



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

**Address:** PO Box 134, 108 E Main St, Clinton,  
CT 06413-0134

**Phone:** 860-664-9434

**Web:** <http://www.stalexischurch.org>

**Email:** [stalexis@ dneoca.org](mailto:stalexis@ dneoca.org)

**Fr Steven Hosking**

Rector

**Phone:** 860-866-5802 (Message)

**Email:** [frsteve@stalexischurch.org](mailto:frsteve@stalexischurch.org)

**Dn Timothy Skuby**

Attached

**Phone:** (808) 341-1813

**Email:** [dntimothy@stalexischurch.org](mailto:dntimothy@stalexischurch.org)

Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

---

Bulletin for Sunday, April 25, 2021

---

### Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine

Liturgy, it is offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against

racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

#### **Members of our Parish Council are:**

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large  
Dori Kuziak - Council Secretary  
Carolyn Neiss - Vice President  
Marlene Melesko - Council Member at Large  
Kyle Hollis - President  
Roderick Seurattan - Treasurer

## **Pastoral Care - General Information**

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

## **Announcements**

### **Church Council Meeting April 20, 2021**

Please find attached, a brief summary of our last Church Council meeting. As we did not have a quorum, the agenda topics were just discussed but not voted on

Pledge forms update: Father stated that he has received only 8 completed forms so far...he usually receives around 20. A copy of the Pledge form can be found at the bottom of the on-line bulletin for March 28, 2021 or on the [stalexischurch.org](http://stalexischurch.org) website.

Bids have been acquired to replace the fence between church and the strip mall. It was decided not to repair the few sections

as all the contractors stated the old remaining sections will eventually collapse. No decision was made to the type of fencing that will be purchased...cedar, vinyl, spruce or chain-link.

At the last Council meeting in March, it was discussed to meet with other churches in Clinton to discuss "Church growth and community outreach". The Council decided to wait to meet at least a few more months due to COVID but to start putting together questions to discuss.

The Outreach Committee asked the Council for funds to purchase gift cards for our 4 college students as they prepare for exams. (In the past, goodie boxes were prepared but it was decided to replace them with gift cards due to COVID restrictions.)

## **Amazon Smile**

Want to help make a difference while you shop in the Amazon app, at no extra cost to you? Simply follow the instructions below to select "St Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Church" as your charity and activate AmazonSmile in the app. They'll donate a portion of your eligible mobile app purchases to us.

How it works:

1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "St Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Church" as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Archpriest Dennis,  
Archpriest Michael,  
Deacon Timothy, Evelyn,  
Katheryn, Anne, Aaron,  
Veronica, Richard,  
Nancy, Susanne, Carol,  
Alexander, Gail, Vincent,  
Nina, Ellen, Maureen,  
Elizabeth, Christopher,  
Joshua, Jennifer, Petra,  
Olivia, Jessica, Sean,  
Sarah, Justin, Arnold,  
Carol-Anne, Anthony,

Natasha, Gene, John, John, Michael, Kelley,  
Krisha, Alix, Natalie, Edward, Nathan, Caila,  
Julianna, Paul, John, Jacob, Lynn, Anna,  
Richard, Robert, Dorothy, Elaina

Many years to Sarah Gaulin, Daria Davis and  
Cathy Martins on the occasion of their  
birthdays.

- Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;
- All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalized, those who have no one to pray for them;
- All Orthodox seminarians & families;

- all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
- All those who have perished due to hatred, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

---

### ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM.

**Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark** (1st c.). **Palm Sunday** . Ven. Sylvester, Abbot of Obnora (1379).

### Parish Calendar

### Parish Calendar

April 25 to May 3, 2021

#### Sunday, April 25

Daria Davis  
Palm Sunday  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
5:30PM Bridegroom Matins for Monday

#### Monday, April 26

Holy Monday  
6:30PM Bridegroom Matins for Tuesday

#### Tuesday, April 27

Sarah Gaulin  
Holy Tuesday  
6:30PM Bridegroom Matins for Wednesday

#### Wednesday, April 28

Holy Wednesday  
6:30PM Bridegroom Matins for Thursday

### **Thursday, April 29**

Cathy Martins  
Holy Thursday  
10:30AM Vespers Divine Liturgy of Holy Thursday  
6:30PM Matins of Holy Friday

### **Friday, April 30**

Krawchuk  
Holy Friday  
8:30AM Royal Hours  
4:00PM Vespers of Holy Friday  
6:30PM Matins of Holy Saturday

### **Saturday, May 1**

Holy Saturday  
10:30AM Vespers Divine Liturgy of Holy Saturday  
9:30PM Paschal Compline and Canon

### **Sunday, May 2**

Great and Holy Pascha  
9:30AM Paschal Divine Liturgy  
5:30PM Paschal Vespers

### **Monday, May 3**

Alex Page  
Renewal Monday

## **Saints and Feasts**

### **April 25**

#### **Palm Sunday**

On Sunday, five days before the Passover of the Law, the Lord came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Sending two of His disciples

to bring Him a foal of an ass, He sat thereon and entered into the city. When the multitude there heard that Jesus was coming, they straightway took up the branches of palm trees in their hands, and went forth to meet Him. Others spread their garments on the ground, and yet others cut branches from the trees and strewed them in the way that Jesus was to pass; and all of them together, especially the children, went before and after Him, crying out: "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel" (John 12:13). This is the radiant and glorious festival of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem that we celebrate today.

The branches of the palm trees symbolize Christ's victory over the devil and death. The word Hosanna means "Save, I pray," or "Save, now." The foal of an ass, and Jesus' sitting thereon, and the fact that this animal was untamed and considered unclean according to the Law, signified the former uncleanness and wildness of the nations, and their subjection thereafter to the holy Law of the Gospel.

### **April 25**

#### **Mark the Apostle and Evangelist**

Mark was an idolater from Cyrene of Pentapolis, which is near Libya. Having come to the Faith of Christ through the Apostle Peter, he followed him to Rome. While there, at the prompting of Peter himself and at the request of the Christians living there, he wrote his Gospel in Greek, and it is second in order after Matthew's.

Afterwards, travelling to Egypt, he preached the Gospel there and was the first to establish the Church in Alexandria. The idolaters, unable to bear his preaching, seized him, bound him with ropes, and dragged him through the streets until he, cut to pieces on rocks, gave up his soul. It is said that he completed his life in martyrdom about the year 68. He is depicted in holy icons with a lion next to him, one of the living creatures mentioned by Ezekiel (1:10), and a symbol of Christ's royal office, as Saint Irenaeus of Lyons writes.

*If April 25 falls on or before Great and Holy Pascha, the Feast of St. Mark is translated to Bright Tuesday.*

---

## **April 26**

### **Holy Monday**

The holy Passion of our Saviour begins today, presenting Joseph the all-comely as a prefiguring of Christ. He was the eleventh son of Jacob, and his first son by Rachel; because he was so beloved of his father, his own brethren came to envy him and cast him into a pit. Later they sold him to foreigners for thirty pieces of silver, who later sold him again in Egypt. Because of his virtue, his master gave him much authority in governing his house; because he was fair of countenance, his master's wife sought to draw him into sin with her; because of his chastity, he refused her, and through her slanders was cast into prison. Finally, he was led forth again with great glory and was honoured as a king. He became lord over all Egypt and a provider of wheat

for all the people. Through all this, he typifies in himself the betrayal, Passion, death, and glorification of our Lord Jesus Christ (see Gen., chapters 37, 39-41).

To the commemoration of Patriarch Joseph is added also the narration concerning the fig tree, which on this day was cursed and subsequently dried up because of its unfruitfulness. It portrayed the Jewish synagogue, which had not produced the fruit demanded of it, that is, obedience to God and faith in Him and which was stripped of all spiritual grace by means of the curse (Matt. 21:18-20).

---

## **April 27**

### **Holy Tuesday**

Today we bring to mind the parable of the ten virgins, which our Saviour related as He was coming to His Passion. This parable teaches us that the accomplishment of the great work of virginity should not make us careless in other matters, especially in almsgiving, wherewith the lamp of virginity is made radiant. Furthermore, it teaches us that we should not be remiss about the end of our life, but should be prepared for it at every moment, like the wise virgins, so that we may meet the Bridegroom, lest He come suddenly and the doors of the heavenly bridechamber be shut, and we also, like the foolish virgins, hear that dread sentence: "Amen, I say unto you, I know you not" (Matt. 25:1-13).

---

**April 28**

**Holy Wednesday**

Two women - say the more discerning interpreters of the Gospel - anointed the Lord with myrrh; the one, a long time before His Passion; the other, a few days before. One was a harlot and sinner; the other, chaste and virtuous. The Church commemorates this reverent act today. While mentioning herein the person of the harlot, it also mentions Judas' betrayal; for, according to the account in Matthew, both of these deeds took place two days before the Passover, on Wednesday.

That woman, then, anointed Jesus' head and feet with very precious myrrh, and wiped them with the tresses of her hair. The disciples, especially the avaricious Judas, were scandalized, supposedly because of the waste of the myrrh, which could be sold for a great price and given to the poor. The Lord Jesus reproved them and told them not to trouble the woman. Indignant, Judas went to the high priests, who were gathered in the court of Caiaphas and were already taking counsel against Jesus. On agreeing with them to betray his Teacher for thirty pieces of silver, Judas sought from that time opportunity to betray Him (Matt. 26:14-16). Because the betrayal took place on Wednesday, we have received the tradition from Apostolic times to fast on Wednesday throughout the year.

---

**April 29**

**Holy Thursday**

On the evening of this day, which was the eve of the feast of unleavened bread (that is, the Passover), our Redeemer supped with His twelve disciples in the city. He blessed the bread and the wine, and gave us the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist. He washed the feet of the disciples as an example of humility. He said openly that one of them was about to betray Him, and He pointed out the betrayer by revealing that it was he "that dipped his hand with Me in the dish." And after Judas had straightway gone forth, Jesus gave the disciples His final and sublime instructions, which are contained in the first Gospel Reading of the Holy Passion (John 13:31-18:1 known as the Gospel of the Testament). After this the God-man went forth to the Mount of Olives, and there He began to be sorrowful and in anguish. He went off alone, and bending the knees He prayed fervently. From His great anguish, His sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. As soon as He had completed that anguished prayer, lo, Judas came with a multitude of soldiers and a great crowd; on greeting the Teacher guile fully with a kiss, he betrayed Him.

The Lord Jesus was then apprehended and taken prisoner to the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. The disciples were scattered, but Peter, who was more fervent than the others, followed Him even into the court of the high priest, but in the end denied thrice that he was His disciple.

Then our divine Teacher was brought before

the lawless Sanhedrin and was interrogated concerning His disciples and His teaching. The high priest adjured Him before God that He tell them whether He was truly the Christ. And having spoken the truth, He was judged guilty of death, supposedly as one who had blasphemed. Then they spat in His face, beat Him, smote Him with the palms of their hands, and mocked Him in every way, throughout the whole night until the morning.

---

## **April 30**

### **Holy Friday**

When Friday dawned, Christ was sent bound from Caiaphas to Pontius Pilate, who was then Governor of Judea. Pilate interrogated Him in many ways, and once and again acknowledged that He was innocent, but to please the Jews, he later passed the sentence of death against Him. After scourging the Lord of all as though He were a runaway slave, he surrendered Him to be crucified.

Thus the Lord Jesus was handed over to the soldiers, was stripped of His garments, was clothed in a purple robe, was crowned with a wreath of thorns, had a reed placed in His hand as though it were a sceptre, was bowed before in mockery, was spat upon, and was buffeted in the face and on the head. Then they again clothed Him in His own garments, and bearing the cross, He came to Golgotha, a place of condemnation, and there, about the third hour, He was crucified between two thieves. Although both blasphemed Him at the first, the thief

at His right hand repented, and said: "Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom," to which our Saviour answered, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." As He hung upon the Cross, He was blasphemed by those who were passing by, was mocked by the high priests, and by the soldiers was given vinegar to drink mixed with gall. About the ninth hour, He cried out with a loud voice, saying, "It is finished." And the Lamb of God "Which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) expired on the day when the moon was full, and at the hour when, according to the Law, was slain the Passover lamb, which was established as a type of Him in the time of Moses.

Even lifeless creation mourned the death of the Master, and it trembled and was altered out of fear. Yet, even though the Maker of creation was already dead, they pierced Him in His immaculate side, and forthwith came there out Blood and Water. Finally, at about the setting of the sun, Joseph of Arimathea came with Nicodemus (both of them had been secret disciples of Jesus), and they took down the all-holy Body of the Teacher from the Cross and anointed it with aromatic spices, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. When they had buried Him in a new tomb, they rolled a great stone over its entrance.

Such are the dread and saving sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ commemorated today, and in remembrance of them, we have received the Apostolic commandment that a fast be observed every Friday.

---

**April 30**

**James the Apostle and brother of St. John the Theologian**

James was one of the Twelve, like his brother John (celebrated on Sept. 26), whom the Lord called "Sons of Thunder," because they became great preachers and because of their profound theology. It was the Saint's boldness in preaching the Gospel that Herod Agrippa, the son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great, could not endure, and so he took him into custody during the days of the Passover, and slew him with the sword (Acts 12: 1-2); and thus he drank the cup of which the Saviour had spoken to him prophetically (Matt. 20:23). As for Herod, the following year he went down to Caesarea, and, as the Acts of the Apostles records: "Upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration" to the elders of Tyre and Sidon; and the flatterers that surrounded him "gave a shout, saying, 'it is the voice of a god, and not of a man.' And immediately an Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory; and like his grandfather (see Dec. 29) "he was eaten of worms and gave up the spirit" (Acts 12:21-23)

---

**May 01**

**Holy Saturday**

On Saturday, the high priests and Pharisees gathered together before Pilate and asked him to have Jesus' tomb sealed until

the third day; because, as those enemies of God said, "We suspect that His disciples will come and steal His buried body by night, and then proclaim to the people that His resurrection is true, as that deceiver Himself foretold while He was yet alive; and then the last deception shall be worse than the first." After they had said these things to Pilate and received his permission, they went and sealed the tomb, and assigned a watch for security, that is, guards from among the soldiers under the supervision of the high priests (Matt. 27:62-66). While commemorating the entombment of the holy Body of our Lord today, we also celebrate His dread descent with His soul, whereby He destroyed the gates and bars of Hades, and made His light to shine where only darkness had reigned (Job 3 8 : 17; Esaias 49:9; 1 Peter 3:18-20); death was put to death, Hades was stripped of all its captives, our first parents and all the righteous who died from the beginning of time ran to Him Whom they had awaited, and the holy angelic orders glorified God for the restoration of our fallen race.

---

**May 02**

**Great and Holy Pascha**

Mary Magdalene, and the other women who were present at the burial of our Saviour on Friday evening, returned from Golgotha to the city and prepared fragrant spices and myrrh, so that they might anoint the body of Jesus. On the morrow, because of the law which forbids work on the day of the Sabbath, they rested for the whole day. But at early dawn on the Sunday that followed,

almost thirty-six hours since the death of the Life-giving Redeemer, they came to the sepulchre with the spices to anoint His body. While they were considering the difficulty of rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, there was a fearful earthquake; and an Angel, whose countenance shone like lightning and whose garment was white as snow, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The guards that were there became as dead from fear and took to flight. The women, however, went into the sepulchre, but did not find the Lord's body. Instead, they saw two other Angels in the form of youths clothed in white, who told them that the Saviour was risen, and they sent forth the women, who ran to proclaim to the disciples these gladsome tidings. Then Peter and John arrived, having learned from Mary Magdalene what had come to pass, and when they entered the tomb, they found only the winding sheets. Therefore, they returned again to the city with joy, as heralds now of the supernatural Resurrection of Christ, Who in truth was seen alive by the disciples on this day on five occasions.

Our Lord, then, was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, before the setting of the sun, which was the first of His "three days" in the grave; observing the mystical Sabbath, that "seventh day" in which it is said that the Lord "rested from all His works" (Gen. 2:2-3), He passed all of Saturday in the grave; and He arose "while it was yet dark, very early in the morning" on Sunday, the third day, which, according to the Hebrew reckoning, began after sunset on Saturday.

As we celebrate today this joyous Resurrection, we greet and embrace one another in Christ, thereby demonstrating our Saviour's victory over death and corruption, and the destruction of our ancient enmity with God, and His reconciliation toward us, and our inheritance of life everlasting. The feast itself is called Pascha, which is derived from the Hebrew word which means "passover"; because Christ, Who suffered and arose, has made us to pass over from the curse of Adam and slavery to the devil and death unto our primal freedom and blessedness. In addition, this day of this particular week, which is the first of all the rest, is dedicated to the honour of the Lord; in honour and remembrance of the Resurrection, the Apostles transferred to this day the rest from labour that was formerly assigned to the Sabbath of the ancient Law.

All foods allowed during Renewal Week.

---

## Hymns of the Day



Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Your Passion, You confirmed the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with

the palms of victory,  
we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of Death:  
"Hosanna in the highest!//  
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."

#### Tone 4 Troparion

When we were buried with You in baptism, O Christ God,  
we were made worthy of eternal life by Your Resurrection.

Now we praise You and sing:

“Hosanna in the highest!//

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!”

#### Tone 6 Kontakion

Sitting on Your throne in Heaven,  
carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God,  
accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing://  
“Blessed is He Who comes to recall Adam!”

(Instead of “It is truly meet...,” we sing:)

God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us!

Celebrate the feast and come with gladness!  
Let us magnify Christ with palms and branches,

singing: “Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord, our Savior!”

#### Communion Hymn

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord. God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. (Ps. 117:26b, 27b)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

### Gospel and Epistle Readings

#### Epistle Reading

**Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Psalm 117.26,1.**

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Verse: Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good.  
His mercy endures forever.

#### **The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4-9.**

BRETHREN, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you.

---

### Gospel Reading

#### **Palm Sunday**

#### **The Reading is from John 12:1-18**

Six days before Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus

---

and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was to betray him), said "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of my burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazaros, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazaros also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus.

The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazaros out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign.

---

---

## Wisdom of the Fathers

But observe the wisdom of the Evangelist, how he is not ashamed to parade their former ignorance. That it was written they knew, that it was written of Him they knew not. For it would have offended them if He being a King were about to suffer such things, and be so betrayed.

### **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily 66 on John 12, 2. B#58, p.245., 4th Century*

Besides, they could not at once have taken in the knowledge of the Kingdom of which He spake; for another Evangelist saith, that they thought the words were spoken of a kingdom of this world. (Matt. xx. 21.)

### **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily 66 on John 12, 2. B#58, p.245., 4th Century*

## Beyond the Sermon



Metropolitan Anthony  
Bloom

The Lord's Entry Into  
Jerusalem

In the Name of the  
Father, the Son and the  
Holy Ghost.

Today Christ enters the path not only of His sufferings but of that dreadful loneliness which enshrouds Him during all the days of Passion week. The loneliness begins with a misunderstanding; the people expect that the Lord's entry into Jerusalem will be the triumphant procession of a political leader, of a leader who will free his people from oppression, from slavery, from what they consider godlessness - because all paganism or idol-worship is a denial of the living God. The loneliness will develop further into the dreadful loneliness of not being understood even by His disciples. At the Last Supper when the Saviour talks to them for the last time, they will be in constant doubt as to the meaning of His words. And later when He goes into the Garden of Gethsemane before the fearful death that is facing Him, His closest disciples, Peter, John and James - whom He chose to go with Him fall asleep, depressed, tired, hopeless. The culmination of this loneliness will be Christ's cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Abandoned men, rejected by the people of Israel He encounters the extreme of forsakenness and dies without God,

without men, alone, with only His love for God and His love for mankind, dying for its sake and for God's glory.

The beginning of Christ's Passion is today's triumphal procession; the people expected a king, a leader - and they found the Saviour of their souls. Nothing embitters a person so much as a lost, a disappointed hope; and that explains why people who could receive Him like that, who witnessed the raising of Lazarus, who saw Christ's miracles and heard His teaching, admired every word, who were ready to become His disciples as long as He brought victory, broke away from Him, turned their backs on Him and a few days later shouted, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." And Christ spent all those days in loneliness, knowing what was in store for Him, abandoned by every one except the Mother of God, who stood silently by, as she had done throughout her life, participating in His tragic ascent to the Cross; she who had accepted the Annunciation, the Good Tidings, but who also accepted in silence Simeon's prophecy that a sword would pierce her heart.

During the coming days we shall be present - not just remember, but be present - at Christ's Passion. We shall be part of the crowd surrounding Christ and the disciples and the Mother of God; as we hear the Gospel readings, as we listen to the prayers of the Church, as one image after another of these days of the Passion passes before our eyes, let each one of us ask himself the question, "Where do I stand, who am I in this crowd? A Pharisee? A Scribe? A traitor, a coward? Who? Or do I stand among the Apostles?" But they too were overcome

by fear. Peter denied Him thrice, Judas betrayed Him, John, James and Peter went to sleep just when Christ most needed human love and support; the other disciples fled; no one remained except John and the Mother of God, those who were bound to Him by the kind of love which fears nothing and is ready to share in everything.

Once more let us ask ourselves who we are and where we stand, what our position in this crowd is. Do we stand with hope or despair, or what? And if we stand with indifference, we too are part of that terrifying crowd that surrounded Christ, shuffling, listening, and then going away; as we shall go away from church. The Crucifix will be standing here on Thursday and we shall be reading the Gospel about the Cross, the Crucifixion and death - and then what will happen? The Cross will remain standing, but we shall go away for a rest, go home to have supper, to sleep, to prepare for the fatigues of the next day. And during this time Christ is on the Cross, Christ is in the tomb. How awful it is that, like the disciples in their day, we are not able to spend one night, one hour with Him. Let us think about this, and if we are incapable of doing anything, let us at least realise who we are and where we stand, and at the final hour turn to Christ with the cry, the appeal of the thief, Remember me, Lord, in Thy Kingdom. Amen.