**ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM.**

Palm Sunday .

“Today we celebrate Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem, a feast preceding the commemoration of the holy Passions. In fact, yesterday we started this separate calendar period of the Passion week, celebrating Lazarus Saturday, a miracle of resurrection of the dead man, a friend of our Lord whose name was Lazarus. Lazarus died and after four days passing his death our Lord came to the village where Lazarus lived and called him away from the tomb. Today’s celebration continues that theme and today we sing the same troparion which mentions righteous Lazarus resurrected by our Lord. At the end of today’s reading from the holy Gospel of John we also heard that the people of Jerusalem went out to greet Jesus because *“they heard that He had done this sign”* (Jn. 12, 18). People heard that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, so they believed in Him, at least, for some time.”
“We could notice that the miracle of the resurrection is here called “a sign”. This expression is often used in the Gospel to describe some miraculous and important events. This is done because those miracles served as the signs of the true coming of the Messiah, of the Savior. These miraculous events indicated that Jesus Christ was truly the Son of God and the One promised by the Prophets. Every miracle the Lord performed had to show that He is the true Messiah. Thus these were His signs.”
“Signs are important in the life of the people. We use and have them everywhere. The signs tell us about the shop’s working hours, whether it is open or closed. They point us to a right direction. We well know the road signs showing us the way, traffic signs which help us to drive. These are signs used in our regular, earthly life. But also in the spiritual life we use and need signs. The most known religious sign is the sign of the cross which we make many times when we pray. There many other important signs in our holy rites and traditions. For instance, today we bless the pussy-willows, take them and hold. This is a sign, a sign of our allegiance to our Lord. We imitate those people, especially those Hebrew children who came out to greet Jesus when He entered Jerusalem. They held the palm and olive branches which were the signs also, the signs of allegiance and homage. Those people met Jesus as their Lord, their King who entered the holy city with a triumph.”
“We say that the people need the signs. However, the signs by themselves are not solving all the problems. We need to follow them, to obey them or to use them properly. Otherwise they won’t be helpful. If we disregard a stop sign on the road we may have an accident. A similar thing happens with the signs of spiritual nature. Our Lord Jesus Christ performed a lot of miracles before the eyes of the people. He healed the sick, cleaned the lepers, returned the sight to the blind, He even raised the dead, as He did with Lazarus. However, not everyone believed in Him. The Jewish leaders were not persuaded by all those signs. They plotted to kill Him. As the Gospel tells us they still asked Him to show some sign that He is the Messiah. The Lord, perform many signs but certain people still did not recognize Him.
“People in today’s world are very often similar to those leaders of the Jews who failed to believe in Christ and to recognize Him. Many have a very little faith. They seek for the signs. They say, “Show us a sign that God exists”, “Show us a proof that Jesus really lived”. No matter that God shows us a great number of signs every day. Every day we see that the sun is rising. For a person who believes it’s a sign of God’s ruling the world. Every year at spring we see that the flowers bloom, like those pussy-willows we bring today to the church to bless. For a believer it’s a sign of God’s care for the creation. But, of course, for the one who doesn’t believe this is no sign. We may go on and recall that our Lord Himself came to this world and became a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophesies. Everything that happened to Him was foretold by the prophets. However, the leaders of the Jews who knew those prophets did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. They were still seeking for some sign.
“Today we take those blessed branches and try to resemble the people greeting the Lord, recognizing Him as the Messiah, paying Him homage as our King and the King of kings. Let us really mean that and sincerely name Him our Master and our Lord. Let us trust Him and not demand a sign, for He always gives us enough signs and assurances. Let us be able to recognize them. And seeing them, let us truly recognize our Lord and Savior and praise Him saying: “Hosanna, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!””

If Christ is truly our king, we need to find time not only during Lent but throughout the entire year to commune with Him through prayer, Bible study and frequent participation in the Holy Sacraments, no matter how busy our schedule is.  Excuses of being too busy simply reflect our insincerity

And I pray that this Holy Week will be an inspiring journey of deeper discovery, helping each one of us grow in our faith.

A most blessed Palm Sunday to all of you.