

Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday

Lazarus Saturday is a paschal celebration. It is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrectional service of Sunday is celebrated on another day. At the liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the Church glorifies Christ as “**the Resurrection and the Life**” who, by raising Lazarus, has confirmed the universal resurrection of mankind even before His own suffering and death.

*By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God!
Like the children with the branches of victory, we cry out to Thee,
O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! (Troparion).*

*Christ—the Joy, the Truth and the Light of all, the life
Of the world and its resurrection—has appeared in His
Goodness to those on earth. He has become the Image of
Our resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all (Kontakion).*

At the Divine Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday the baptismal verse from Galatians: As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3:27) replaces the Thrice-holy Hymn thus indicating the resurrectional character of the celebration. Because of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, Christ was hailed by the masses as the long-expected Messiah-King of Israel. Thus, in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, He entered Jerusalem, the City of the King, riding on the colt of an ass (Zech 9:9; Jn 12:12). The crowds greeted Him with branches in their hands and called out to Him with shouts of praise: Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The Son of David! The King of Israel! Because of this glorification by the people, the priests and scribes were finally driven “to destroy Him, to put Him to death” (Lk 19:47; Jn 11:53, 12:10).

The feast of Christ’s triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday, is one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. The services of this Sunday follow directly from those of Lazarus Saturday. The church building continues to be vested in resurrectional splendor, filled with hymns which continually repeat the Hosanna offered to Christ as the Messiah-King who comes in the name of God the Father for the salvation of the world.

*Sitting on Thy throne in heaven, and carried on a foal
On earth, O Christ God, accept the praise of angels and
The songs of children who sing: Blessed is He who comes
To recall Adam! (Kontakion).*

