

HOSANNA/PALM SUNDAY.

Dearly beloved:

Next Sunday, April 9th is Hosanna/Palm Sunday. The Holy Gospel for that Sunday reads about Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem by riding a donkey on Palm Sunday. This triumphal entry into Jerusalem is recorded in all four Gospels. The Greek word "Hosanna" means "Praise to God" or in literal terms, "O Lord we beseech thee". The donkey also got a measure of respect and welcome because Jesus rode on it. Jesus came to Jerusalem to establish the kingdom of God.

The Hosanna service begins immediately after the Thuyabo. For convenience and in certain circumstances, Hosanna service also begins at the end of "Busmalko". At the service, there will be a procession around the church by the celebrant, altar staff and the faithful holding Cross, Evengelion, Censer, Marbosa, Bells and Palm Leaves, etc. Instituted by the Church in the 4th century, the solemn procession on this Sunday began from Mount Olives to the church in commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Our procession will start from the northern exit door of the church. After circling around the church, we will return to the altar through the southern side of the church. There will be a Holy Gospel reading of St. Luke during the procession at the western entrance of the church. After the procession, the palm leaves will be collected and blessed by today's celebrant, Zachariah Mar Theophilos Thirumeni. Thirumeni will lift up his hand before the palm leaves and pray, "Now God our Lord because of your abundance mercy, bless these branches and the trees from where they were cut, and all the trees that Your Lordship has created and brought into being". He then blesses the leaves in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; the people respond by saying, "Amen". Since these palm leaves are blessed, it should be kept in our home, or in the cars or any other areas, which we consider to be holy places.

The Jewish people had long expected that the Messiah would appear from the Mount of Olive at Passover time. When news spread that Jesus had raised his friend Lazarus from the dead and was now on his way to Jerusalem for the Passover, the believers and those who were healed gathered in great excitement to greet Him. When they saw Him approaching from the Mount of Olives they went out to greet Him as their Messiah King. They shouted the prophetic words of Psalms 118:25-26: "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord-- the King of Israel!"

The Jewish people had sung this victory psalm every year during the Feast of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. This psalm praises God for delivering His people from slavery in Egypt and points to the day when God's anointed King will enter Jerusalem as its conquering hero. Jesus enters Jerusalem in humility, as the King who brings victory and peace to His people.

The religious leaders were upset when they heard the report of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. Now they react with even greater jealousy when they hear that the crowds hail Jesus as their Messiah.

Jesus Christ came to bring us the kingdom of God. He is the true King who offers peace, joy, and everlasting life for those who accept Him. *"Lord Jesus, be the King and Ruler of our heart, mind, life, and home.*

Please read the following Bible verses, in preparation for this Sunday's commemoration.

(please turn over)

Bible readings for Sunday, April 9th, 2006.

(Hosanna/Palm Sunday)

Before Holy Qurbana:

Genesis - 49: 8-15
I Samuel - 2: 18-26
Daniel - 1: 16-20
I Kings - 3: 4-14
Jeremiah - 30: 18-22

Holy Qurbana

General Epistles: I John - 5: 1-12
Epistles of St. Paul: Romans - 8: 18-25
Holy Gospel: St. John - 12: 12-19

For Procession (At the Western Entrance)

Holy Gospel: St. Luke - 19: 28-40

For the Blessing of the Palm Leaves

Zechariah - 9: 9-12
Isaiah - 51: 9-11
I John - 2: 7-14
Romans - 11: 13-24
St. Mark - 11: 1-11

Saturday, April 8th is 'Lazarus Saturday'. On this day, there will be a Holy Qurbana at 8.00 am. The chief celebrant will be H.G. Zachariah Mar Theophilos. The Retreat will start at 10.00 a.m., will be followed by Confession and Evening prayers.

Importance of Next Week.

- 1. There will be Evening Prayers on Monday, 4/10th and Tuesday, 4/11th starting at 6.30 p.m.**
- 2. We are celebrating "Passover Service" on Wednesday, 4/12th starting at 6.30 p.m.**
- 3. The "Washing of the Feet Service" will be on Thursday, 4/13th starting at 5.00 p.m.**
- 4. The "Good Friday Service" will starts at 8.00 a.m.**
- 5. The "Holy/Gospel Saturday Service" will starts at 9.00 a.m. followed by an Evening Prayer at 6.00 p.m.**
- 6. Next Sunday, April 16th is Easter/Kyamto Sunday.**

With prayers,
Thomas Alex