

A reading from an oration by Gregory of Nazianzus

Why was the blood that was shed for us, God's most precious and glorious blood, this blood of the One who carried out the sacrifice and of the One who was himself the sacrifice? Why was it poured out, and to whom was it offered? These are questions that echo within my mind.

If the death of Christ was a ransom paid to the Father, the question that arises is for what reason? We were not held captive by the Father. And anyway, why should the blood of his only Son be pleasing to the Father who once refused to accept Isaac when Abraham his father offered him as a burnt offering, and instead was pleased to accept the sacrifice of a ram?

Surely it is evident that the Father accepts the sacrifice of Christ, not because he demands it, still less because he feels some need of it, but in order to carry forward his own purposes for the world. Humanity had to be brought back to life by the humanity of God. We had to be summoned to life by his Son.

Let the rest be adored in silence.

Nothing can equal the miracle of my salvation. A few drops of blood have set free the entire universe.

A Reading from the hymns for Palm Sunday in the Orthodox Church

*Let the mountains and all the hills
Break out into great rejoicing at the mercy of God,
And let the trees of the forest clap their hands.
Give praise to Christ, all nations,
Magnify him, all peoples, crying:
'Glory to thy power, O Lord!'*

*Seated in heaven upon thy throne
And on earth upon a foal, O Christ our God,
Thou hast accepted the praise of the angels
And the songs of the children who cried out to thee:
'Blessed art thou that comest to call back Adam!'*

[Source: Celebrating the Seasons]