

PALM SUNDAY -- FLOWERY SUNDAY



Icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

As we begin this Great and Holy Week, our readings are taken from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians and St. John's Gospel. Paul's letter truly exhorts us to virtue and interior peace. Paul wrote:

Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude. Then God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding, will stand guard over your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus.

There are, I believe, some key thoughts in this passage. He tells us to present our petitions to God "full of gratitude". This is important. We must express our gratitude to God for all that we have received from His loving hands, especially the gift of life.

Paul then asserts that if we approach God in this manner, that is with gratitude, we are given "God's own peace." This is worth everything.

The passage we hear from John's Gospel not only shares with us the story of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem but also, prior to that, His visit with Martha, Mary and Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. Scripture commentaries are not clear about which Mary anointed His feet.

The anointing of Jesus' feet causes a discussion among His disciples about the cost of the perfume and John indicates that it was Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus, raised the question. Again this prepares us for the fact that Judas sold Jesus for 30 pieces



of silver and he, Judas, exclaimed that the perfume could have been sold for 300 silver pieces. What a contrast!

Further, while all four Gospels have some version of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem, only John omits reference to the colt that Jesus rode on. The other three Gospels make sure that they reference that Jesus rode on a "colt" that no one had ever ridden on. The other Gospel writers felt that it was important to note that Jesus did not ride into Jerusalem like a conquering "general" (conquering generals usually rode into the city they conquered upon a large stallion) but as a humble servant and prophet.

All four accounts include the fact that people declared loudly: "Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord." These words are a slightly modified version of words from the 118th Psalm. They help connect the Old and New Testaments. We use these same words in the Divine Liturgy. What an awesome connection!

JESUS' ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM



Palm Sunday is the celebration of the triumphant entrance of Christ into the royal city of Jerusalem. He rode on a colt and He permitted the people to hail Him publicly as a king. A large crowd met Him in a manner befitting royalty, waving palm branches and placing their garments in His path. They greeted Him with these words: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"

This day together with the raising of Lazarus are signs pointing beyond themselves to the mighty deeds and events which consummate Christ's earthly ministry. The time of fulfillment was at hand. Christ's raising of Lazarus points to the destruction of death and the joy of resurrection which will be accessible to all through His own death and resurrection. His entrance into Jerusalem is a fulfillment of the messianic prophecies about the king who will enter his holy city to establish a final kingdom. "Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted

on a colt, the foal of a donkey".

Finally, the events of these triumphant two days are but the passage to Holy Week: the "hour" of suffering and death for which Christ came. Thus the triumph in an earthly sense is extremely short-lived. Jesus enters openly into the midst of His enemies, publicly saying and doing those things which mostly enraged them. The people themselves will soon reject Him. They misread His brief earthly triumph as a sign of something else: His emergence as a political messiah who would lead them to an earthly kingdom.

The people totally missed the symbolism of His entrance on a colt. They were so desirous of having a "conquering messiah" who would free them from Roman domination that they didn't listen to what He was attempting to teach them.

That is so human, isn't it? We humans always want God to do what we want and, as a result, totally miss His message to us.

All icons of His Entrance also depict the presence of all of His disciples. It is said that Judas himself wanted Jesus to be a conquering messiah and thought that He would force Jesus' hand by betraying Him. He thought that Jesus would somehow "fight back" and lead a revolt. This, of course, was not what Jesus was attempting to teach. Many missed His message and teaching.

HUMANS: MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

As I suggested in the first installment of this article, the term “image” is thus enriched with the most varied of meanings, corresponding each time with the problems which have to be faced. Sometimes, for example, the expression “in the image” refers to man’s free will, or to his rational faculty, or to his characteristic of self-determination, sometimes to the soul along with the body, sometimes to the mind, sometimes to the distinction between nature and person and sometimes comprehensively to the whole man.

The starting point and core of the theology of the “image” is for the Fathers the teaching of St. Paul. And it is a conclusion of modern biblical scholarship that for Paul the “image of God” is Christ. The relevant teaching of the Apostle is summarized in the first chapter of his Letter to the Colossians, and it is most characteristic that it is expressed not as the personal thought of Paul but as a liturgical hymn of the early Christian community: “He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities - all things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church” (Colossians 1:15-18).

The important point about this text is that it constitutes a teaching concerned not with the Trinity but with cosmology (i.e., the science of the origin and development of the universe) and anthropology (i.e., the study of human biological and physiological characteristics and their evolution). That is to say, it is not so much the relationship of the Logos to the Father - a relationship of course which is presupposed



and which Paul develops elsewhere - as the significance of Christ for man. This point is extremely important, for it highlights the Christological dimension of St. Paul’s understanding of humankind. The same dimension of the term “image” also appears in the Apostle’s fundamental teaching that man, to be made whole, must put on “the image of the heavenly” man, who is Christ, in order to attain “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” and this, “that we may no longer be children.” Man’s growth to full stature coincides for Paul with his Christification - his becoming more like Christ.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



SLIGHT CHANGES IN HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

You will note from the Holy Week Schedule that there are a couple of changes. Our Great and Good Friday Service will be held at **7:30 PM**. There will be no VIGIL. Also food will be blessed in the NAVE of the church on Easter Sunday. There will be a special table at the front of the Church.

PUSSY WILLOWS

If you would like Blessed Pussy Willows but did not attend the Divine Liturgy, they will be available in the Church Parking Lot in a basket by the Parking Lot Side Door.

EASTER FLOWERS

Although I have cut down on the number of Easter Plants that decorate our church this year, I am still offering EASTER FLOWER MEMORIALS for those who wish to donate to the purchase of Easter Flowers. If you share with me the persons you want to be remembered by your flower donation, I shall them in our prayers during he holy season.

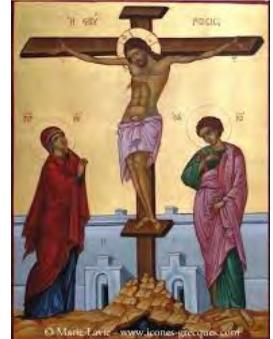
OUR BISHOPS' EASTER PASTORAL

You can find this on our websites.

<http://stmichaelarchangel.org/>

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

As we enter into the life-giving events that are celebrated during the Great and Holy Week, we see quite clearly how we are called to meet the challenges of life. We are called to meet our challenges in the way that Jesus met His.



He met His greatest challenge with nobility and grace and maintained His commitment to unconditional love for His fellowmen.

Think about His passion. All of His suffering did not make Him a bitter and angry man. In fact His response to all the horrible things that He had to face only caused Him to be more mellow. The suffering caused Him to "think about others" rather than Himself and to summon up the courage to "love" instead of "hate".

Some will immediately say, Oh it was possible for Him because He was also God. Our Church clearly tells us that He went through His passion as a "HUMAN", not as God. It was His faith and trust in the Father that allowed Him to endure His suffering in the manner in which He did. This gives us a clue. Our faith, if we rely on it, can help us through the most

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A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

HOLY MONDAY, MARCH 29th

Heavenly Father, as I think about what my Church is about to celebrate this week, I am filled with awe. I realize that You spared nothing to tell me that You love me and to help me benefit from this earthly life. I know that this life is designed to help me spiritually grow, to come to a deeper sense of my “union” with You. I ask you to open the eyes of my heart and mind to embrace the love You have shown for me through the Person of Your Son Jesus. Help me to learn from His life. Help me to have the courage to live as He lived, even unto His death. I offer this prayer to You who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

HOLY TUESDAY, MARCH 30th

My brother Jesus, my Church calls these first days of the Great Week the days of the Bridegroom. I am called to see You as a spouse, one joined to me in love for the sake of my benefit. I realize that You went through all that You did in Your life to reveal to me how to live this life. I cannot thank you enough for revealing to me the true way of living this life. I realize that You revealed that the way to worship the Father is by offering my life back to Him in thanksgiving for my life. To do this I realize I must embrace a life of personal change. I offer this prayer to You who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

HOLY WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31st

My brother Jesus, as I enter this Great and Holy Week, I think about the things that you taught while You were on earth. You taught me how to live in order to be a true child of our Heavenly Father. You taught me to unconditionally love all others regardless of how they treat me, remembering always that they too are temples of God’s Spirit even if they do not realize it. You taught me to always unconditionally forgive others so that I can be able accept the Father’s forgiveness. You taught me to respond to others as You responded to all other persons who came into Your life, thinking about them before thinking about myself. I offer this prayer to You and Your Father and Your Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 1st

My brother Jesus, I believe that on the night before You died You established the Holy Eucharist, assuring me that You are always with me. Through the Holy Eucharist You also showed me how to worship God, true worship of God being achieved by offering my very life back to Him in thanksgiving for the gift of life. Help me to offer my life back to God by embracing personal change and transformation, making every attempt to become more like You. I am deeply thankful to You for the gift of the Eucharist. It gives me the strength to meet the challenges of my life. Help me to join with You in worshipping the Father. I offer this prayer to You who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

GREAT & GOOD FRIDAY, April 2nd

O my dearest Brother, as I think about what You endured to reveal to me how I must live, I stand in awe and, with heartfelt thanks, I extend my love. You indeed showed me how I must live if I am to become truly a child of our Heavenly Father. I see how You endured the major challenge of Your life, Your Crucifixion, and I know that that is how I must face the challenges of my life. You embraced the Cross with nobility and grace and thought first of others before Yourself. I know that I must embrace the challenges of my life in the same way if I am to spiritually grow. I offer this prayer to You who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

HOLY SATURDAY, April 3rd

My brother Jesus, I spend today contemplating what You, God incarnate, did in order that I might know how to live this earthly life. I believe that Your most profound teachings were from the Cross. On the Cross and amid Your suffering, You only thought about and forgive others, regardless of the pain they may have caused You. You showed me what unconditional love truly means. You call me to extend unconditional love to all others. Unconditional love means that I do not allow the actions of others to dictate how I treat them but, rather, to unconditionally forgive them and say as You did: Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. I offer this prayer to You who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

THE GREAT AND HOLY DAY

EASTER, APRIL 4TH

On this great and holy day there is only one prayer that we can offer to our Heavenly Father. We say:

**Christ is risen from the dead,
conquering death by death and to
those in the graves bestowing
life.**

Think about the faith that is expressed in this prayer. We not only believe that Jesus, the Christ, rose from the dead **BUT THAT** He conquered Death by His own death.

God revealed through this event that human life, because it is a sharing in Divine Life, is eternal. It reveals that we humans are immortal just as Jesus is immortal. What an absolute great gift and wondrous revelation.

And so we are filled with great joy and happiness as we think about our relationship with our God. He is our Heavenly Father and He has shared with us His very life. He calls us to an eternal relationship with Him. **DON'T DOUBT, ONLY BELIEVE!**

This action by our Eternal God in time is perhaps the most wondrous gift that He could have ever extended to us. He revealed that we are truly His children and, as His children, He shares with us immortality. This means that we shall, for all eternity, be joined with Him in the cycle of spiritual growth. He has spared nothing to let us know that He unconditionally loves us and wants only our happiness.

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Pastor

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LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
In most instances membership
required for six months

Funerals
Membership of an immediate
family member required

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.734.7078

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Rev Deacon Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, March 28 - PALM SUNDAY - Beginning of the Great Week
10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Willow Branches

THE GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

Holy Monday, March 29
No Service Scheduled

Holy Tuesday, March 30
7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy & Communal Penance

Holy Wednesday, March 31
No Service Scheduled

Holy Thursday, April 1
7:00 PM - Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist and Anointing

Great and Good Friday, April 2
7:30 PM - Vespers and Burial

Holy Saturday, April 3
No Service Scheduled

Easter Sunday, April 4
8:00 AM - Matins, Divine Liturgy and Blessing of Food

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difficult of life's challenges.

Of course it depends on what we truly believe. Do we believe the "promise" the Father has revealed to us through Jesus? That promise being that if we engage in personal transformation and change that we will come to a deeper understanding of life and that there is nothing that transpires in life that can destroy us.

Research psychologists have proved that what a person believes makes all the difference (this is not in a religious sense). Psychologists that work with athletes, work with them to truly believe that they will be successful - they will hit the ball or catch the ball. Guess what? Athletes have found that it works. Their performances are controlled by their beliefs.

This can be true also in the religious/spiritual world. What we believe can control how we live just as fears and wrong beliefs can sabotage our lives. Believe and trust in our Heavenly Father.



<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

AN IMPORTANT QUESTION: WHO IS JESUS?

When God the Father said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”, He was talking to Jesus, His Word, “through whom all things were made”. God is a Trinity, and we are also a type of trinity, being made of body, soul and spirit. So we are in His image in that way. Anthony the Great of Egypt wrote this: Life is union and junction of spirit, soul and body; death is not the destruction of these parts, but the disruption of their union God preserves it all even after this disruption.

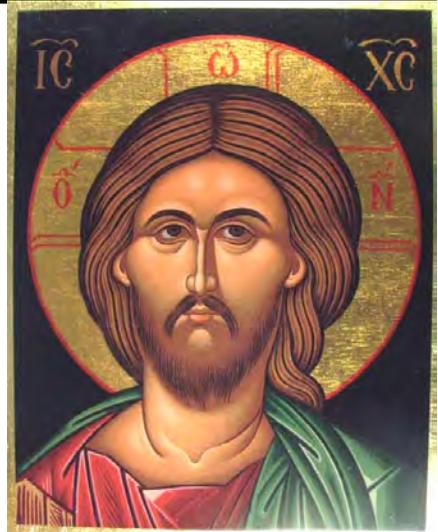
But we are more literally in God’s image than that. When God said, “Let us make man in our image,” He was saying we’d be made in the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.

So, many years before Jesus came to earth, God formed human beings in the image of what Jesus would be when He became man. Therefore the Christian definition of man is a created being in the image of Jesus, with all the physical, intellectual, spiritual properties and capacities that Jesus had as a man. Ireneus wrote this:

For in times long past, it was said that man was created after the image of God, but it was not actually shown; for the Word was as yet invisible, after whose image man was created. When, however, the Word of God became flesh, He confirmed both the image and the likeness; for He both showed forth the image truly, since He became Himself what was His image; and He re-established the likeness by uniting man to the invisible Father through means of the visible Word.

By telling us in ancient Scripture that we were made in His image, God prepared us for the birth of Jesus. He got us ready to believe that someday the Son of God would come and would really be a human being, walking on the earth with the rest of us.

This information, along with all the detailed



prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament, made His coming a very well-known thing. So, by the time He came, no one had any excuse to doubt that He was the Son of God. For we have never been ignorant that God would also be a human being, sharing His image with us.

This, however, did not really happen. It took the Church more than 300 years to finally truly assert that Jesus was fully God and fully man and that as man, He was God’s image - the image in which we were created.

So spiritual growth becomes real when we make every effort to grow in our likeness of Jesus.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.
Vol. 68 No 13 Willow/Palm Weekend March 27-28, 2021

HOW TO PRAY FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

I have been sharing ideas about using Gospel stories as a form of prayer. I have suggested, along with the author I am using, that the way to do that is to allow the event to have the same impact on us as it would if we were to have lived through it in our own personal history. In allowing the particular experience to be our own, we also accept the consequence of this experience in the lives of those who did live it. We become so one with Jesus' story that His life flows into us in just the same way it flowed into the people whose personal histories were intertwined with Him in Palestine. As we allow ourselves to find our identity in Jesus, the smallness, pettiness, weakness and sickness of our lives gives way to His great vision, openness, strength and health. Thus Jesus empowers us to take another step in our spiritual growth.

All throughout our lives we come in

touch more and more with various parts of our personalities, such as our masculinity and femininity, our being sons and daughters of our earthly parents as well as of God our Father and the roles we play in the lives of others. As we walk the journey to become alive to all the relationships that have been given to us, we find several significant moments of healing and release of our potential to live fully and feel free in our relationships with God and with other human beings.



This can lead to us sensing that we are loved for the person that we were created to be, not the person who we think we "ought" to be. This is the deepest meaning of healing - to accept life, not in the sense of "this is all there is," but in the sense of "there is so much possibility in who I am that I will never find all of it, and when I find my weaknesses, I am not bad but just only human.

Palm Sunday

The hymns and prayers celebrating Christ's glorious journey into the Holy City reflect both the joy and the concern about what shall in short time occur in this City.

The introductory Vespers' hymn expresses these sentiments in these words: "Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and we all take up Your Cross and say; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" The Palm Sunday exclamation, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord ..." is repeated over and over and we know that it was also taken into the Liturgy's solemn hymn, "Holy, holy, holy ..."

A Palm Sunday liturgical text beautifully expresses the full dimensions of this greeting when it says, "Blessed are You, You have come and are

coming again in the name of the Lord God our Savior!" The serene sunshine of the Palm Sunday could not last long. Evening is approaching of the first day of the Holy Week. Jesus' enemies were not idle; they gather and debate how to stop any similar demonstration. He should be arrested.

The Church reminds us of this change: "As we pass from one Divine Feast to another, O faithful, let us go with haste to the reverent and saving celebration of Christ's sufferings. Let us behold Him undergo voluntary suffering for our sake, and let us sing to Him with thankfulness a fitting hymn: O Fountain of tender mercy and Haven of salvation. Lord, glory be to You!" The Great, Holy Week of Christ's Passion began.

Father Vladimir Vancik