



About this Icon

The icon used as a banner for this web page is the well-known Eastern Orthodox icon, “Behold the Bridegroom.” It depicts our Lord after He had been beaten and mocked by the Roman soldiers.

And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the praetorium); and they called together the whole battalion.¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on him.¹⁸ And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!”¹⁹ And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him.²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. (Mark 15:16-20)

Jesus was then returned to Pilate who then presented Him to the chief priests and officers:



⁴ Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith to them: Behold, I bring him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in him.⁵ (Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment.) And he saith to them: Behold the Man.⁶ When the chief priests, therefore, and the servants, had seen him, they cried out, saying: Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith to them: Take him you, and crucify him: for I find no cause in him. (John 19:4-6)

There is an irony with the naming of this icon. *Behold, the Bridegroom!* comes from the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew:

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them;⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’⁷ Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. (Matt 25:1-7)

This is an eschatological passage referring to the Second Coming of Jesus when He returns in glory for His bride, the faithful and vigilant virgins who wait eagerly for the return of the Bridegroom. Yet, we are not presented with the King of kings, and Lord of lords, but rather the suffering servant as He stood before Pilate and the angry mob.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. (Isa 53:4-5)

This was the “bride price” (Hebrew: *ketubah*), that Jesus paid for His Church. This is why Jesus came into the world.

...though he [the Logos of the Father] was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil 2:7-11)

The world says, *Ecco Homo*, “Behold the man.” Since Pilate to this day there are those who cry out, *Crucify him, crucify him!* But the Church declares with boldness, “Behold, the Bridegroom!” In recognizing our Bridegroom in this “man of sorrows” we acknowledge the price that He paid for us and that we are not our own, we are His.

You are not your own;²⁰ you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1Cor 6:19-20)

And while there is a similar cost that we must pay to be His Bride in taking up our cross and following Him (Matt 10:38-39) we count it as nothing for the surpassing glory of knowing Him.

⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. (Phil 3:7-11)

