

**Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church**  
**971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905**  
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**The Feast of Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem**  
**(04.28.2024.)**

**John 12:1-18**

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt. These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. (KJV)

Today God's Holy Church focuses on the Lord Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Jesus was hailed as King of Israel. Crowds gathered to greet Him and pay tribute.

Jesus Christ's miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead was known to people gathering to see Him. The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead was of great interest. Jesus' power over death deserves constant consideration.

The Church wants believers to continue to be informed of Jesus' power over death. Jesus' power over death is life-transforming. The resurrection of the dead is a foundational principle for believers.

Next week believers will celebrate Pascha, the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus' power over death establishes the unquenchable hope for believers in all circumstances of life.

Persons immersed in sin can reach out to Jesus in hope to begin life anew. When loved ones depart this life, hope exists that reuniting with loved ones will take place at the general resurrection when Christ's Second Coming occurs.

This is a most serious time in the Church as Great and Holy Week has arrived. The Church will extensively proclaim the content of the Gospels this Great and Holy Week. Attentive believers will enrich their lives.

The Gospels address the hunger in believers' souls. The Divine services of God's Holy Church provide the life-enriching and life-changing content for believers willing to invest the effort in learning.

Parish churches offer a range of services for believers to attend. Monasteries offer more extensive services for those seeking to learn more. Believers in America are blessed with the freedom to visit different churches and monasteries to learn.

Each parish church offers the basic services necessary for believers to grow in Jesus Christ. The parish priest is the primary resource for believers to turn to for advice on further learning.

Great and Holy Week is the time for believers to concentrate their full attention on Jesus' betrayal, arrest, trial, death on the cross and resurrection. Great and Holy Week is the time to fully appreciate Christ's humility and love.

Each person determines the degree of investment in Great and Holy Week. Paschal joy will be proportionate to the investment made in the journey to Pascha. Believers serious about following Christ experience the joy of the life in Christ.

Thank God for the presence of parish churches. Thank God for priests willing to serve and believers supporting each parish. Thank God for the choirs, the parish boards, the tutors, church school teachers and other supporting organizations.

Thank God for the Diocesan Bishop, Diocesan Council and all supporting believers and leaders of God's Holy Church. Much is involved for the Church to thrive in the contemporary world.

The evil forces that worked to crucify Jesus continue to exist. The Holy Spirit strengthens believers to combat and stand against evil. Great and Holy Week is a time for believers to draw strength from the Living, Loving God.

Great and Holy Week is the time for hope in Jesus' power over evil and death to be renewed and strengthen. Greatly anticipate the joy that comes with the arrival of Pascha. Use Holy Week to think seriously about Jesus Christ.

This week put away worldly cares and focus completely on Jesus Christ. Be attentive to the content of the Divine services. Sit in the quiet of the parish church and experience the presence of Jesus Christ.

Be renewed in Christ this Holy Week. Be enriched in Christ. Love Christ and be thankful to Christ. May this Holy Week be fully transforming and heart-filling with Christ's love.

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**The Feast of the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem. Palm Sunday. April 15/28, 2024.  
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic**

## **Palm Sunday: The Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem**

### **Introduction**

On the Sunday before the Feast of Great and Holy Pascha and at the beginning of Holy Week, the Orthodox Church celebrates one of its most joyous feasts of the year. Palm Sunday is the commemoration of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem following His glorious miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead. Having anticipated His arrival and having heard of the miracle, the people went out to meet the Lord and welcomed Him with displays of honor and shouts of praise. On this day, we receive and worship Christ in this same manner, acknowledging Him as our King and Lord.

### **Biblical Story**

The biblical story of Palm Sunday is recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; and John 12:12-18). Five days before the Passover, Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Having sent two of His disciples to bring Him a colt of a donkey, Jesus sat upon it and entered the city.

People had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover and were looking for Jesus, both because of His great works and teaching and because they had heard of the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. When they heard that Christ was entering the city, they went out to meet Him with palm branches, laying their garments on the ground before Him, and shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!"

At the outset of His public ministry Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God and announced that the powers of the age to come were already active in the present age (Luke 7:18-22). His words and mighty works were performed "to produce repentance as the response to His call, a call to an inward change of mind and heart which would result in concrete changes in one's life, a call to follow Him and accept His messianic destiny. The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is a messianic event, through which His divine authority was declared.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king: the Word of God made flesh. We are called to behold Him not simply as the One who came to us once riding on a colt, but 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 our fears and insecurities, "to take solemn possession of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart," as someone has said. He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His 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 summons us to accept both the rule and the kingdom of God as the goal and content of our Christian life. We draw our identity from Christ and His kingdom. The kingdom is Christ - His indescribable power, boundless mercy and incomprehensible abundance given freely to man. The kingdom does not lie at some point or place in the distant future. In the words of the Scripture, the kingdom of God is not only at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), it is within us (Luke 17:21). The kingdom is a present reality as well as a future realization (Matthew 6:10). Theophan the Recluse wrote the following words about the inward rule of Christ the King:

*"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. Then God acts within it as master 'both to will and to do of his good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). This reign begins as soon as we resolve to serve God in our Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Then the Christian hands over to God his consciousness and freedom, which comprises the essential substance of our human life, and God accepts the sacrifice; and in this way the alliance of man with God and God with man is achieved, and the covenant with God, which was severed by the Fall and continues to be severed by our willful sins, is re-established."*

The kingdom of God is the life of the Holy Trinity in the world. It is the kingdom of holiness, goodness, truth, beauty, love, peace and joy. These qualities are not works of the human spirit. They proceed from the life of God and reveal God. Christ Himself is the kingdom. He is the God-Man, Who brought God down to earth (John 1:1,14). "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not" (John 1:10-11). He was reviled and hated.

Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king - the Suffering Servant. We cannot understand Jesus' kingship apart from the Passion. 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 griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions and made Himself an offering for sin (Isaiah 53). His 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, the king who was on His way to death. His Passion, however, was no morbid desire for martyrdom. Jesus' purpose was to accomplish the mission for which the Father sent Him.

“The Son and Word of the Father, like Him without beginning and eternal, has come today to the city of Jerusalem, seated on a dumb beast, on a foal. From fear the cherubim dare not gaze upon Him; yet the children honor Him with palms and branches, and mystically they sing a hymn of praise: ‘Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to the Son of David, who has come to save from error all mankind.’” (A hymn of the Light.)

“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 art Thou, O Savior, who hast come into the world to save Adam from the ancient curse; and in Thy love for mankind Thou hast been pleased to become spiritually the new Adam. O Word, who hast ordered all things for our good, glory to Thee.” (A Sessional hymn of the Orthros)

## Icon of the Feast



In the Icon of the Feast of Palm Sunday, Christ is the central figure, depicted seated upon the colt of a donkey as He enters Jerusalem, a fulfillment of the prophecy found in Zechariah 9:9.

Christ is blessing with His right hand, and in His left hand is a scroll, symbolizing that He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah, the Anointed One who has come to redeem us from our sins and break the power of death. The colt, one of the animals that were considered unclean according to the Law, is symbolic of the inclusion of all peoples of all nations in the new covenant that will come through the death and Resurrection of Christ (Isaiah 62:10-11). It is also a sign that our Lord has revealed a heavenly and spiritual kingdom that offers true and enduring peace.

On the right, the disciples accompany Jesus in His Triumphal Entry. Depicted on the left are the Jews who greet Him crying “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” The word “Hosanna” means “Save, I pray” or “Save now.”

The children are the small people who are greeting Christ with palm branches and laying these and their garments on the ground before Christ as tokens of honor for one who is acknowledged as a King. The city of Jerusalem is shown as the walled buildings, and the temple is depicted as the building with the dome.

## **Orthodox Christian Celebration of Palm Sunday**

Palm Sunday is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, which is preceded by the Matins service. A Great Vespers is conducted on Saturday evening according to the order prescribed in the Triodion. Scripture readings for Palm Sunday are: At the Vespers: Genesis 49:1,8-12; Zephaniah 3:14-19; Zechariah 9:9-15. At the Orthros (Matins): Matthew 21:1-17. At the Divine Liturgy: Philippians 4:4-9; John 12:1-18.

On this Sunday, in addition to the Divine Liturgy, the Church observes the Blessing and Distribution of the Palms. A basket containing the woven palm crosses is placed on a table in front of the icon of the Lord, which is on the Iconostasion. The prayer for the blessing of the Palms is found in the Ieratikon or the Euxologion. According to the rubrics of the Typikon, this prayer is read at the Orthros just before the Psalms of Praise (Ainoi). The palms are then distributed to the faithful. In many places today, the prayer is said at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, before the apolysis. The text of the prayer, however, indicates clearly that it is less a prayer for the blessing of the palms, even though that is its title, and more a blessing upon those, who in imitation of the New Testament event hold palms in their hands as symbols of Christ's victory and as signs of a virtuous Christian life. It appears then, that it would be more correct to have the faithful hold the palms in their hands during the course of the Divine Liturgy when the Church celebrates both the presence and the coming of the Lord in the mystery of the Eucharist.



## Hymns and Prayers of Palm Sunday

### **Apolytikion: First Tone**

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your passion, You did confirm 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!

### **Apolytikion: Fourth Tone**

As by baptism we were buried with Thee, O Christ our God, so by Thy Resurrection we were deemed worthy of immortal life; and praising Thee, we cry: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

### **Kontakion: Plagal of the Second Tone**

Sitting on Your throne in heaven, carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God. Accept the praise of angels and songs of children who sing: Blessed is He that comes to recall Adam.

## Donations April 21, 2024

**Offering - \$ 915.00   Candles - \$22.00   Dues - \$50**

### Large Candles

IMO Mary Ellen Locher-Byrd from Helene Gleason  
IMO Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Milica Knepp  
IMO Grandparents Amelia & Pete Mastovich from Rick Kondas  
IMO brother Joseph Kondas from Rick Kondas

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### **CONGRATULATIONS**

**To our Father Dragan, Popadija Vladanka, and Petar on the  
arrival of Beautiful Baby Vera on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>.  
God Bless the Vukovic Family!  
dobrodošla devojčica!  
Mnogaja Ljeta!**

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### **TODAY IS THE LAST DAY**

**Please see attached form in regards to Flowers for Pascha. If you  
have any questions, please see Suzette Gardenhour.**

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## SCHEDULE FOR HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA

**GREAT and HOLY THURSDAY - *May 2<sup>nd</sup>* - 9:30 am – Divine Liturgy  
7:00 pm – Great Vigil (The reading of the 12 Gospels)**

**GREAT and HOLY FRIDAY - *May 3<sup>rd</sup>*  
7:00 pm – Vespers Service Veneration of Plastanica (Epitaphios)**

**GREAT and HOLY SATURDAY - *May 4<sup>th</sup>* -9:30 am – Divine Liturgy  
Egg coloring and Lunch Following Divine Liturgy**

**9:00 pm – Paschal Matins  
RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - PASCHA *May 5<sup>th</sup>*  
10.00 am – Divine Liturgy**



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**ST. NICHOLAS SLAVA ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**  
**SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024 - Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM**

**Change in church time - Beginning Sunday, June 2, 2024. Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:30 AM and continue at that time until Sunday, September 8, 2024, when it will then again begin at 10:00 AM.**

## MEMORIAL SERVICES IN 2024

Memorial services at the Church cemeteries will be held as follows:

BENSHOF HILL CEMETERY on Saturday, June 8, 2024 – 9:30 AM (Begin at Top)

GRANDVIEW CEMETERY on Saturday, June 8, 2024 – Beginning at 1:00 PM

OLD ST. NICHOLAS CEMETERY on Saturday, June 15, 2024 – 9:30 AM

ST. PETKA CEMETERY Saturday, June 15, 2024 – 10:30 AM – (Begin at Top)

**Polka-Fest – Friday May 31st to Sunday, June 2nd**

**Band of Brothers – July 11-13th and 17 – 20th**



**SATURDAY, AUGUST 10<sup>TH</sup> 2024**

**Johnstown Slavic Festival – September 20-21<sup>st</sup>**



# FLOWERS FOR PASCHA



This year with our Easter falling on Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, it may be difficult to get the flowers that we normally purchase. You have the option of purchasing your own flowers, or donating money that will be used to purchase flowers to decorate the tomb. Please complete the form below and return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to Suzette Gardenhour no later than Sunday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. If you are out of town – payment and completed form can be mailed to:

St. Nicholas Church  
1001 St. Clair Road, Johnstown PA 15905

Or contact Suzette at 814-421-1276 or shliva16@gmail.com

Please check this box if you will be purchasing your own flowers. They must be at the church no later than Friday morning, May 3<sup>rd</sup>.