

GOSPEL OF JOHN 12 B (12-19)

“Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king: the Word of God made flesh. We are called to behold Him not simply as the One who came to us once riding on a colt, but as the One who is always present in His Church, coming ceaselessly to us in power and glory at every Eucharist, in every prayer and sacrament, and in every act of love, kindness and mercy. He comes to free us from all our fears and insecurities, ‘to take solemn possession of our soul, and to be enthroned in our heart,’ as someone has said. He comes not only to deliver us from our deaths by His death and resurrection, but also to make us capable of attaining the most perfect fellowship or union with Him. He is the king, who liberates us from the darkness of sin and the bondage of death. Palm Sunday summons us to behold our king: the vanquisher of death and the giver of life (Fr. Alkiviadis Calivas).”

¹²On the morrow a great crowd which came to the feast, after they heard that Jesus was coming into Jerusalem, ¹³took the palm branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet Him, and were crying, “Hosanna, blessed is He Who comes in *the* name of *the* Lord, the King of Israel.” ¹⁴And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat upon it, even as it is written:

Bp. Gerasimos: “*Hosanna* was the general greeting to the pilgrims with the prayer: Save, O King God, save the coming pilgrims! Here with the Hosanna, they mean to say, save him who is coming *in the name of the Lord*. The entire reception is clearly messianic. John placed particular emphasis on the title of Christ as King, and for this reason refers to the prophecy of Zechariah. The Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, Luke) do not refer to this detail.”

Cyril of Alexandria: “...he does this (rides in a donkeys’ colt) to indicate that he is about to make subject to himself as a new people the unclean among the Gentiles, and to lead them up to the prerogative of righteousness and to the Jerusalem above of which the earthy is a type. It is into this Jerusalem that, being made clean, shall enter with Christ, who will be hymned by guileless angels of whom the babes are a type.”

¹⁵“Cease fearing, O daughter of Sion, behold, thy King comes, sitting on a colt of an ass.”

Bp. Gerasimos: “Christ is coming as a meek and humble man to put away the fears of his people and to bring them joy. Daughter of Zion is the people of Jerusalem, who are personified poetically in this phrase and invited to meet and receive their King...”

“...the Eucharist as the sacrament of the Kingdom...the Kingdom of God is the content of the Christian faith (eros, ardent desire) – the goal, the meaning and content of the Christian life. According to the unanimous witness of all scripture and tradition, it is the knowledge of God, love for Him, unity with Him and life in Him. The Kingdom of God is unity with God, the source of all life, indeed life itself. It is life eternal: ‘And this is eternal life, that they know you’ (Jn 17:3)...The

King himself came in the form of a servant and reigned only through the cross. There are no external signs of this kingdom on earth (The Eucharist, Schmemmann).”

¹⁶But the disciples knew not these things at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written in reference to Him, and *that* these things they did to Him.

John is written from a heavenly, post resurrection and glorification perspective

Fr. Behr: “The importance of correct scriptural interpretation regarding the Christ is reiterated throughout the Gospel of John. When the Spirit is finally bestowed, to ‘bring to remembrance *what had been written*: the disciples did not at that time, understand Jesus’ actions of entering Jerusalem upon an ass...The coming of the Spirit corresponds with the departure of Christ, and as such, His words, and Christ Himself, cannot be understood until His glorification.”

¹⁷Then the crowd that was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from the dead bore witness. ¹⁸On this account the crowd also went to meet Him, because it heard that He had done this sign.

Bp. Gerasimos: “It is emphasized that the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus took place for the glory of the Son of God (11:4). The miracle led the people to meet and receive Jesus as the Messiah and King – anointed (by Mary) as one who symbolically has already died – who is victor over death.”

¹⁹The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, “Observe you that you profit nothing? Behold, the world has gone away after Him.”

Chrysostom: “Wealth is just as liable as power to destroy those who are not careful. The first leads to covetousness; the second, into pride. See how the multitude of the Jews is sound while their rulers are corrupt...For no miracle so attracted the people as that of Lazarus. And another evangelist says that *they threw their garments under his feet (Matt 21:8)* and that *the whole city was moved (Matt21:10)*. This is the kind of honor he had when he entered the city.”

Bp. Gerasimos: “These words of the Pharisees are an involuntary prophecy for the coming kingdom of God (Mk 11:10).