

Jesus toward Jerusalem

By Bishop George Khodr

Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem, in tomorrow's remembrance of the Eastern Christians, signifies His acceptance of death, which He came to actualize as the result of His love of us. His death was to make humanity live in Him after He has prayed that they might be one with Him as He is one with the Father.

There is no doubt that one of the Easter's meanings is that we become one with the Father, who is the Beginning and the End. The Father has been most of the times forgotten by common Christians, while the Father is the First and the Last. Christ, as the suffering humanity, is not the end of everything. If you have forgotten that He is the way to His Father you misunderstand His salvation. He could have also shown you that at the end of His path He consented to die in order that you might be with Him and you might inherit the life which He has poured forth through His resurrection.

The start of His path was with Palm Sunday, namely His entrance to Jerusalem so that humanity kills Him there. The whole humanity, which is represented by the Jews, had killed Him. The destiny of the Son of man, as the Father has planned, was that people would kill Him, since His acceptance of death was the sign of His love and the passageway to His resurrection.

Nothing other than Jerusalem would kill Him, as it killed the prophets and those sent to it. It was in the Father's purposes that the Son is killed by people and because of the [Father's] love. This is, then, the conduct of people, on the one hand, and the conduct of God, on the other. The divine purpose was that humanity and its Savior meet through blood and then, through emancipation from blood, forever. The Son of man entered the city of God on Palm Sunday in all His humility, as a king over humanity, which would kill Him by authorizing the Jews to kill Him. This was in the divine purpose, since Christ was slain before the foundation of the world.

This is the concealed mystery since ages that humanity has committed a crime and has killed God's Christ; [however] later on, the crime has been forgiven since God's response to crime is love.

Jesus the Nazarene enters the guilty city since His Father has foreordained to Him a death, which was for the salvation and the resurrection of all people. Jesus told Martha, the sister of Lazarus, and this was new: "I am the resurrection and the life". [John 11: 25] All that was said before these words were promises from God to endow people with life. Jesus the Nazarene said about Himself that He is the life. And He came up with this paradox that He must die, and then He resumed that He will rise [from the dead].

However, He did not describe His resurrection as merely an event, but He also has said: "I am the resurrection and the life". [John 11: 25] This, in language, has no meaning. He did not merely say that He gives resurrection. He said about Himself that He is the resurrection. Namely, He did not say: 'I am who will rise [from the dead]', rather: 'if you were in me I will bring you into the same resurrection'. In the language of reality this has no sense, however, Jesus the Nazarene puzzles you as He moves you from your conventional reality in order that you might participate in His reality.

The blessed Lord was not part of life. He was the fullness of life, and you cannot grasp that with rational elaboration. His Mystery has to penetrate within you in order that you may understand. And the beginning of understanding [is to see that] He has entered Jerusalem to be killed, since He knew that by His residing in Jerusalem, Jerusalem will slay Him as it had slain the prophets before Him, and that in this is His glory and Jerusalem might be also glorified, whenever it repents. By His death all residence here on earth ends, since through this death we have inherited eternal life, which is present in us through His Spirit from now on, until the vision is fulfilled by faith and the acquisition of the Spirit.

Before Jesus the Nazarene there were heroic testimonies and in their magnitude they were images of the glory of Christ, that which has appeared upon Him as He was hanged on the wood. In His crucifixion and resurrection all glory has become ours.

His glory has brightened in His humility as He entered Jerusalem. And Jerusalem did not become the city of God unless at His resurrection from the dead, since then His glory has eloquently brightened. The exaltedness of Christ has first appeared when he was hanged on the cross. And the wonders were a disclosure of this glory. However, His victory over sin and death has been evidently disclosed at His death. His resurrection is a different expression of the glory which was fully upon Him as He was raised on the wood of humiliation. He is the one who changed the humility of death to victory. From this, there is no difference in the efficacy between his death and resurrection. Death has never surmounted Him. His emanation [resurrection] was the result of the death that He wanted to die. His resurrection from the dead was the uncovering of a victory that He accomplished on the cross and with the cross joy has come to the whole world. Thus, Easter is the disclosure of a victory which has been fulfilled in it and diffused to the worlds. At His death victory has been completely achieved and it was proclaimed by His resurrection, since salvation has not occurred merely from death. Salvation was in His person.

By His entering Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets, He has demonstrated His journey toward death. And later we have understood that the Palm Sunday has paved the way for Easter. Various events were revealed to be related through His

love. They were different stages of the one love, hence, you cannot neglect any incident between the Palm Sunday and the Easter dawn. The whole thing is one Easter, since through these incidents different expressions were revealed, [which demonstrate] His embracing us in the movement of the one love. He has accepted the will of the Father to walk one salvation way in its different manifestations between the Last Supper and His rising at the dawn of the great Sunday. However, and because of your love [toward Him] and because of the weaving together of the events, you cannot without collecting all incidents in your memory, which were mentioned in the dear Book, since [the events] from the night of His submission to His victory on the Easter morning makes one prospect.

You may not fasten your attention on one incident of the salvation events, since you should accompany the Master throughout the different stations which the Book mentions. And after each of those events we recite in prayer that He has accomplished that event for our salvation, as though salvation were a journey ends with resurrection, and for us resurrection becomes a promise about the Holy Spirit. That is why whenever we indicate any incident at the Passion Service we say that He has accomplished it for our salvation.

Thus, you have to delight spiritually in all stages of salvation without disregarding a work that He has done, since contemplation in all the works of the Lord is your consideration of the sanctity and the uniqueness of each and every work. Blessed is the one who can move through the different stages of the Lord's journey with one joy, and can halt at every station since whatever is written is written for our salvation. Thus, our full joy pours forth from every event that has occurred to the Lord and from our accompaniment to all what the Master has done, specially, but not exclusively, from the Last Supper to the instant of resurrection in expectation of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, and upon us in every divine liturgy.

The Lord is blessed in all His works of salvation, and may God help us to taste all God's works, and every single one, till the dawn of resurrection which is the joy of the whole world.