



March 28, 2010
FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF
OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM
(PALM SUNDAY)

PALM SUNDAY TROPARION - TONE ONE:

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!"

SECOND PALM SUNDAY TROPARION - TONE FOUR:

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."

PALM SUNDAY KONTAKION - TONE SIX:

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."



EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 4TH TONE:

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord! God is the Lord and has revealed himself to us!

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 your 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.

ALLELUIA

*O sing to the Lord a new song, for the Lord has done marvelous things!
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God!*

COMMENTARY

The marathon of Great and Holy Lent is coming to an end this year, and the Apostle Paul reminds us of the fruit of a disciplined life of prayer and thanksgiving. Our efforts to discipline our minds, bodies and souls can bring us to being open to receive the Peace of God. That it "guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" points out that when we are receptive to God's Peace, we are also unifying our will to His Divine Will. The unification of wills ensures that when we ask, we will receive: because we will ask only for that which is necessary for our salvation. This is why, as Orthodox Christians, we are anxious for nothing. Our faith that the Lord is at hand, and present with us, reminds us that God will provide everything that we need. May Christ our God strengthen our prayer, and sustain our fast, so that we may always greet Him with great rejoicing!



GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

JOHN 12: 1-18

At that time, 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 Zion; 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 the 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.

COMMENTARY

Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, gives Judas every opportunity to turn from his greed and be saved. Even though He knew Judas to be a thief, Jesus still allows him to be in charge of the money box (and the distribution of its funds). He allows Judas to exercise apostolic authority, He washes Judas' feet with the other disciples, He allows him to partake of the Mystical Supper. All was offered to Judas for his own salvation, yet he could never overcome his greed. In the same way, all is offered to us for our salvation...yet we still cannot overcome our own sinful ways. However, there is good news! Christ doesn't expect us to overcome our sinfulness alone--all we have to do is ask Him for help. Ask for His help and you shall receive it! May Christ our God assist us all in having the humility to ask for His help as we fight to overcome our sinful ways.

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From *The Prologue* for Mar. 15/Mar. 28 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Holy Martyr Agapius and the Seven with him: Publius, Timolaus, Romulus, Alexander, Alexander, Dionysius and Dionysius

They all suffered in Caesarea in Palestine at the hand of Prince Urban during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. All seven were extremely young men, and none of them were Christians except Agapius. Neither were they baptized with water, but theirs was a baptism by blood. One day these seven young men were observing how Christians were being tortured: one in the fire, another on the gallows, and a third before wild beasts. Seeing with what great forbearance these Christians endured all their pain and sufferings, these seven became inflamed with a zeal for Christ. They tied their hands behind their backs and came before Urban, saying: "We also are Christians." The flattery and threats of Urban were in vain. These young men were joined by a distinguished citizen of this town, Agapius, who had previously suffered much for Christ. They became all the more inflamed in their faith and love for the Lord. All were beheaded in the year 303 and took up their abode in the mansions of the Heavenly King.

The Holy Martyr Alexander

Alexander was from the city of Side in Pamphylia. A deputy of the Emperor Aurelius asked Alexander: "Who are you and what are you?" To this Alexander replied that he was a shepherd of the flock of Christ. "And where is this flock of Christ?" further inquired the wicked and suspicious governor. Alexander replied: "Throughout the entire world live men whom Christ God created, and among them are those who believe in Him: they are His sheep. But all such as you, who are fallen away from their Creator and are slaves to creation, to man-made things and dead idols, are estranged from His flock. At the Dread Judgment of God, they will be placed on the left with the goats." The wicked judge then ordered that Alexander first be beaten with bullwhips and then thrown into a fiery furnace. But the fire did not harm him in any way. After that, he was flayed and thrown to the wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch him. Finally, the deputy ordered that Alexander be beheaded. As soon as the judge pronounced the sentence, he became possessed by an evil spirit and went insane. Howling, the judge was led before his gods, the idols, and on the way his evil soul was wrenched from him. St. Alexander suffered between the years 270 and 275.

The Holy Martyr Nicander the Egyptian

Nicander was skinned and then beheaded for his faith in Christ. His crime was that, as a physician, he ministered to Christian martyrs and honorably buried their martyred bodies. He suffered honorably in the year 302.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Holy Martyrs Agapius, Alexander, Nicander and those with them
From every state the Lord chooses His army:
Everyone in whom the flame of love and faith burns;
From among physicians, sages, peasants and laborers,

From among emperors and fishermen—an army of martyrs!
The sword beheaded, the Lord received the wise Alexander;
The sword beheaded, the Lord took the merciful Nicander;
The sword beheaded eight beautiful, young apples;
Beneath the sword, the All-sustaining Hand received them.
Those whom the world scoops up and discards from its sheepfold
The Lord with His tender hand gathers as the most beautiful blossoms.
Shoveled aside as a weed, the first citizen Agapius
Was received by the Lord as His son.
Ten martyrs, glorious men,
Now sing in eternity in the angelic choir.
Not all deaths are the same; all die, but for what?
Some of the dead are blessed and others cursed.
Who dies for Christ's sake—with him is a blessing;
Who dies persecuting Christ—with him is a curse.

REFLECTION

Love for anyone or anything, even love for oneself, can in time grow cold in man, be lost altogether and even be twisted into hatred. But the love of man for God, once gained and established, is more difficult to cool off, unless one loses one's mind. In the first instance man diminishes or eradicates his love either out of a change in himself or because of a change in the objects of his love. In the second instance man can diminish his love toward God only because of a change in himself and never because of a change in God. All of this is neatly and clearly explained by St. Isaac the Syrian: "There is a kind of love that is similar to a brook after a rainfall, which quickly ceases after the rain stops. But there is a love similar to a spring, which erupts through the earth and never ceases. The first love is human love, and the second love is Divine Love." St. Simeon the New Theologian, speaks about Divine Love: "O Holy Love! Thou art the end of the Law. Thou overcomest me; Thou warmest me; Thou inflamest my heart to immeasurable love for God and my brothers. Out of love, God became man. Out of love, He endured His life-giving suffering in order to deliver man from the throes of hades and bring him to heaven. Out of love, the apostles completed their difficult course. Out of love, the martyrs shed their blood in order not to lose Christ."



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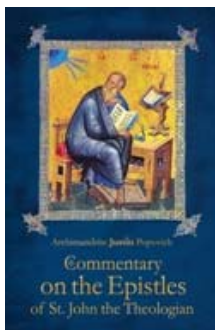
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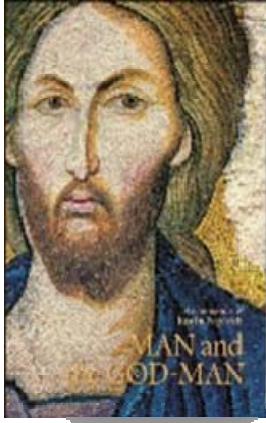
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By Archimandrite Justin Popovic

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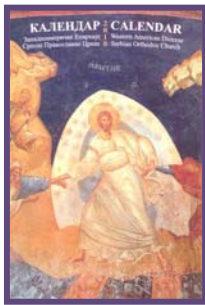


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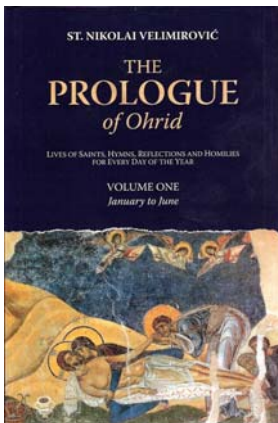
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