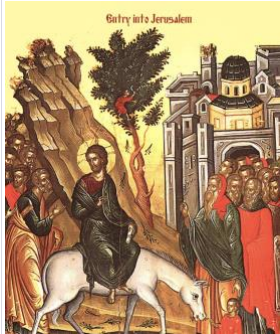




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Palm Sunday

28 April 2024

Homily on the Entry of the Lord Into Jerusalem by Saint Nikolai Velimirovich

One of the most miraculous details of our Savior's life was foreseen by the Prophet Zacharias through the dark glass of time, and described thus:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; proclaim it aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, the King is coming to thee, just, and a Saviour; he is meek and riding on an ass, and a young foal And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him." (Zach. 9:9).

The Apostle Luke, an eyewitness, describes this event:

"And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, 'Why loose ye the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord hath need of him.' And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as he



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went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, 'Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.'

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, 'Master, rebuke thy disciples.' And he answered and said unto them, 'I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.' And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.

And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, 'It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.' And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him" (Lk. 19:28–48).

This is the description of an historical event that took place twenty centuries ago, as related by an eyewitness. But this event has more than historical significance; it also has a spiritual meaning, and therefore also a moral meaning for every modern-day Christian. According to the spiritual meaning, Jerusalem signifies the human soul, and the entry of the Lord into Jerusalem signifies the entrance of God into the soul.



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The multitudes of people, crowded and pushing one against another, joyfully awaiting and greeting Christ, symbolize the noble sentiments and exalted thoughts of a person who joyfully greets God, his Savior and Deliverer. The leaders of the crowd of people, who hate Christ and want to kill Him, personify the lower desires and earthbound thoughts, which take the upper hand over man's noble nature and oppress it. Now this lower human nature rebels against God's entry into the soul, for when God is enthroned there, the lower nature will inevitably be destroyed.

The Temple in Jerusalem symbolizes the holy of holies of the human soul—that sacred place where the Holy Spirit has if only a miniscule haven even in the greatest sinner. But earthly passions penetrate there also, and lower human nature has used even it to achieve its base aims.

Christ heals the soul of those sick ones who fall down before Him with faith, and this means that certain impulses of the soul, although sick, thirst for unity with God and seek for Him, the only true Doctor in the world. Christ's prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction symbolizes the destruction of any soul that God rejects, lays low, and spews forth from Himself.

No one in this world is happy unless he has opened wide the gates of his spiritual Jerusalem—his soul—and received God into himself. A godless man feels lonely to despair. The society of others does not make his loneliness go away, but only increases it. However he who has taken God into his soul will never feel lonely even in a desert. No one dies an eternal death other than one in whom God has died.