



Palm Sunday Sermon

Fr. Luke Sidarous - 22 April 2019

The Triumphant procession

“St. Paul wrote to the Church of Corinth:

“...thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.”¹

The feast we celebrate today is the triumphant procession, triumph over death—when Christ raised Lazarus from the dead and defeated the final enemy.

This triumphant procession is called the procession of ‘LIFE’, not only for Lazarus, but for everyone Christ raised from the dead.

There was another procession at the gate of a city named Nain—the son of a widow died young.²

As the villagers of Nain were carrying the coffin at the gate of the city, the author of life—Christ—came across the coffin and touched it; the writer of the gospel account wrote, “...and those who carried him stood still.”³

They froze; why?

When life meets the procession of death, death stops; it ceases.⁴

Today we celebrate the procession of those who were raised by Christ Jesus, those who received the grace of life. This was 20 centuries ago, but He still leads them to springs of living water in heaven, because He is the Lord of life.

“Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ;”⁵ we share in this procession of ‘LIFE’, for death can never overcome us.

Everyone raised with Christ, who has tasted the grace of liberty and victory, is always with Christ. Death, which is born from sin, will never overcome us, for Christ raised us up.

¹ 2 Cor. 2: 14

² Lk. 7: 11-17

³ Lk. 7: 14

⁴ 1 Cor. 15: 54

⁵ 2 Cor. 2: 14

What is this victory, triumph?

It is not like going to war, or to a court of law and winning. No; it is victory over death; victory over sin. You walk with your head held high; why?

Because sin is humiliation, degradation, shame, and death.

For this reason, I thank God, because we are in this procession of 'Life'.

Who is leading us? Who is guiding us in this world?

I do not walk according to my own lusts and desires, nor according to the world.

It is He who raised Lazarus from the tomb, who said to him, "Lazarus, come forth!"⁶

He leads us; He leads me. It is He behind Whom I walk in His procession; and He who reveals the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. This triumphant procession is for all ages and generations, in every place—not just the first century, nor is it for a specific country—He leads us in His triumphant procession at all times, for all the days of our life.

1. **Victory over death is the nature of God's children.**

We can't be dead sometimes, and alive at others. He reveals the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

Isn't it right for the person who is raised from the dead to witness to the ONE who raised him?

If we have been raised with Him, it is right to witness to Him, becoming the fragrance of His knowledge everywhere, to everyone; you become the fragrance of Christ.

That is why today's procession is not specific or limited to Palm Sunday; it is the triumphant entry of Christ in every place for all ages.

That's why we are called witnesses to the resurrection. We did not see the resurrection, but our lives, our conduct, are a witness to the resurrection—exactly like Lazarus.

If we look at Lazarus, isn't he the one who emitted a stench in the tomb? Can you see life in him now? Isn't he the one who was mourned?

That is why if we live as true Christians, even if we don't say a word, everyone who saw us would say, 'See this life? See the work of Christ?' when He changes the lives of sinners and evildoers to become saints without words or sermons.

⁶ Jn. 11: 43

When the blind can see, does he need to use words to preach? A blind person can see; a dead person is now alive; the lost person has returned; this is life in Christ.

But if we remain in sin, we cannot witness to Christ. We must experience the resurrection and the life every day.

When you live a life of victory in Christ, then the resurrection is in you, and all who see you would say you are God's child, a godly person in whom God's work is visible.

The power of life in such a person has overcome the death of this world.

But if death is in us, how can we witness to Christ?

Who were the ones who received Christ entering Jerusalem? The people He raised from the dead, who were healed from their diseases, whose eyes were opened—or like Zacchaeus, who was spiritually healed from his greed and evil; Christ healed them.

So, unless there is a change from death to life, from darkness to light...without this change, we cannot witness to Christ.

Therefore, everyone must live a life of repentance. We often pretend, being good in the workplace but angry at home; this is not a witness to Christ.

But if someone experiences a change in their life with Christ—from glory to glory—they will witness to Christ everywhere.

Many have seen those who have changed—and were called holy people, godly people—have been graced by the grace of life.

We ought to live a life that witnesses to Christ, Who is risen from the dead.

Do not be defeated by death in everyday life. Hold on to Christ's commandments with all your might, because His commandments give life.

But disobeying the commandments leads to death.

Witness to Christ; take part in the procession of those whom Christ raised, healed, or made good and can preach the goodness of the ONE who called them from darkness to His true light.

Keep the joy of this day in your heart that you may cry 'Hosanna' aloud, for He is our true Saviour—able to save the worst of sinners.

Wasn't Mary Magdalene—who had been possessed by seven demons—following Him? These are the witnesses of Christ.

May God grant us this grace that we truly witness to Him in our lives, at home, with our families; even to those who persecute us.

The devil does not like the procession of life, for this is the procession that defeated death.

The devil "...was a murderer from the beginning."⁷

When Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, the devil wanted to kill him again. The priests and high priest thought of killing Lazarus, for the devil is a murderer from the beginning.

2. **The power of sin is death.**

So, the devil will seek to kill everyone who is raised with Christ; the devil seeks to destroy them.

And this is happening in this day and age; they enter Churches to blow them up—this is the devil.

Anyone who is raised from the dead by the power of Christ, the devil seeks to destroy.

Can darkness overcome light? Never. Can death, with all the power of the devil, defeat life? Impossible.

Hold on to your eternal life, and never fear death, because you are one with Life: Christ. After Christ defeated death, all Christians should never fear death.

"O Death, where is your sting?"⁸

Hold on to Christ, His commandments, and life in Christ; you will overcome and defeat death in all its forms.

Glory be to God forever. Amen."

⁷ Jn. 8: 44

⁸ 1 Cor. 15: 55