

## Palm Sunday



*"Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her; ..."*

***Isaiah 66:10-24***

Who loves *Jerusalem* more than the One who knows her wounds and feels her pain? The One who nurtures her with milk and honey and quenches her thirst from a barren rock of unbelief. The One who rejoices with her when joy visits her house and sets her table before her enemies so all can eat and be satisfied. Jerusalem who teaches the taste of bread to all nations so goodness can overflow forever and ever into every foreign heart. Jerusalem who is hospitable to the good and the evil and welcomes them the same, just as rain is welcomed by a parched land, where every drop is received with thanksgiving.

Jerusalem, the place where the hungry are fed and the naked are covered. Where the shame within the soul is traded for the purity of heart. The place where prayer has learned many languages, and a beautiful song so the deaf and the dumb can pray. The beauty of Jerusalem is the kindness of the Bridegroom that wins over the solitude of heart.

If we cannot rejoice today, it is because we have not yet cried over the brokenness of Jerusalem. Her pain has not yet been welcomed within our heart. If we cannot rejoice today, it is because her brokenness has not been carried yet by our hands and no tears have been shed over her wounds for healing. Today Jerusalem cries for those who cannot shed tears because the Beloved visits her with His mercy. If we cannot rejoice today, it is because we never encounter the lack of hope of the oppressed who today discover their freedom.

Who loves more than the king the beauty of the queen? Jerusalem is the gathering of the wise virgins who have kept the light of burning lamps within the darkness of the day and made within the night a place of vigil so that every soul can be spared. Jerusalem, the place where evil hurts many souls because it feeds on its goodness. The patience of prayer that touches the depths of the human heart's abyss because it encounters there the lifegiving cross.

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever."* (Hebrews 13:8 – Saturday reading)

And yet, just as it was yesterday so it is today, the visitation of Christ is known within the wounds of the community and the brokenness of her gathering. We welcome today Christ from within the innocence of our longing. From the perseverance and stubbornness of a search that took us through many places. We've been waiting naked and hungry, forgotten, and restrained, thirsty and with a promise that we could not remember. Today we welcome Christ with a heart that



knows the betrayal, a heart that was never consoled. The heart of Jerusalem, who loved much and cared much for Christ and yet was so much betrayed by those who today are envious that the promise is remembered when the scripture is fulfilled. How do we welcome today and everyday Christ who visits his church at every hour? By learning to stay with Him, by making a place within the heart so He is always with us (George on Friday). To welcome Him with everlasting

time so He never needs to go.

*"I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory, and I will set a sign among them. And from them I will send survivors to the nations."* Isaiah 66:10-24

We have seen, within the community, the prayer in many languages and the faithfulness of many hearts. The song of many cultures where prayer has changed the topic of the language and the prayer of the one who cannot speak. (It was just this week that a person who cannot speak nor hear asked to be received in the chapel to be prayed upon). An abundance of faith and a genuine search for integrity in the encounter.

In the loneliness of the city and the harm of human dignity we ask and pray many times that God would visit those who have no place to welcome Him. In the place where sorrow reigns and the hope is abandoned. In the place where the remembrance of sin and the fear of encounter makes the visitation an idle tale. In a culture with such a broken sense of community life, how could the visitation of the One who comes in humility bring people together? The most we can hope is that visitation happens today in the solitude of a prayerful heart, that there might be one heart ready for the encounter. And yet, today, the humility of the king makes known his entrance within the gathering of those who are lonely of heart. It is his humility that stays at the centre so all can gather and not be afraid. Because it is humility that builds the gathering of the saints and becomes the fabric of community and not pride that can achieve many things, always at the expense of others (from Friday's reflection, a young soul on humility).

If we were not a community until today, we have now become one. If we were not a church for the poor and those who have a broken heart, today we have become one. Because the Bridegroom is visiting his church. He looks to greet the many after he has resurrected the one who lay dead for four days in the tomb. Yesterday, Christ brought light and new life into a lifeless tomb, within my heart; today we are called to come together so the king can bless us all.

## A temptation during the week in a time of joy:

A man's question revealed the struggle of this generation who, being misled, brings about death for its children and the most vulnerable ones so that they cannot sing today **Hosana**. The "axiom" of temptation was that the poorest of the poor has only one weapon when the abuse is overwhelming, and all hope that anything might change the reality of sin has vanished. The last resort is self destruction, the refusal of the gift of life. So that they may not take everything. So that they may not win. The church, he said, has taken this away from the poor soul, because this has become the greatest sin within the church and so it has left the poor man without his last defence. This was an unreconciled pain for our visitor.

The "logismoi" is tempted as any other thoughts and a little bit more. It is true, when the innocence is harmed and there is no hope of healing, out of grief, self inflicted pain seems the only defence. So that they cannot hurt you anymore. But it is within this pain in a human heart that has been robbed of its dignity that Christ enters today. The temptations and the reasoning that follows depicts a world where there is no God. But only the abusers and the victims. A world where only sin matters, where there is no mystery of healing, no power of the cross and no fear of the resurrection. There might be a God, but He does not care. Or if He does care, it is not to the point to save the suffering humanity from its own sin.

It is today that we can answer this question, it is today that we can speak freely. Because those who suffer the most and lost the most are called first to partake of this joy together so all others can follow shortly after that. It is today that we see that the King cares for the whole community and saves it from its own sin. God visits us today, in the midst of all, and this brings us closer to each other as we learn to partake of His humility. We gather and we trust because we have seen the resurrection of the one who was dead. On Palm Sunday, the church has become the gathering of those who have seen the love of the Bridegroom for the soul who was dominated by corruption and died within the sins of community. We have seen his resurrection on Saturday and today we gather out of this faith to receive the One who loves the poorest of the poor. We have seen the resurrection of Lazarus and so our singing is genuine and full of real hope.



*"When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which they had with them, and bowed down to him to the ground. And he inquired about their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?" They said, "Your servant our father is well, he is still alive." And they bowed their heads and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me? God be gracious to you, my son!" Then Joseph made haste, for his heart yearned for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his*

*chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out; and controlling himself he said, "Let food be served."*

*(Chapter 45:1-16) Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him; and he cried, "Make every one go out from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph; is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, I pray you." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Make haste and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not tarry; you shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have; and there I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come; lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty.' And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Make haste and bring my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him. When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, "Joseph's brothers have come," it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well."*

## Reflection on Wednesday's reading:

Today we see in the scripture the dew of heaven that heals the wound of the human heart. Joseph is weeping on the shoulder of young Benjamin. We see the blessing of God upon man (Wednesday's reading). God is blessing man; the tears of Joseph are the tears of Jesus that we are going to encounter at the tomb of Lazarus. Because he loved him dearly. In the scripture Joseph represents the innocence of Christ that we sell into slavery. He is the one we betray in our life. The one who is lost because of our sin. Through prayer, the scripture today becomes for us an icon of the last judgment, where the one that was lost, that we thought was dead, the innocent we "killed" with our sins is alive and forgives us in the midst of community. It is revealed that the innocence of the human heart brings to tears the Creator. He sees the tears of Christ, the dew of heaven that heals our heart. It is this love that we trust. It is this love we discover within the heart at the given time. When the heart finds its innocence, it is the time when the tear of Christ drops upon it, healing it.

We also pray and hope. And this is a great mystery, that at the last judgment, those who sin, the brothers, are able to receive the forgiveness of their brother whom they sold into slavery. It is the icon of reconciliation of the whole community. At the end of the scripture even the pharaoh, who had the power to release or crucify, was pleased.

It was said that in the old covenant, in the scriptures, the full reconciliation happens on earth and yet, for the Christians the real reconciliation happens only through the cross and the fruits we taste fully in the kingdom of God. In a way, we know the love only from the cross. This is true, and yet, at the given time we are all called to give a witness at the last judgement. Because the kingdom of heaven has already begun.

To give a witness of the time when the innocence of our heart has been healed by the dew of heaven. When we received within the heart the tear of Christ. To remember and to give a beautiful account of the moment that healed our soul. The time when in innocence we received the love of Christ that healed our soul. To speak without fear about the time when Christ cried on our shoulder because He saw in us an innocent heart.

At the given time, we are also called to receive at the last judgement the forgiveness of the one we sold into sin. Not to run away out of fear from the forgiveness that we never thought was going to look us into the eyes. To give a beautiful witness of this forgiveness by opening our hearts to it. Within the community.

And also, at the proper time to give a beautiful account of forgiveness, within the community, of those who sold us into sin. Of those who betrayed the "brotherly love" that must continue. To forgive like Joseph, with a sincere heart, because God made out of our sorrow a place of healing and shelter for those who sinned against us.

The last judgment has occurred and it's still happening, and it is about to happen. At a given time, as a community, we are called to give a beautiful account of all these things. And we are ready. We pray and hope that many will be.

**April 28 – May 11**

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We are an apostolate of the ecumenical patriarchate "Mother Church of Christ's poor" under  
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