

## SERMON ON PALM SUNDAY - April 1, 2018

The prophet Zechariah foretold the events we celebrate today: "Do not fear, O daughter of Zion: 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" (Zech. 9:9, Matt. 21:5). The prophet shows by these words that this king in the prophecy is the only true king of Zion. "Your king," he says, "does not arouse fear in those who see him. Nor is he an oppressor or an evildoer accompanied by shield-bearers and spearmen, trailing behind him a host of foot-soldiers and cavalry, passing his life in greed for gain, demanding taxes and tributes, and unpleasant and harmful labors and services. By contrast, His banner is humility, poverty and lowliness, and He enters mounted upon an ass, without any human pretensions at all. He is the only righteous King who righteously saves. He is meek, and meekness is His distinctive work." The Lord said of Himself, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29).

God is love, and love is the essence of the Christian faith. We all have one hope and one God, who is above all, and through all, and in us all (Eph. 4:6). So let us love one another. Let us bear with one another, seeing that we are members one of another. As the Lord himself said, the sign that we are His disciples is love. When He departed from this world, the fatherly inheritance He left us was love, and the last prayer He gave us when He ascended to His Father was about love for one another (John 13:33-35). Let us strive to attain to this fatherly prayer and let us not lose the inheritance, our blessing and the promised hope. The early Christians did not think of their Christian faith as something to be practiced in an individualistic and personal way, apart from our fellow community of Christians.. They understood Christianity only one way, in the gathering of the the assembly with their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. They understood that the key to Christian love is Jesus's injunction to "Do this in remembrance of me." We all know that these words of our Lord can only be followed in the Church. The word liturgy itself means "a common act of the people." Our very Christian faith itself is a common act of the people. When the community of Christians offers up to God the Father bread and wine in the name of Jesus, the Father offers back to us, unworthy as we are, the true Body and true Blood of His only-begotten Son. As we partake with each other of the Mystical sacrifice, God Himself enters into our bodies in a very real and physical way and unites us not only to God but to each other. This is the only way that Christian love can grow and thrive within us. This is the only way to know God. The Lord says in the Gospel, "If you do not eat my body and drink my blood, you have no life in you." Apart from the assembly of the Christians we, therefore, can have no life in us. Our love will turn inward and grow cold and selfish. The Holy Gospel warns us that in the end times the Christians will forget that it is necessary to gather in the Church. In the end times, we are told, the love of many will wax cold. Without love there is no God. Without love there is no salvation. Without love we cannot conquer sin. Without love hatred and evil creep in and we lose our souls. Without gathering with our fellow Christians there cannot and will not be the love of Christ.

We are entering into the holiest days of the year. Today Jesus is hailed as a King. His throne will not be a golden chair. It will be a tree. His glory will not be human praise and adulation. His glory will be that He will be hung upon a cross and suffer and die for sinful mankind. His victory will not be that he will vanquish a foreign army or conquer a foreign land. Jesus' victory will be that He will conquer and annihilate death for all time. His victory will be an everlasting victory like no earthly king has ever known. The son of God will hang on the Cross in order to free us from the bondage and tyranny of the devil and invite us into His Kingdom. Like no earthly kingdom, the Kingdom that Jesus offers and promises to us will have no end. The saving act of our Lord to become a man, suffer and die on the Cross is the greatest expression of love that mankind will ever know. Let us join the Lord this week as He walks the road to Calvary. Just as He did, let us voluntarily take up our cross and follow Him. Let us suffer and die with Him during these coming days. Let us love Him and each other let us and participate

not only this week but every week in the Divine sacrifice that we may join Him in the Resurrection and in eternal life. To which may we all attain by the grace and love towards mankind of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom belong all glory, honor and worship, together with His Father without beginning and the life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.