

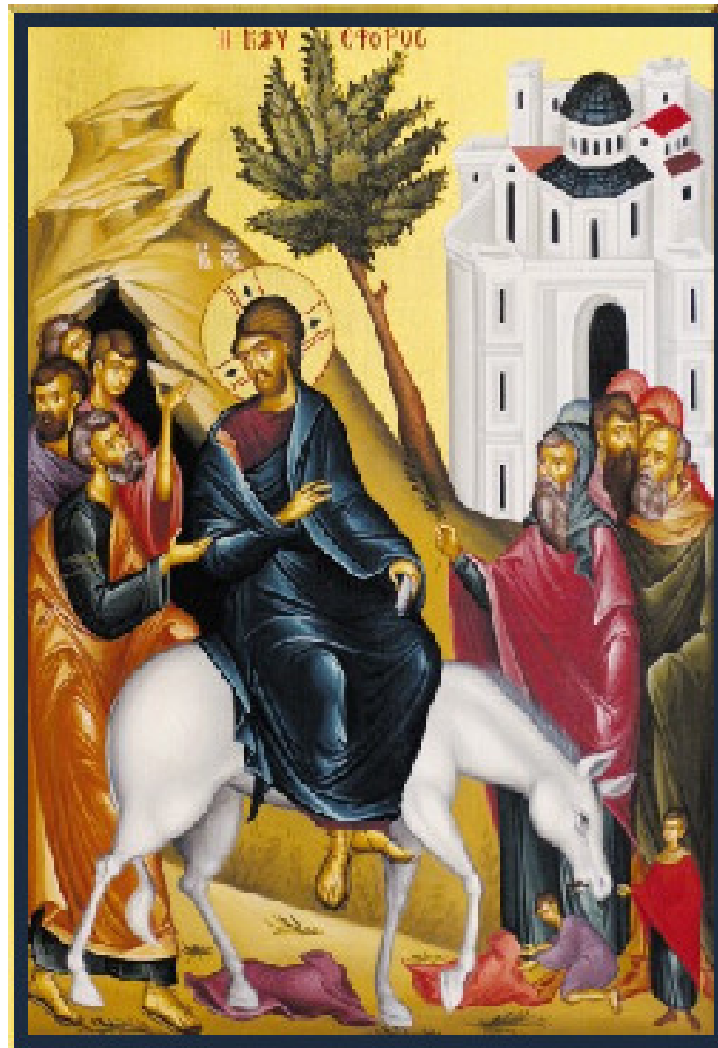
What is

# PALM SUNDAY ?

What does it mean to us ?



Here is the icon for Palm Sunday.



How do we read it ? What is happening here ?

## What is Palm Sunday ?

“Palm Sunday, also called the Triumphal Entry, is one of the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church, celebrated on the Sunday before Pascha (The Resurrection of Christ).”

Taken from: [http://orthodoxwiki.org/Palm\\_Sunday](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Palm_Sunday)

“The biblical story of Palm Sunday is recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:28-38; and John 12:12-18). Five days before the Passover, Jesus came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Having sent two of His disciples to bring Him a colt of a donkey, Jesus sat upon it and entered the city.”

Taken from: [http://lent.goarch.org/palm\\_sunday/learn/](http://lent.goarch.org/palm_sunday/learn/)

## Why would He do that, and how does the “Palm” come into “Palm Sunday” ?

“People had gathered in Jerusalem for the Passover and were looking for Jesus, both because of His great works and teaching and because they had heard of the miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus. When they heard that Christ was entering the city, they went out to meet Him with palm branches, laying their garments on the ground before Him, and shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he that comes in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!”

Taken from: [http://lent.goarch.org/palm\\_sunday/learn/](http://lent.goarch.org/palm_sunday/learn/)

## Okay ... but why *palm* leaves ?

“The feast of Palm Sunday has been celebrated in our Church since the earliest days of Christianity, but the use of Palms in connection with religious celebrations goes all the way back to Old Testament times. Oddly enough Palm trees did not grow around the city of Jerusalem, and people would often buy imported Palms for religious celebrations, in particular The Feast of Tabernacles celebrated at the temple in Jerusalem. The Palm branch was used as a visual tool proclaiming the sovereignty of God as the true king of the Israelites.”

Taken from: [http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/resources/sermons/brown\\_palm\\_sunday.htm](http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/resources/sermons/brown_palm_sunday.htm)

## And why a donkey ?

“And Christ fulfils the prophecy of Zachariah, entering Jerusalem on a donkey.”

Taken from: [http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/resources/sermons/brown\\_palm\\_sunday.htm](http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/resources/sermons/brown_palm_sunday.htm)

## So these elements were taken directly from prophecy ?

“In the life of Jesus the solemn entrance in the Holy City was the only visible triumph. Up to that day, He consistently rejected all attempts to glorify Him. But six days before the Passover, He not only accepted to be glorified, He Himself provoked and arranged this glorification by doing what the prophet Zacharias announced: “behold, Thy King cometh unto thee... lowly and riding upon an ass.. ”(Zac. 9:9). He made it clear that He wanted to be acclaimed and acknowledged as the Messiah, the King and the Redeemer of Israel.

The Gospel narratives stress all these Messianic features; the Palms, the cry from the crowd of “Hosannah”, the acclamation of Jesus as the Son of David and the King of Israel.

The history of Israel is now coming to its end. Such is the meaning of this event. The purpose of that history was to announce and to prepare the Kingdom of God, the advent of the Messiah. And now it is fulfilled. For the King enters His Holy City and in Him all prophecies, all expectations find their fulfilment. He inaugurates His Kingdom. ”

Taken from:

<http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/general/livinganorthodoxlife/liturgicalmeaningofholyyweek/palmsunday>

## So, Jesus Christ our Lord wanted his full authority recognised on this day ?

“Yes, that is correct.”

Fr Emmanuel

“The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is a messianic event, through which His divine authority was declared.”

Taken from: [http://lent.goarch.org/palm\\_sunday/learn/](http://lent.goarch.org/palm_sunday/learn/)

## Then how was it that *only five days later* on Holy Thursday, He was arrested and vilified, with the crowds calling for His death ?

“We must remember that for a few hours Christ was indeed King on earth in this world of ours, for a few hours only and in one city. But as in Lazarus we have recognised the image of each man, in this one city we acknowledge the mystical centre of the world and indeed of the whole of creation. For such is the biblical meaning of Jerusalem, the focal point of the whole history of salvation and redemption, the holy city of God's advent.”

“However, we know that the King whom the Jews acclaimed then, and whom we acclaim today, is on His way to Golgotha, to the Cross and to the grave, we know that this short triumph is but the prologue to His sacrifice.”

“The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem came at the end of the entire process of preparation revealed in the Bible: it was the end of all that God did for men.”

Taken from:

<http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/general/livinganorthodoxlife/liturgicalmeaningofholyweek/palmsunday>

### **But how did the people's favour turn to hatred so quickly? What happened to their belief in Him?**

“A mere few days before His crucifixion, Jesus Christ was received by adoring throngs at his entry into Jerusalem on the back of a young donkey. The believers meet him, and spread out before him his clothes and olive branches.”

Taken from: [http://orthodoxwiki.org/Palm\\_Sunday](http://orthodoxwiki.org/Palm_Sunday)

“As the people carry their branches and sing their songs to the Lord on Palm Sunday, they are judged together with the Jerusalem crowd. For it was the very same voices which cried Hosanna to Christ, which, a few days later, cried Crucify him!”

Taken from: <http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the/lazarus-saturday-and-palm-sunday>

“The great hope of Israel centred in the kingdom of God which would change the course of history by inaugurating the period of justice, peace and prosperity announced by the prophets, the more strenuously since the bitter experience of the deportation to Babylon.

It is difficult to summarize the varied ways the Jews conceived of the hoped-for liberation. Their position could be approximately summed up as follows: God's reign was to be inaugurated by the Messiah, the Leader consecrated by God King of Israel, restorer of David's Kingdom, the victorious warrior who would cast off Roman domination and defeat and humiliate the pagan nations. He was to be the guardian and master of the law (Jn 4:25), a judge to purify the people and inaugurate the period when there would be no more poor nor oppressed people and all the institutions — king, temple, priesthood, and law courts — would function smoothly. Sin, hunger and misfortune would be done away with, and they would live in a truly happy society. For many of the Jews the Messiah was to appear on the

parapet of the Temple (Mt 4:5; Lk 4:9) from whence he would make a proclamation to the people and initiate his victorious reign.”

Taken from: <http://www.kiev-orthodox.org/site/english/1072/>

“Naturally the people understood this kingdom according to their own ideas that is, their expectation of a change in the history of Israel that would bring about the final era of prosperity and triumph under the government of the Messiah-King. When Jesus said the kingdom was at hand, the people began to expect the coup d’etat in which the Messiah would fight and overcome the Romans, putting an end to foreign domination, and reforming the national institutions.”

Taken from: <http://www.kiev-orthodox.org/site/english/1072/>

“Then Jesus came face to face with the central authorities in Jerusalem, where he denounced the establishment. He knew it was to cost him his life. It was the final battle, a fight to the death.”

Taken from: <http://www.kiev-orthodox.org/site/english/1072/>

“The religious authorities spit on him and gave him blows (Mt 26:67-68). The Roman soldiers, representatives of repression and violence, made him a bleeding mockery (Mt 27:27-31). Letting themselves be manipulated by the leaders, the people clamoured for his crucifixion (Mt 27:20-26); and, knowing his innocence, the governor, condemned him to death ( Mt 27,28).”

Taken from: <http://www.kiev-orthodox.org/site/english/1072/>

**So, the people had misunderstood what the role of the Messiah was to be, and that led them to turn against Him ?**

“Yes, although this misunderstanding was manipulated by those who wanted Jesus crucified.”

Fr Emmanuel

**What was it that they couldn't understand ?**

“The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem came at the end of the entire process of preparation revealed in the Bible: it was the end of all that God did for men. And thus this short hour of Christ's earthly triumph acquires an eternal meaning. It introduces the reality of the Kingdom into our time, into all hours, it makes this Kingdom the meaning of time and its ultimate goal. The Kingdom was revealed in this world - from that hour - its presence

judges and transforms human history.”

Taken from:

<http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/general/livinganorthodoxlife/liturgicalmeaningofholyyweek/palmsunday>

“Throughout the entire history of the known world, men have conquered other men. Rulers have conquered cities. Emperors have conquered entire nations. At times, Kings have strived to conquer the entire world. But there remains one uncharted territory that has eluded men of power all throughout history. This unconquered territory is the human heart, and its sole conqueror is Christ the King.”

Taken from: [http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/resources/sermons/brown\\_palm\\_sunday.htm](http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute.org/resources/sermons/brown_palm_sunday.htm)

### **What does that mean for us – two millennia later ?**

“We have the understanding, that the people of Jesus’ time didn’t – that it was Christ Jesus’ incarnation, death, and resurrection, that achieved access to His Kingdom for us. It fulfilled all the promises of the Old Testament prophecies.

It also took the lack of understanding of this principle to achieve Christ’s death through crucifixion, by the religious authorities of His time.”

Fr Emmanuel

### **So Palm Sunday represents the triumph that was to come, even though at the time it appeared to be followed by a disastrous outcome ?**

“Yes, exactly.”

Fr Emmanuel

“And at the most solemn moment of our liturgical celebration, when we receive from the priest a palm branch, we renew our oath to our King and confess His Kingdom as the ultimate meaning and content of our life. We confess that everything in our life and in the world belongs to Christ, nothing can be taken away from its sole real Owner, for there is no area of life in which He is not to rule, to save and to redeem. We proclaim the universal and total responsibility of the Church for human history and uphold her universal mission.”

Taken from:

<http://www.greekorthodox.org.au/general/livinganorthodoxlife/liturgicalmeaningofholyyweek/palmsunday>

“Palm Sunday summons us to accept both the rule and the kingdom of God as the goal and content of our Christian life.”

Taken from: [http://lent.goarch.org/palm\\_sunday/learn/](http://lent.goarch.org/palm_sunday/learn/)

“The kingdom does not lie at some point or place in the distant future. In the words of the Scripture, the kingdom of God is not only at hand (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), it is within us (Luke 17:21).”

Taken from: [http://lent.goarch.org/palm\\_sunday/learn/](http://lent.goarch.org/palm_sunday/learn/)

“The kingdom of God is the life of the Holy Trinity in the world. It is the kingdom of holiness, goodness, truth, beauty, love, peace and joy. These qualities are not works of the human spirit. They proceed from the life of God and reveal God. Christ Himself is the kingdom.”

Taken from: [http://lent.goarch.org/palm\\_sunday/learn/](http://lent.goarch.org/palm_sunday/learn/)

