

## Feast of the Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem Flowery Sunday

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The Lord's entry into Jerusalem concludes the Great Fast and, at the same time, begins the strict fast of Holy Week. This feast is called 'Palm Sunday' or, especially in countries where palm trees do not grow, like Ukraine, 'Flowery Sunday,' since on this day Jesus Christ solemnly entered Jerusalem and the children greeted Him by laying their own clothes and palm branches on the ground. On this Sunday the Church gives a triple blessing:

First, the Church blesses the plant world. During the service, believers hold the first spring flowers and tree branches in their hands, and the clergy reads a special prayer invoking God's blessing on these flowers and branches. But truly, the whole plant world receives this blessing and, waking up after its winter hibernation, it glorifies the power and majesty of the Lord with the greenery of the trees and the beauty of the flowers.

Second, the Church blesses the animal world. The Lord rode upon a donkey when he entered Jerusalem. Although today donkeys do not strike us as majestic and noble animals and few people keep donkeys as pets, in ancient times, a rider on a donkey was a symbol of peace, unlike a rider on a horse. Thus, it is appropriate that a donkey was the creature through which the Lord gave his blessing to the animal world.

Finally, the Church blesses human beings. The triumphal entry of Christ was a merry celebration for the children. Praising the Lord, little boys and girls sang Hosanna and threw flowers and palm branches at the Savior's feet. Through the children on that day, all people receive blessings, especially when their hearts become childlike and full of sincere love.

Our church celebrates today's holy day not only as an event that took place in the distant past, but as a process that takes place forever. We honor Christ the King, who enters our hearts.

For the Lord is always knocking on the door of our lives, asking permission to enter. Some holy Fathers have stated that the Lord reminds us of a lover who is constantly seeking to meet his beloved, the object of his love. He is ready to do anything to be with His beloved creature.

Before the Divine Liturgy today, we received pussy willow branches. Each of us should take them home and place them in a prominent place. Let them be a constant reminder that Christ is the King of our hearts and families and the only source of love, happiness, and meaning in our lives.

Dear believers! If we proclaim Christ the King and Lord of our lives, we live so that there is time for Him in our daily lives. Remember that career, education, material wealth, and earthly cares are only temporary, but with Christ we build eternity. Let's define what is more important in our life: temporary or eternal. Only by choosing eternity will we find true peace, true love, and boundless happiness, even in the midst of a turbulent and difficult present.