

Palm Sunday - Palmarum - Second Sunday of the Passion

Hymns: 41, 162, 161, 160

(omit Gloria, responses before & after the Gospel reading, and other ascriptions of praise during Lent.)

The INTROIT

(Psalm 22:1,19,21)

P: Be not Thou far from me, O Lord;

C: O my Strength, haste Thee to help me.

P: Save me from the lion's mouth;

C: and deliver me from the horns of the unicorn.

P: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

C: Why art Thou so far from helping Me?

The COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast sent Thy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon Him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility, mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience and also be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God world without end.

The FIRST LESSON

Zechariah 9:9-10 (NKJV)

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’”

The GRADUAL

(from Ps.73 & 22)

P: Thou has held me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory.

C: Truly, God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped; for I was grieved at the ungodly.

P: Why art Thou so far from helping Me:

C: and from the words of My roaring?

P: I am a worm and no man:

C: a reproach of men and despised of the people.

P: Be not Thou far from Me, O Lord;

C: O My Strength, haste Thee to help Me.

P: I will declare Thy name unto My brethren:

C: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.

P: They shall come and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born:

C: that He hath done this.

The EPISTLE

Philippians 2:5-11 (NKJV)

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Philippians 2:8)

P: Christ has humbled himself, and become obedient unto death:

C: even the death of the cross.

The HOLY GOSPEL

St. Matthew 21:1-9 (NKJV)

Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me.

"And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.

And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!"

Zechariah 9:9-10 — "He Shall Speak Peace to the Nations"

INTRODUCTION

I. REJOICE GREATLY, O DAUGHTER OF ZION!

II. HE SHALL SPEAK PEACE TO THE NATIONS

III. HIS DOMINION

CONCLUSION

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Zechariah 9:9-10 — “He Shall Speak Peace to the Nations”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The appointed reading of the Old Testament appointed for Palm Sunday is Zechariah 9:9-10:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’”

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Palm Sunday is an exquisite display of the salvation of our God. His attitude toward mankind and especially toward the Church on earth is manifested for all to behold. Truly it is impossible for the true Church to be silent with this visage set before us. How can anyone who truly receives the fullness of the Palm Sunday proclamation refrain from crying out with heavenly joy? Surely all who recognize the LORD of glory on this day will rejoice at His coming and rejoice in knowing that He comes to speak peace to the nations and to extend His dominion to the ends of the earth.

I. REJOICE GREATLY, O DAUGHTER OF ZION!

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off.

On the day that this wonderful prophecy was manifested in its fullness, rejoicing truly did take place. The King of Glory did ride into Jerusalem in the manner that Zechariah foretold. The daughter of Jerusalem, the people who had heard the message and were looking for the coming of the Christ, did receive Jesus with rejoicing and with shouts of praise to God. They did come out to Him with shouts of welcoming praise, saying, **“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the highest!”**

Hosanna! LORD save! This is the cry of the Church. This is the never-ending chant of the daughter of Jerusalem. On this day, the LORD answered the pleading cries of the Church on earth. He came to His people to save them.

Sadly, however, those to whom the Word of the LORD comes seldom receive Him for who He really is. For He comes in a manner by which only those who are truly the daughter of Zion can receive Him. He comes **“just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.”**

People do not look for such a King. They do not want such a King. People are not willing to subject themselves to a King who comes saying, **“I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off.”** For all of the talk of desiring world peace, people do not really want peace at all. What people really want and demand is power. Even among those professing to be Christians, power and glory is the real demand that they pray. People want God to establish them above the rest of the world. People want to be vindicated. They want to have church bodies that the world can see. They want to be held up before the world as those who march with the power of heaven to set the world right again.

And when we say *people*, secretly we must admit that we mean *Us*. We are these idolatrous people who want to be recognized as the ones to join. We want all the world and especially those claiming to be Christians to acknowledge us and join with us. We want to see the world come to us and to build a kingdom that can be seen as victorious and glorious. We want to be heard as the true representatives of God. We want to be mentioned in the news media and in magazines. We want to show large numbers of members so that we can say to the world, **“See! See! We really are the true Church by which salvation is received!”**

But the LORD does not come with such displays that attract the world and honor us. The LORD comes to us through means that show Him as being just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. The LORD comes to us in the way that does not impress the glory and power seekers of the world. He comes through the lowly preaching of sinful men who seek nothing for themselves and never acquire fame or fortune. He comes through gatherings of despised and poor sinners who seek nothing in life except to receive water and bread and wine with the promise of forgiveness and salvation attached to them.

These are the signs to which the daughter of Zion gathers. These are the signs that fill the daughter of Zion with rejoicing and moves her to shouts of praise.

Such a lowly way of coming to the world has never brought recognition by the world. The world is impressed by big evangelism marketing schemes. The world is impressed by magnificent architecture and ornamentation. The world is impressed by numbers of people and setting the world ablaze.

But the LORD comes to His Church in lowliness, with the proclamation of His death as the altar call. **“Here I am!”** He says. **“Come to me. Here I am in water poured over you that you may be baptized into Me to be received into My kingdom of grace, mercy, and peace. Come to Me, and I shall wash you and separate you from all of your worldly desires and give to you new desires. Come to Me and I shall drown out of you all of the vanity of your selfish aspirations so that you think more highly of others than of yourself and desire only to be kept as a member of My Holy Communion. Come to Me and I shall offer bread and wine by which you shall partake of My one body and drink of the Cup of the New Testament in My blood for your forgiveness and renewal in the life that I give in My Holy Communion.”**

II. HE SHALL SPEAK PEACE TO THE NATIONS

This is the way that the LORD comes to His Church on earth. In this way He comes to speak peace to the nations. How differently the LORD promises to come from the way that we seek for Him by our own reason and strength! He comes to speak peace. We seek a savior who will speak victory. Moreover, He comes to speak peace to the nations. We seek a savior who will speak peace to us and will define peace according to our own definition.

How do we define peace? What kind of peace do we preach? Do we preach the same peace as the LORD preaches?

Let us consider the peace that the LORD speaks. First, we need to observe that He does not speak peace *with* the nations, but *to* the nations. His preaching is not one of acceptance of the nations. His preaching is not one of getting along with the nations. He preaches peace to the nations. He preaches conversion and repentance. He preaches that He is the Prince of Peace by whom peace is received. He preaches that He will give peace to those who cannot obtain peace, to those who are by nature at war with God and with themselves and with all of mankind. He preaches peace that comes through conviction, through judgment, through the cross. He preaches peace that does not accept sinners, but crucifies them and raises up new creatures to live in the holiness of forgiveness and repentance. This is not a partial crucifixion or a partial drowning, but a complete and total eradication of the sinful nature. Moreover, this is not an act of choosing to be crucified, but a crucifixion that is against the will of the individual.

This is why Jesus told Nicodemus that no one can perceive the kingdom of God unless he be born again and that no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he be born again of water and the Spirit. The water of Baptism is not something that an individual can produce for himself. Water is God's creation. Water by itself cannot produce life. Only water that has been connected with God's Word so that the Spirit is present has the power to give life. By itself the water is an instrument of death and separation. Water is an agent of transportation. God uses it as a flood to remove sin and to carry it away, and simultaneously to pour His Word upon us and into us to live in us and give us life. This is not something that a person can do for himself. It must be done by God through His ministers.

But these ministers cannot speak by their own authority. It is not the minister who speaks peace to the nations. It is the LORD who speaks peace through the ministers. It is the Word of the LORD that the ministers speak. Thus we are not the preachers of peace. We are not the ones who bring people into the Church. We are merely messengers through whom the LORD speaks peace to the nations. He is the speaker. We are merely vessels in which His Word lives.

This is humbling beyond our ability to receive. We must first hear the Word of the LORD by which we are crucified to self and raised to the newness of the life that is in Christ. Then, as those who rejoice in God's peace preached to us, we are empowered to proclaim what we ourselves have received from God. This is why Christ commands that this be done through the means of water and bread and wine. In this way there is no misunderstanding who is the true preacher of peace. Having been brought together in the water that carries us to the safe shore of the promised land, we continue to feast upon the bread of life and the blood of forgiveness. As we partake again and again of the oneness of Christ's body and imbibe again and again of the forgiveness of His blood, in this Holy Communion we proclaim His death till He comes. This is the preaching of peace to the nations that the LORD comes to us to preach through us.

III. HIS DOMINION

“His dominion shall be ‘from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.’ This is the restoration of God’s creation. This is how things were before sin destroyed the life that God had created man to enjoy. Through His coming to be with us through Word and Sacrament, God restores His dominion in the world. As He teaches us to pray, His kingdom does come to us so that we are restored to live in His kingdom once again. And where this was once limited to a singular location with the temple in Jerusalem, now that the King has come and has preached peace from the cross, His dominion is wherever people hear the Gospel and gather to the Gospel to eat and drink and proclaim the Lord’s death by which peace is restored to us.

The key to this successful spread of His dominion is the fact that this is HIS dominion. Since the kingdom is His kingdom, no separation remains on account of the kingdoms that we seek to establish. He fought the fight. He won the victory. As we pray, **“For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.”**

This is the peace that the LORD comes to us and proclaims. Wherever Christ crucified is preached and received, God’s peace reigns. Like with the great flood that God used to save Noah and his family, through Baptism God washes away the threats of earthly kingdoms and church bodies and family ties so that His peace guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Just as through circumcision the LORD made all who received His mark upon their procreation and families so that they were made to be worthy participants in His Passover, so also we receive the mark of the Church’s procreation upon our bodies and families to be made worthy of the New Testament in His blood. Having received His seal of sonship we live in the peace that He speaks to us through His means of grace and we serve as His witnesses of His peace to the nations. As we gather into His name as communicants of His peace, we proclaim His peace as He continually speaks His peace to us and through us to the world.

CONCLUSION

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

Does the daughter of Zion hear her King? Or does the daughter worship her mother? Does the daughter understand that she is the bride of the King? Does the daughter recognize the fact that her life is with her husband?

The Lord Jesus most certainly has come to us. What a wonderful sound this message carries. The Lord, our God and King, has come to us. He has not left us to find our own way. He does not stand at a distance and command that we find Him. He has come to us. He has come with justice and salvation. We do not have to find justice within ourselves before He comes to us. He comes and declares His justice through the cross. We do not have to lift ourselves up to His level, but rather, He humbles Himself and comes to us where we are so that He may raise us up to the new life that He has purchased for us. We do not have to strive to become good people so that we may approach Him. He has come to us to work His goodness in us through means that are easy to receive and swallow. Nothing is required of us. He comes to us with the water and supplies all that is required. He comes to us through the preaching of the holy absolution to give us peace and confidence to run to Him and receive the Supper by which we continue to live in His grace, mercy, and peace. He comes to us lowly and in the slow way of peace. He does not come to us with the mighty thundering of a warhorse or chariot, but upon the

everyday donkey of the daily chores. In other words, through poor preachers who live among us as our own countrymen, working side by side and living by the same means of grace that we do. The water we draw from a river or well or in modern times from a faucet, and His ministers speak His Word and the LORD's kingdom comes. To the nourishing daily bread and to the refreshing drink He adds His Word and we are renewed in faith and forgiveness and peace. In our family devotions, through our fathers and mothers He preaches peace. In our daily chores as we do all things as unto the LORD, He preaches peace. In this way, to the poor in spirit He comes and gently moves into the world, bringing with Him and establishing among us His kingdom of peace.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you! In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.