

Palm Thursday

Father Robert E. Halus

"All covered with sores caused by sin, I live in the tomb of inertia. I call out to You, O Christ, raise me and save me so that carrying the palms and willows of virtues, I might come to You and exclaim: 'Hosanna!' "

Matins for Palm Thursday: Canon, Ode Nine

At times our spiritual lives appear to be in a state of inertia—a condition of inaction and stagnation. Like the inert body of the entombed Lazarus, we need a Friend—the Lord Jesus—to be summoned to our grave of error, despair, and sin. The Lord will never permit us to remain in such a state if we call upon Him in repentance and contrition. However, the spiritual "New Life" to which Christ raises us demands a constant growth, a dynamic and vibrant relationship with God and our neighbor, all human beings—the People of God. Spiritual stagnation and religious inactivity have no place in the life of the genuinely committed Christian.

As we now pass on toward the final days of Palm Week, our Byzantine Catholic Church urges us to be prepared to witness the greatest of any miracle that Jesus has as yet performed: the raising of His dear friend Lazarus from a tomb sealed for four days. And as we contemplate the tremendous power which Jesus possesses as the Son of God—the very power of Life itself—the Church likewise bids us to recognize Him as the Savior of our souls, the Master of our lives—the Lord of our existence—the Eternal King.

Lazarus' resurrection is symbolic of the constant rising from the tomb of spiritual lifelessness that each of us periodically experiences throughout our lives. Therefore, we must ever cultivate a personal relationship with the Lord so that Jesus would indeed be our "Friend," as He was a friend to Lazarus.

We are now preparing to witness the promulgation of the Messianic Kingdom of Jesus' Kingship this coming Sunday. Let us go forth to encounter Him by preparing the willow branches of our virtues, the palms of our victory over sin, the flowers of our Christian charity, and the olive branches of our forgiveness of others.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Isaiah 65:8-16

Genesis 46:1-7

Proverbs 23:15 - 24:5