

The King of Peace

"Hosanna, Blessed is He who comes
in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel."

This shout fills the atmosphere of this day. Another beautiful expression of St. Paul's is heard today, "Brethren rejoice, and I say again rejoice... And the King of peace be with you."

This is the coming of the King. The King of Israel. The King of peace. He is after the order of "Melkizedek," that is to say the King of righteousness.

By nature, man seeks peace. He finds in peace his happiness and prosperity. Often he misjudges and chooses the wrong ways that he thinks will lead him to have peace. As a result, man has fallen repeatedly in wars. For the sake of peace, many have become despotic. Others rushed to amass wealth and possessions, thinking that by doing so they might find peace. In short, many did not hesitate to use any way they thought to achieve peace, even if it meant wrong behavior.

An objective reading of history will demonstrate that the fervent quest for peace has ended in failure because of most of the ways and solutions which he used.

The Jews themselves, whom we heard in today's Gospel passage shout, "Hosanna! (Save us!) Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," lived a long history in suffering and seeking peace. They desired it, but their vision was to achieve it through political independence. In many instances, this did not mean less than despotism. They expected to achieve peace through liberation, even if this meant tyranny over others. They sought peace through dreams of temporary glory and autocracy, through willingness to dominate and dominate by ruling. They forgot the prophecy of Zachariah, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: 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" (Zach. 9:9).

After three years of teaching and working, the Lord Jesus reached the doors of Jerusalem in an atmosphere of a hard challenge. After resurrecting Lazarus, He entered Jerusalem as a conqueror. He captured the hearts of people by his power even over life and death. The people saw in Him the fulfillment of their dreams, so he entered Jerusalem as a King. Strangely however he came riding upon the foal of an ass.

By coming this way, Jesus announced to all the nature of His Kingdom, being the Kingdom of righteousness and true peace. The Epistle today emphasizes this point: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,

whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things... And the God of peace shall be with you" (Phi. 4:8-9).

These are the weapons of peace that we try to achieve. The Lord Jesus has today established His Kingdom. These are the ways of peace, and this is what is meant by today's procession of Palms. This procession is the peaceful "walk" of Christians in which they raise their weapons, which are nothing but the Palms. The Holy Tradition and hymns of the Church explain the symbol of palm branches as virtues.

This is how the Lord Jesus conquered Jerusalem. This is how he opened up the Kingdom of peace, leaving to us, the Christians, the mission of achieving peace on all the earth. Christ came to Jerusalem once as a King so that He also may become ruler over the entire world.

By teaching, living, and preaching righteousness, the Church is not just on earth the only center of peace among nations, but also its sign and strength. The Kingdom that is built on righteousness and destroys the power of evil, connecting people with love, eliminating differences and denomination, is the Church. She truly gathers, while others gather to separate. She eliminates all racism and reconciles people to each other, making them compete together in righteousness.

The procession of the Palms is a "walk" that contains the following: the establishment of a kingdom whose power is love, whose eminence is humility, and whose glory is service, and the Master is the one coming on the foal of an ass. This is the risk of faith, and faith without risk is futile. Our faith is that we believe what our Master teaches, that the injustice is weak for it is

temporary, that sacrifice is a grain that will yield many kernels of glory, even if it begins by dying in the ground. Everything that is weak in the eyes of people, is our strongest weapon through faith. Many have oppressed people through domination, and conquered nations by power. All once existed. Only our Lord lived and died for His love, but He arose and is coming again.

They persecute us by oppression, and we face them by forgiveness. They rule us by domination, and we show that humility. Our faith knows that oppression disappears, but forgiveness remains forever. The former is illusionary and the latter is life, and never dies.

We, as the hymns say today, lift up your Cross O Lord and say Hosanna in the Heights, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel.

Amen.