

The Feast of Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem

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)

God's Holy Church has arrived at the Great Feast of the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem. The forty days of Great Lent have concluded. The journey to Pascha continues. The focus on the Lord Jesus Christ intensifies.

Jesus' miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead is prominent today. The troparion for this Feast refers to the raising of Lazarus from the dead as confirming the universal resurrection. (1 Thess.4:13-17)

All falling asleep with faith in the Lord have reason to place hope in the universal resurrection. The raising of Lazarus from the dead verifies Jesus Christ's power over death.

Great joy fills God's Church today. Jesus is hailed as King on His entry into Jerusalem. Riding into Jerusalem on a common animal in a most humble fashion, Jesus captures the minds of believers in every century until the present day.

The chief priests plotting Jesus' death is an integral part of today's Gospel. Current believers know well that Jesus will soon be betrayed, arrested, crucified, buried and will resurrect.

Holy Week focuses clearly on the Divinely ordered days following Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Each believer rejoicing in Christ's entry into Jerusalem is challenged with examining his or her personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Who among present believers will betray Christ in the days ahead? Who among present believers will deny Christ or fall away from following Christ? Who will confess Christ as King and as God? Who will repent?

Today's Gospel describes Mary anointing Jesus' feet. Last Sunday's Gospel told of the sinful woman washing Jesus' feet. (Lk. 7:36-50) On Holy Thursday, the example of Jesus washing His disciples' feet is read from the Gospel. (Jn.13:14-15)

Let us think deeply and carefully about the example of Mary, the sinful woman and Jesus in the feet washing as personal actions related to the Christian life. How often do we personify such humble steps of love in daily life?

What are the values and personal actions we treasure most in life? At this time, God's Holy Church asks us to look deep within ourselves and assess the degree the Lord God dominates our heart, mind and soul.

Today Jesus enters Jerusalem to the cheering of the crowd. Is Jesus cheered in our heart, mind and soul each day? Will we join with those that in a few days will shout to crucify Him? (Mk. 15:13)

Jesus' mother, the women with her and the disciple Jesus loved were present at the Crucifixion. (Jn.19:25-26) Do our hearts, minds and souls show comparable support and love of Christ when He is being Crucified in today's world?

We cannot separate our personal lives from Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem and His betrayal and crucifixion in today's world. Jesus Christ continues to be betrayed and crucified.

If we seriously take to heart the teachings of God's Holy Church and the experiences of Great Lent and Holy Week, we will stand with and for Jesus Christ in daily life. If we are serious about Christ, our daily lives will show it.

Serious lovers of Christ will be like His mother at the Cross and like the disciple Jesus loved. If we want to be saved by Christ, we will be like the thief that reached out to Jesus on the Cross (Lk 23:42).

Jesus Christ called Lazarus from the tomb after Lazarus was clearly dead. Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead has a defining place in our lives. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem is a lasting lesson of humility for believers.

The Church devotes a major part of the year in the journey to Pascha. Christ's Entry into Jerusalem is a turning point in the journey. Believers have the opportunity to fully benefit in the remaining moments of the journey.

Every believer can reach out to Christ in repentance and say: "Lord remember me in Your Kingdom." With certitude and full hearts of great joy, let us always say "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord." (Mk. 11:9)

The Feast of the Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem. April 12/25, 2021. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic