14/04/2020

# Palm Sunday at the Jerusalem Patriarchate



On Sunday March 30/April 12, 2020, the Patriarchate celebrated the feast of Palm Sunday, as it is written in the contrite Triodion, as the commemoration of the triumphant entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ in Jerusalem before His Passion, seated on an ass, while the children of the Jews laid down their garments welcoming Him and crying out loud “Hosanna to the Son of David”.

Due to the security measures imposed by the Ministry of Health against the deadly virus, the feast was not celebrated with the usual festivities like the previous years. It was celebrated at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with an all-night Vigil led by Geronda Sacristan His Eminence Archbishop Isidoros of Hierapolis and the Temple Fathers. This year the feast was also celebrated at the monastic Church of Saints Constantine and Helen with Vespers in the afternoon and the Divine Liturgy in the morning, with the participation in prayer of His Beatitude the Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, along with Hagiotaphite Archbishops, Priests and Monks, and the Consul General of Greece in Jerusalem Mr. Christos Sophianopoulos.

After the Divine Liturgy, holding palm branches, His Beatitude and the Fathers went to the Reception Hall of the Patriarchate, where His Beatitude read the following festal address;

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass” Prophet Zechariah says (Zechariah 9:9). And David again says about the children “out of the mouths of babes and succklings hast Thou perfected praise” (Psalm 8:3).

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Noble Christians,

The entrance of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy City of Jerusalem, riding upon an ass, and being praised by the children with the words “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest” (Matth. 21:9), proclaims the peak of the redeeming mission of the Divine Providence, namely of the excessive philanthropy of God the Father, which was materialized in the Son and Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was crucified and resurrected from the dead for our sake.

Our Holy Church, being the mystical body of Christ, exists and acts in the world, by preaching the Gospel of the King of righteousness, as St. John the Evangelist witnesses by saying: “And when he is come [the Comforter], he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11).

The Comforter, namely the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, will prove to the world that Jesus was “Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1), just like the centurion

confessed by saying; “Certainly this was a righteous man” (Luke 23:47). And according to Apostle Peter, “Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

The Holy Week, the Week of the Passions and of the Resurrection of Christ refers to nothing more than the projection of the Divine Righteousness, namely to the comprehension of the path of salvation. “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Again, the Lord says; “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:12).

Especially during this period of the pandemic that mercilessly plagues all mankind, our Holy Church is calling us precisely to this, to the Light of the world and of life, with the words of the hymn writer who says; “Come forth, ye nations, come forth, ye peoples: look today upon the King of heaven, who enters Jerusalem seated upon a humble colt as though upon a lofty throne” (Palm Sunday Matins, praises troparion 3). “Therefore, we also, with our souls cleans and in spirit carrying branches, with faith let us sing Christ praises like the children, crying with a loud voice to the Master: Blessed art Thou, O Saviour, who hast come into the world to save Adam from the ancient curse” (Palm Sunday Matins 1st Kathisma).Amen. Many happy returns, free from every plague, and Happy Easter!”

From Secretariat-General