

Symbolism-laden and poetic Monday of the Holy Week celebrated by Orthodoxy today



Monday of the Holy Week is observed by Orthodox Churches around the world today, April 22, with a solemn Divine Liturgy commemorating the blessed and noble Joseph of the Old Testament and the fig tree, which was cursed and withered by the Lord.

The withering of the fig tree was a miracle of special symbolism, since the tree had leaves, but no fruit. It is symbolic of the many people who claim ethical and religious identity, but who in reality have empty lives that yield no fruit.

In the evening service, the Hymn of the Bridegroom is sung, “Behold the Bridegroom comes in the midst of the night...beware, therefore, O my soul, lest thou be borne down in sleep...and lest thou be shut out from the Kingdom...”

The canticle hymn also has a symbolic exhortation:

“I see thy bridal hall adorned, O my Savior, and I have no wedding garment...O giver of Light, make radiant the vesture of my soul and save me.”

At this time, the solemn procession of the Icon of Christ-Bridegroom takes place around the church. The faithful, anticipating the sufferings of Christ, sing:

“Thy sublime sufferings, on this day, shine upon the world as a light of salvation.”