. Hosanna

means “save us.” And salvation comes, it is not brought. The former befits a lord, the latter a servant. Christ does not come in the name of a servant, but in the name of the Lord. Jesus, riding on a donkey, fulfills the prophecy made five hundred years earlier by the Prophet Zechariah: “Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” (Zechariah 9:9). The great King had come, not on a horse and a chariot to defeat worldly enemies, but in humility and service to the spiritually lost, the sick, and the poor. He hid his Divine glory to defeat not earthly powers but a much greater adversary, indeed the greatest enemy: He came to trample down upon death by His death. The Messiah is ready to enter Jerusalem, the city of the King. Spreading people’s outer garments and branches on the pathway was customary to greet a royal figure entering the city. But this was no ordinary King, but the King of Israel and the King of the Universe, the creator and ruler of all, the Angel of Great Counsel who brings His peace to the world. The branches of the palm trees symbolize Christ’s victory over the evil one and death.

However, according to their own Messianic ideas, the religious establishment of Israel at that time wanted a Messiah who would liberate them from the Romans.

Because of this, many of the people who now exclaim “Hosanna!” would be calling for Him to be crucified six days later.

This reminds us to ground our faith in a proper understanding of Christ’s love and character. The Lord’s work is not meant to fulfill our selfish expectations, because we would then be worshiping a god of our imagination. In turn, this may easily become a temptation for us to blame God for not doing what we want Him to do. If we do not understand who Christ is and how He loves us, we might find ourselves looking for Him to act how we want when difficult situations arise. And we might even be tempted to turn away from Christ.

However, the Lord loves us so much more than our limited comprehension allows.

His purposes are beyond our understanding, and they are always intended for our salvation. Let us remember that when good or bad things happen to us, it is allowed by God for our spiritual benefit. On Palm Sunday, the Blessed Lord comes as a humble King, and the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem is a symbol of His entrance into our hearts. Christ is the King Who reigns even now in the midst of our sufferings and failures. Salvation has come to us if we trust our King as our only hope.

The Lord Jesus is always with us. He has entered the Temple, He established the

Church, and ministers at the altar of our hearts. Let us remember Mary and Martha’s joy

and gratefulness to the Lord, who brought the Resurrection to their own home, as He does with us. Let us also remember Judas’ betrayal, for we too can allow our passions to overcome us if we do not trust in the Lord completely. This is why we fast on

Wednesdays

throughout the year, because we remember the betrayal of Judas, and we soberly contemplate our own faithfulness to the Lord.

Trusting in Christ and accepting His grace, we follow His example of how to struggle, to love, and to forgive. We learn humility

from the great King who rode on a donkey and participated in the crowd’s joy, knowing they would crucify Him six days later. Christ is full of compassion and love. His love does not falter or waver. His love is steadfast no

matter what is done to Him. He is always with us as we continue our journey through Holy Week to Great and Holy Pascha.

As Christ enters Jerusalem, let Him enter our hearts. Let us receive Him with joy.

Let us walk with Him on the way of suffering towards the Crucifixion. Let us lay down our own struggles, temptations, and sins at the foot of the Cross to die with Christ. And may we be resurrected with Him in a new life — a life of faith, peace, and love.

RAISING OF LAZARUS



·ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM·

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