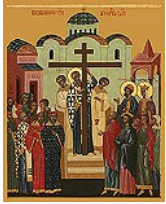


## ✠Bulletin✠

Week of April 5th to April 11th



# Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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### ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM

#### Palm Sunday

Martyrs Agathopodes the Deacon and Theodulus the Reader at Thessalonica (303). Ven. Publius of Egypt (4th c.). Ss. Theonas, Symeon and Phorbinus, of Egypt (4th c.). Ven. Mark the Anchorite, of Athens (ca. 400). St. Plato the Confessor, abbot, of the Studion (813). Ven. Theodora of Thessalonica (892). Translation of the Relics (1652) of St. Job, Patriarch of Moscow (1607).

### Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

#### Sunday April 5th

##### Palm Sunday

9:15 am – Hours

##### Blessing of Palms

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

#### Holy Monday – April 6<sup>th</sup>

5:30 pm - Bridegroom Matins

#### Holy Tuesday – April 7<sup>th</sup>

5:30 pm - Presanctified Liturgy

##### Lenten Meal to follow

#### Holy Thursday – April 9th

3:00 pm - Mystical Supper Vespereal Liturgy

##### Lenten Meal to follow

#### Good Friday – April 10th

3:00 pm - Great & Holy Friday

Burial of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ

#### Holy Saturday – April 11th

9:00 am – Christ's descent into Hades

Holy Saturday Vespereal Liturgy

### Weekly Schedule

#### Sunday April 5th

- Choir Practice following Divine Liturgy

#### Thursday April 9<sup>th</sup>

- 5:30 pm Choir Practice at the church, following the Lenten meal

#### Friday April 10<sup>th</sup>

- 4:30 pm - Pascha church preparations, church cleaning

### Each One of Us is Potentially a Judas

#### A sermon given by Fr. Seraphim (Rose) during Great Lent, 1982

*Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as he sat at meat. But when His disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, "To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." When Jesus understood it, He said unto them, "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For ye have the poor always with you; but Me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall be also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you." And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. (Matthew 26:6-16)*

In this passage of Scripture, we read how, as our Lord prepared for His Passion, a woman came and anointed Him with very precious ointment; and it is very touching how our Lord accepted such love from simple people. But at the same time Judas—one of the twelve who were with Him—looked at this act, and something in his heart changed. This was apparently the “last straw,” because Judas was the one in charge of the money and he thought that this was a waste of money. We can even see the logical processes going on in his mind. We can hear him think about Christ: “I thought this man was somebody important. He wastes money, he doesn’t do things right, he thinks he’s so important...” and all kinds of similar little ideas which the devil puts in his mind. And with his passion (his main passion was love of money), he was caught by the devil and made to betray Christ. He did not want to betray Him; he simply wanted money. He did not watch over himself and crucify his passions.

Anyone of us can be exactly in that position. We have to look at our hearts and see which passion of ours will the devil hook us on in order to cause us to betray Christ. If we think that we are something superior to Judas—that he was some kind of a “kook” and we are not—we are quite mistaken. Like Judas, every one of us has passions in his heart. Let us therefore look at them. We can be caught with love for neatness, with love for correctness, with love for a sense of beauty: any of our little faults which we cling to can be a thing that the devil can catch us with. Being caught, we can begin to justify this condition “logically”—on the basis of our passion. And from that “logical” process of thinking we can betray Christ, unless we watch over ourselves and begin to realize that we are filled with passions, that each one of us is potentially a Judas. Therefore, when the opportunity comes—when the passion begins to operate in us and logically begins to develop from a passion into betrayal—we should stop right there and say, “Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!”

We must not look at life through the glasses of our passions, nor see how we can “fit” life into being what we would like it to be—whether this is a life where there is peace and quiet or where there is a lot of noise and excitement. If we try to make life “fit” like this, a total disaster will result. In looking at life, we should accept all the things which come to us as God’s providence, knowing that they are intended to wake us up from our passions. We should pray to God to show us some God-pleasing thing that we can do. When we accept what comes to us, we begin to be like the simple woman in the Gospel who heard the call from God and was thus able to be His minister. She was proclaimed to the ends of the world, as our Lord says, because of the simple thing she did—pouring out the ointment upon Him. Let us be like her: sensitive to watching God’s signs around us. These signs come from everywhere: from nature, from our fellow men, from a seeming chance of events... There is always, every day, something that indicates to us God’s will. We must be open to this.

Once we become more aware of the passions within ourselves and begin to fight against them, we will not let them begin the process which was seen in Judas. Judas started from a very small thing: being concerned about the right use of money. And from such small things we betray God the Savior. We must be sober, seeing not the fulfillment of our passions around us, but rather the indication of God’s will: how we might this very moment wake up and begin to follow Christ to His Passion and save our souls.

### Excerpts of Great and Holy Saturday

By Rev. Alexander Schmemmann

Great and Holy Saturday is the day on which Christ reposed in the tomb. The Church calls this day the Blessed Sabbath.

“The great Moses mystically foreshadowed this day when he said: God blessed the seventh day. This is the blessed Sabbath. This is the day of rest, on which the only-begotten Son of God rested from all His works....” (Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday)

By using this title, the Church links Holy Saturday with the creative act of God. In the initial account of creation as found in the Book of Genesis, God made man in His own image and likeness. To be truly himself, man was to live in constant communion with the source and dynamic power of that image: God. Man fell from God. Now Christ, the Son of God through whom all things were created, has come to restore man to communion with God. He thereby completes creation. All things are again as they should be. His mission is consummated. On the Blessed Sabbath He rests from all His works.

#### THE TRANSITION

Holy Saturday is a neglected day in parish life. Few people attend the Services. Popular piety usually reduces Holy Week to one day—Holy Friday. This day is quickly replaced by another—Easter Sunday. Christ is dead and then suddenly alive. Great sorrow is suddenly replaced by great joy. In such a scheme Holy Saturday is lost.

In the understanding of the Church, sorrow is not replaced by joy; it is **transformed** into joy. This distinction indicates that it is precisely within death that Christ continues to effect triumph.

#### TRAMPLING DOWN DEATH BY DEATH

We sing that Christ is “...trampling down death by death” in the troparion of Pascha. This phrase gives great meaning to Holy Saturday. Christ’s repose in the tomb is an “active” repose. He comes in search of His fallen friend, Adam, who represents all men. Not finding him on earth, he descends to the realm of death, known as Hades in the Old Testament. There He finds him and brings him life once again. This is the victory: the dead are given life. The tomb is no longer a forsaken, lifeless place. By His death Christ tramples down death by death.

## THE ICON OF THE DESCENT INTO HADES

The traditional icon used by the Church on the feast of Pascha is an icon of Holy Saturday: the descent of Christ into Hades. It is a painting of theology, for no one has ever seen this event. It depicts Christ, radiant in hues of white and blue, standing on the shattered gates of Hades. With arms outstretched He is joining hands with Adam and all the other Old Testament righteous whom He has found there. He leads them from the kingdom of death. By His death He tramples death.

“Today Hades cries out groaning: I should not have accepted the Man born of Mary. He came and destroyed my power. He shattered the gates of brass. As God, He raised the souls I had held captive. Glory to Thy cross and resurrection, O Lord!”  
(Vesperal Liturgy of Holy Saturday)

## Inquirers & Catechism Class

Class on Palm Sunday is cancelled. Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

## [tithe.ly.com](http://tithe.ly.com)

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, [tithe.ly](http://tithe.ly) can be accessed through the church website [www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org](http://www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org)

## Prayer Requests

Heather (Helen) Auld  
Anne and Scott Peatross  
Nicholas Kowalski  
Robert Kozera  
Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos’ daughter  
Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

## Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,  
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,  
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,  
Roman, Mykola  
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei  
Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

## Announcements - Confessions

The last time for confessions before Pascha will be Saturday morning, April 11<sup>th</sup>. Please make every effort to have your confession heard during Holy Week, before Pascha Sunday.

## Schedule of Weekly Services

### **HOLY PASCHA Sunday Morning– April 12<sup>th</sup>**

**\*\*\*8:00 am\*\*\***

**MATINS & RESURRECTION LITURGY**

**\*Blessing of Baskets & Egg Hunt**

### **Bright Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup>**

**8:45 am - Paschal Hours**

**9:00 am – Divine Liturgy**

## **The Divine Liturgy**

**Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom**

Variable Hymns and Readings

### **The First Antiphon**

I love the Lord because He has heard the voice of  
my supplication. *(Ps. 114:1)*

*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. *(Ps. 114:2) (Refrain)*

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of hell  
laid hold on me. *(Ps. 114:3) (Refrain)*

I suffered distress and anguish, then I called on the Name  
of the Lord. *(Ps. 114:4a) (Refrain)*

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the  
living. *(Ps. 114:9) (Refrain)*

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

### The Second Antiphon

I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted." (Ps. 115:1)  
*Refrain: O Son of God, Who sat upon a foal, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!*

What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He has given me? (Ps. 115:3) (*Refrain*)  
I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. (Ps. 115:4) (*Refrain*)  
I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people. (Ps. 115:8) (*Refrain*)  
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

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 117:1)

#### *Troparion of the Feast*

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion,  
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.  
Like the children with the palms of victory,  
we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death:  
"Hosanna in the highest!//  
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."

Let the house of Israel say that He is good; for His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 117:2)

#### *Troparion of the Feast*

Let the house of Aaron say that He is good; for His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 117:3)

#### *Troparion of the Feast*

Let those who fear the Lord say that He is good; for His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 117:4)

#### *Troparion of the Feast*

**Entrance Verse:** 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. (Ps. 117:26-27a)

### Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion,  
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.  
Like the children with the palms of victory,  
we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death:  
"Hosanna in the highest!//  
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."

### Tone 4 Troparion

When we were buried with Thee in baptism, O Christ God,  
we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection.  
Now we praise Thee and sing:  
"Hosanna in the highest!//  
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!"

### Tone 6 Kontakion

Sitting on Thy 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!"

### Tone 4 Prokeimenon

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord. / God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. (Ps. 117:26a, 27a)

V. O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. (Ps. 117:1)

### Philippians 4:4-9 (Epistle)

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 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.

## Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*V. O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things!  
(Ps. 97:1)*

*V. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.  
(Ps. 97:3b)*

### John 12:1-18 (Gospel)

Then, 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 his 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.

## Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

**1-3. Then, 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.** On the tenth day of the month the Jews take the sheep which will be slaughtered for the Passover, and from that time they begin the preparations for the feast. Therefore, *six days before the Passover*, which is the ninth day of the month, they make a bountiful dinner which they consider a prelude to the feast. Coming to Bethany, Jesus also dines. To emphasize the great miracle of the raising of Lazarus the Evangelist says, *Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him*. Having appeared from the tomb alive, Lazarus did not soon return to death, but remained among them a long time, eating, drinking, and living a normal life. By saying that Martha served, the Evangelist indicates that the dinner was in her house. Behold the faith of this woman, who did not permit servants to do the serving, but herself performed this duty. Paul says of the widow who was *well reported of for good works*, "if she has washed the feet of the saints." [I Tim. 5:10] Martha, then, serves all, but Mary reserves her honor for Christ alone, attending to Him not as a man but as God. She poured out the myrrh and wiped His feet with her hair, not regarding Him a mere man, as did many of the others, but Master and Lord. And it filled the world with fragrance, just as the house was filled with the fragrance of Mary's myrrh. What meaning do we see in the hairs which wiped the feet? They represent the saints who adorn the head of God and His supreme authority. Existing for the glory of God, they may be called His adornment and have become fellow sharers in the anointing of Christ's Flesh. Paul says to the Corinthians, *Now He Who established us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, is God*. [II Cor. 1:21] We know that throughout the world those who live according to Christ are called "Christs."<sup>(1)</sup> Therefore the hairs that wiped Jesus' feet represent Christians, who share in the divine anointing. Just as hair is something dead, so too those who belong to Christ are dead. They have crucified the flesh, mortified their members that are on the earth, and died to the world. [See Gal. 5:24.] Hair is the adornment and glory of the head, the saints are the glory of God, their light shines before men, and the Father is glorified by them. [See Mt. 5:16.] And for you, O reader, Jesus has also resurrected your fallen mind like another Lazarus, and you have received Him

into the house of your soul, and that which is risen feasts together with Him.

**4-8. 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."**

Being a lover of money, Judas criticizes Mary's way of showing honor. What he is saying is, "Why did you not offer Him money (so that I could steal it) instead of myrrh?" How can it be that another Evangelist says that all the disciples asked this question? [Mt. 26:8-9] We may say that all the disciples did speak these words, but the others did not share Judas' disposition. The Lord does not rebuke him although He knew that he spoke with a thieving mind. He wished to avoid shaming him, thus teaching us also to be patient and long suffering with such individuals. But in a veiled manner He does chide him for his treachery and willingness to betray Him to death out of love of money. He mentions His burial to wound Judas' unfeeling heart with a pang of conscience, in order to correct him if at all possible. His next words have the same purpose: "the poor you always have with you; but Me you have not always, because in a little while I will go away, since you are plotting My death. If I am annoying to you and the honor shown to Me grieves you, wait a short while and you will be free of Me; then you will know if it was indeed for the poor that you needed the sale of the myrrh." If Judas was in fact a lover of money and a thief, why did the Lord give him control of the purse? For the very reason that he was a thief, so that he could not use his love of money as an excuse for his betrayal. He had sufficient consolation for his weakness from handling the purse, but despite this he was not faithful. He bare, which means, carried off and stole, what was put therein, committing sacrilege by taking for himself what had been given for godly purposes. (Let plunderers of sacred things take note whose fate they share.) But the culmination of his wickedness was that he betrayed the Lord. Do you see where love of money leads? To betrayal. Well does Paul call it the root of all evil, since it led, in this case, to betrayal of the Lord, and in every other instance does exactly the same. [I Tim. 6:10] Some say that Judas was entrusted with the ministry of the funds because it was lower than the other forms of serving. To care for the funds is a lesser ministry than teaching, as the Apostles say in the Book of Acts, *It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.* [Acts 6:2]

**9-11. 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.** These people who came to Jesus showed good sense and judgment, as opposed to those who senselessly raged against Him. For they came, the Evangelist says, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also. Indeed, because the miracle was so astounding, many wanted to see the resurrected man, and perhaps hoped to hear something from Lazarus about the others who were with him in hades. But the Pharisees were so inhuman that they desired to kill not only Jesus, but also Lazarus, who had become the cause of salvation for many of the guileless who were led to faith by means of the miracle worked in him. Thus, the Pharisees considered the good he had experienced to be his crime. Above all they were vexed that with the great feast approaching all the people were rushing to Bethany to hear about the miracle and become eyewitnesses of the resurrected man.

**12-13. 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!"** Jesus had first withdrawn into the desert for a while to calm the rage of those intent on His murder. Now He enters boldly into the city and appears to all. The time of His Passion is at hand, and He no longer hides, but gives Himself for the salvation of the whole world. Consider the sequence of the Passion. Saving the greatest miracle for last, He raised Lazarus from the dead. As a result, many ran to Him and believed. Because many believed, there was greater envy and rage, leading to the plot and the Cross. *When the multitude heard that Jesus was coming,* they met Him with greater glory and honor than a mere man would deserve. They no longer considered Him merely a prophet, for which prophet had their fathers ever honored in this manner? Thus they also cried out, *Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.* From these words we may infer, first, that He is God. For *Hosanna* means "Save now," as it is written in Greek in the 117th Psalm according to the Seventy. There the Hebrew *Hosanna* is rendered in Greek as *O Lord, save now.* The power to save is God's alone, and to Him are addressed the words, "Save us, O Lord our God." From many passages one must conclude that Scripture attributes salvation to God alone. First of all, the Psalms of David which refer to Christ say that He is God. Furthermore, they say that He is true God. For it says here, He that cometh, and not, "He that is led." The latter would be the sign of a servant; the former is the sign of power and authority. The words, *in the name of the Lord,* show

the same thing, that He is true God. They do not say that He comes in the name of a servant, but in the name of the Lord. They also reveal that He is not an adversary of God, but one who comes in the name of the Father, as the Lord Himself says, *I am come in My Father's name, whereas another shall come in His own name.* [Jn. 5:43] And they called Him the King of Israel, as if thinking of a physical kingdom. They were awaiting a king stronger than human nature to be raised up who would save them from the Roman power.

**14-16. 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.** Why do the other Evangelists [speak of the Lord's instructions to find the young ass] and say, Loose him and bring him hither, while John is silent about this, saying merely, when He had found a young ass? [See Mt. 21:2; Mk. 11:2; and Lk. 19:30.] Do they perhaps disagree? Not at all. What the others said in more detail, John expresses in summary by saying, when He had found a young ass. When the disciples had untied it and brought it to Him, then He found it and sat thereon. In doing so He fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah who said, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh to thee, sitting on the colt of an ass.[See Zech. 9:9.] Because most of the kings of Jerusalem were wicked and tyrannical, the prophet said, "Fear not, O Zion. The king of whom I prophesy to you will not be like the others, but meek and humble, displaying no arrogance whatsoever." This is shown by the fact that He came seated upon an ass. He did not enter the city at the head of an army but conveyed by a donkey. His sitting upon an ass was also a symbol of things to come. Being unclean according to the law, the ass represents the uncleanness of the Gentile race, upon whom Jesus, the Word of God, sits, subduing like a colt this insubordinate and uninstructed people, this new race, and leading it into the true Jerusalem once it has been tamed and made obedient to Him. Has the Lord not gathered the Gentiles into heaven, once they became His people and were obedient to His preaching? As for the palms, do they not indicate perhaps that He Who raised Lazarus has become the Victor over death? For palms were awarded to those who were victorious in games and contests. Perhaps they also indicate that He Who is being praised is a heavenly Being Who has come from above. Of all trees is the palm that appears to soar upwards to the very heavens, so to speak; it bears foliage at the top, and at the peak puts out young white shoots, but the stump and the middle section of the trunk, all the way to top, are rough and hard to climb because of the sharp spines. So it is that he who strives to acquire knowledge of the Son and

Word of God will find it a hard and uphill journey because of the toil of gaining virtue. But when he has arrived at the pinnacle of knowledge, he will be met, as if by the whitest palm shoots, by the bright light of divine knowledge and the revelation of ineffable things. Marvel with me, O reader, how the Evangelist is not ashamed, but boldly displays the former ignorance of the Apostles. These things understood not His disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified. By glory he means the Lord's Ascension after the Cross and Passion. Only then, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, did they understand that these things were written of Him. That these things were written, perhaps they knew; but that they referred to Jesus, they did not know, and providentially so. They would have been scandalized by His Crucifixion if [they had understood that] Scripture Itself had proclaimed Him King, and then He had suffered these things.

**17-18. Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his 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.** The Evangelist is saying that the people who saw the miracle which He worked for Lazarus were witnesses and heralds of His power. This is why He was met with glory by the people who had *heard*, that is, believed, *that He had done this miracle*. If they had not believed, they would not have congregated so swiftly.

*(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing the following)*

#### **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. *(Ps. 117:26a, 27b)*  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!