

# Palm Sunday

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**By Archbishop Andrei of Novo Diveyevo**

Brothers and sisters! So the Holy Church indicates for us spiritual spring. Winter is over. Ended is the state in which our heart was like ice, as if dead in languor, thirsting for Grace. And now, during the past six weeks the sun has been warming us more and more, and nature has gradually started to come back to life. And so our heart too should have come back to life. Last night during the evening service, we sang, “Children were bearing the sign of Victory...” What sign? Pussy willows, branches which had already budded, indicating that spring was coming, as if saying to us: Look here, joy is already beginning, happiness. So through the pussy willows, the Church has been saying to us: This is the beginning for you too; just be Christians, and think it over, and you will begin to see a sign. A sign of what? - that Christ is Risen. And we, brothers and sisters, we close our eyes like an ostrich who puts his head under his wing. We don’t want to think that a limit will come, just as it comes to old people: hands stop working, eyes stop seeing, ears stop hearing — a limit. The end will come. And it seems that in these moments, when we begin to recognize the approach of old age, we involuntarily compare it with winter, with snow. Yes, but after winter comes spring. And in a spiritual understanding: after our eyes close, then comes Eternal Life, the joy of Life with Christ. This is what last night’s pussy willows were telling us about, “bearing the sign.” Abide not in grief; turn to joy. And now comes the moment when the Lord, by a special mystery, through Passion Week which we are approaching, will give us the feeling of this joy of Eternal Life.

Now we worry about a piece of bread, about a roof over our heads, about our social conditions. And it seems to us that the meaning of life consists of this. But the Church says, Look at the pussy willows: leaves will sprout and later flowers and fruit. So it is even in a Christian soul. Everything we are busying ourselves with, all this will remain here. But with us there will go another stream of — spiritual life. You should think about this. But is it so? Maybe it’s not. Brothers, it is so! Today the Holy Church speaks to us through the Apostle. What does the Church say? She says: “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4). Today, at the conclusion of Great Lent, she says to us, rejoice! Do you have this joy? If this is joy about Eternal Life, then yes, you will have this joy, because Christ is Risen. And all our sicknesses, our old age, our expectancy of death — all of this will dissolve. In what? In Christ. And when the moment of our departure comes (this is how we believe and what the Church says), God Almighty, the Giver of Life, will come to us and will perform for us the mystery of releasing our bonds, and we will enter eternal existence.

“Rejoice” says the Apostle, “and again I say, Rejoice” (Phil. 4:4). See how the Apostle is exhorting us. But what is this? There is a condition: “Let all men know your meekness” (The Russian text reads “meekness” instead of “forbearance” or “moderation” which appear in the English versions), continues the Apostle. Look here, spring has come to nature. But it will not stop here, it will go further; it will change into summer. And so it is with us — life goes on. “Let all men know your meekness.” This means that our life should move in such a way that pride will depart. It should dissolve in Christ’s patience, in Christ’s meekness. The Apostle says: May your meekness be of the Lord. And further, “Have no anxiety about anything,” but be always in prayer. Hear what promises the

Lord gives. “Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your wishes (The Russian text reads “wishes” instead of “requests” which appears in the English version) be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6). What daring is given to us!

But what kind of wishes should our prayers express? If they are the wishes which people experience in sitting rooms, theaters, worldly amusements — then of course, brothers, the Lord desires something else for us, because all of this will remain here. This senselessness, this commotion, this quarreling, this adversity, this rage, all this will remain here. And only joy will depart with us. This is joy: if you wish for meekness, humility, prosperity, brotherly love, Christian living, quiet — then pray! The Lord will be with you. Rejoice! The Holy Day is approaching.

Tomorrow there will come great moments when the Sacrament is being performed. And so in our hearts will be revealed this joy: Christ is Risen! May this joy abide with us in a joyous feeling of Eternal Life.