



Excerpt from St. Andrew of Crete's Homily on Palm Sunday

"Let us go together to meet Christ on the Mount of Olives. Today he returns from Bethany and proceeds of his own free will toward his holy and blessed passion, to consummate the mystery of our salvation. He who came down from heaven to raise us from the depths of sin, to raise us with himself, we are told in Scripture, above every sovereignty, authority and power, and every other name that can be named, now comes of his own free will to make his journey to Jerusalem. He comes without pomp or ostentation. As the psalmist says: He will not dispute or raise his voice to make it heard in the streets. He will be meek and humble, and he will make his entry in simplicity.

Let us run to accompany him as he hastens toward his passion, and imitate those who met him then, not by covering his path with garments, olive branches or palms, but by doing all we can to prostrate ourselves before him by being humble and by trying to live as he would wish. Then we shall be able to receive the Word at his coming, and God, whom no limits can contain, will be within us.

In his humility Christ entered the dark regions of our fallen world and he is glad that he became so humble for our sake, glad that he came and lived among us and shared in our nature in order to raise us up again to himself. And even though we are told that he has now ascended above the highest heavens - the proof, surely, of his power and godhead - his love for man will never rest until he has raised our earthbound

nature from glory to glory, and made it one with his own in heaven.

So let us spread before his feet, not garments or soulless olive branches, which delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but ourselves, clothed in his grace, or rather, clothed completely in him. We who have been baptized into Christ must ourselves be the garments that we spread before him. Now that the crimson stains of our sins have been washed away in the saving waters of baptism and we have become white as pure wool, let us present the conqueror of death, not with mere branches of palms but with the real rewards of his victory. Let our souls take the place of the welcoming branches as we join today in the children's holy song: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the king of Israel."

Hymns from the Stichera of the Great Vespers for Palm Sunday. Tone 6

Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and taking up the Cross we all say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!'

Same Tone.

He who has heaven as his throne and earth his footstool, the Word and co-eternal Son of God the Father, having come to Bethany, showed his humility today on the colt of a dumb animal. Therefore the children of the Hebrews, holding branches in their hands, sang his praise and cried, 'Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes, the King of Israel'.

Same Tone.

Let us too, all the new Israel, the Church from the nations, come today and let us cry out, 'Rejoice greatly, daughter of Sion. Proclaim it, daughter of Jerusalem. For see, your King is coming to you, meek and bringing salvation, and mounted on the colt of an ass, offspring of a beast of burden. Celebrate with the Children. Holding branches in your hands shout his praise, 'Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes, the King of Israel'.

Apolytikion. Tone 4

Buried with you through Baptism, Christ our God, we have been granted immortal life by your Resurrection, and we sing your praises, crying: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Kontakion. Tone 4

Mounted on the throne in heaven, Christ God, and on the foal on earth, you accepted the praise of the Angels and the hymn of the children who cried to you: Blessed are you who come to call back Adam.

(<http://www.anastasis.org.uk/palm.htm>)

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us and save us! Amen!