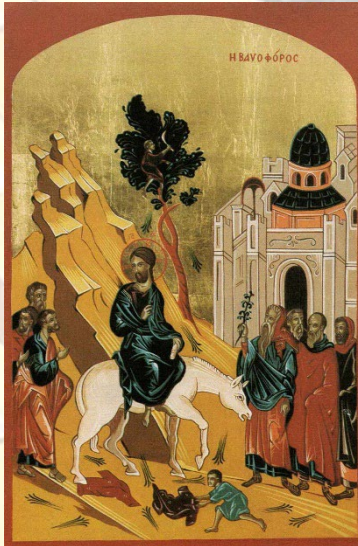


CREATE: THE CLEARING

Lent, 2024 with Icons Through Western Eyes with Russell Hart

Palm Sunday – The Entry



In the icon of the Entry, Christ rides sideways, his head slightly turned to the Apostles following behind. He enters — not the earthly Jerusalem, but the heavenly city where the laws of space and time are suspended. There are the children cutting branches along His way, although no Evangelist mentions them, but here are the children mentioned by Matthew as well as the Psalmist: *“Out of the mouths of infants and children you have brought praise.”* [Mt. 21:16 & Ps. 8:3]

The adult spectators here appear very grave, for this Jesus is not the one they have expected. Before the week is over, they will be shouting “Crucify him!” Being well-versed in the Scriptures, they recognized that He is acting-out the words of Zachariah 9:9 — *“Behold, your king comes to you: triumphant and victorious, humble and riding on an ass — on a colt, the foal of an ass.”*

The Gospel of John for Palm Sunday ends with the religious authorities giving unwitting praise to Jesus in their dismay: *“You see, there is nothing we can do; look, the whole world is running after him.”* [12:19]

In the section of this Gospel where we learn of the Greeks who came to see Jesus, we see emissaries from the wider world that will soon begin to stir and respond. As Thomas Merton writes, *“Do not think that you can show your love for Christ by hating those who seem to be his enemies on earth. Suppose they really do hate him: nevertheless he loves them and [we] cannot be united with him unless [we] love them too.”*

Alas! And did my Savior bleed, and did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head for sinners such as I?

Thus might I hide my blushing face when his dear cross appears;
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness and melt my eyes to tears;

But drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe.
Here Lord, I give myself away; 'tis all that I can do.

~ Isaac Watts