

April 11, 2020

Dear Holy Archangel Michael's Serbian Orthodox Church Community in Hibbing, MN,
Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!

Tomorrow we celebrate Palm Sunday, which as many clergy will tell us is the one of the most widely and highly attended Orthodox Christian Church services of the year. In some instances Palm Sunday has been better attended than Pascha! This year will of course be an exceptional case, as we "shelter in place" due to COVID-19, but let us contemplate what it is about Palm Sunday that we love so much.

Do we love Palm Sunday because it was the only day, when Jesus Christ walked the face of the earth, that He was praised and glorified as He always should be? Is it because it is easy to follow the crowd, and while Jesus is being praised on Palm Sunday that was and is easy to do? Is it because we really don't like the bloody and humiliating path that Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ endured because of our many sins, and we would rather join Him in the "happy" times instead of the truly joyous resurrection that comes out of tough times?

Whatever is the case, the Gospel narrative on Palm Sunday goes as such, Jesus Christ was riding into Jerusalem seated side saddle on the foal of an ass while everyone sang out, "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord!" Many people will indicate this as a sign of Christ's unending humility, and this is true, but this foal of an ass represents something much more personal, to each and everyone of us, that is the irrational mind.

Of course, we probably all know something about donkeys, or asses. We know that they are often considered unintelligent, stubborn, carnal, and even abusive with a swift kick of their hind legs. This donkey-like behavior represents our irrational mind and the part of our human nature that reacts on carnal impulses. Anytime we find ourselves in a bad way with sins it is because we have let the irrational part of our mind do the driving. However, in the biblical narrative depicted on Palm Sunday, Jesus Christ has conquered the irrational mind (the ass) and is riding peaceably atop it into Jerusalem accompanied by praises from all those around Him. Jesus Christ had of course conquered His irrational mind as He was human but SINLESS. On Palm Sunday He also allowed and allows those around Him to conquer their irrational minds and give praise to Him as God! May we invite Jesus Christ to be seated atop, and conquer, our irrational minds as we follow Him to His death and His Bright Resurrection!

May He who was seated on the foal of an ass for our salvation, Christ Our True God, bless and protect everyone of us. Amen.

With the blessings of God,
Father Constantine "Dean" Franck