



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Palm Sunday

April 6, 2014

**Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor;
Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris,
Cantors**

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Please abstain from meat products all week and from meat and dairy products on Great and Holy Friday and Saturday.

+++ In the name of our Saviour, all are invited to join us in pilgrimage this coming week by being at ALL the services celebrated for the sake of our parishioners and the salvation of souls.

+++ Today we heaven provided opportunity to join in exuberance of faith response with the city people of Jerusalem and make a generous offering as the Lord comes among us on the colt of a donkey! May our offering also shout out with voice of welcome!

+++ We thank all who labored so generously and laboriously to make yesterday's Bake Sale a success. We invoke upon all the generous blessing of our Lord for continued good physical and spiritual health. God grant you Many & Blessed Years!

+++ Every Monday, we have prayerful devotions before the Myrrh bearing icon at 6:00 PM. Everyone is invited to be present in praise. The Birthgiver invites us to manifest our faith in response to her first shown love, to unite our prayers with hers for the salvation of our souls. Invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

+++ We ask all of our faithful to be sensitive of soul to the needs of our parish and generously express their gratitude for the gift of salvation in Christ by their offering next Sunday. This is the greatest by far in stature feast of our Church. Let us match the generosity of our Lord towards us!

+++ Next Sunday as you pray for your beloved departed souls and members of your family, please consider lighting a seven day light during the week or on that day to burn in celebration and gratitude for many blessings received. The offering is \$3.00.

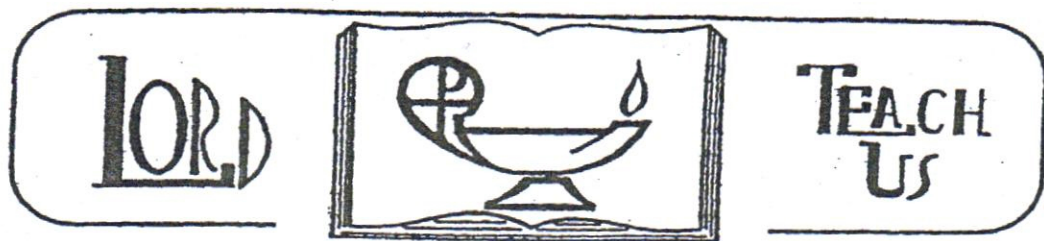
+++ Please dispose of last year's pussy willows and palms by burying them along the foundation of your home or in the flower bed. Do NOT put in trash collection!

+++ Please keep the intentions of these members of our parish intercession community in your daily prayers: Anna, Barbara, Betty, James, Yevlogia, Maria and Father George.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received last Sunday: Tithe Offering, \$641.00; Candles, \$54.00; Great Fast Self-Denial, \$130.00; Holyday, \$60.00; Kitchen, \$89.00; Food Coupons, \$340.00; Flowers, \$180.00; Resurrection, \$10.00; April Web Site, \$30.00; April Bulletin, \$30.00, for a total of \$1564.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offer their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleanor Korba, Robert Gorbich, Marilyn Korba and Pani Buletza.



Son Of God.

Then he asked them, "Who do you think I am?" "Simon Peter answered, 'The Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' 'God has blessed you, Simon, son of Jonah,' Jesus said, 'for my Father in heaven has personally revealed this to you; this is not from any human source'" Matthew 16: 15.

But even as he said it, a bright cloud came over them and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him'" Mark 9: 7; Luke 9: 35; 2 Peter 1: 17, 18.

Beware that you do not look down upon a single one of the little children. For I tell you that in heaven their angels have constant access to my Father. I also tell you this, if two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you Matthew 18: 10, 19.

But I have no right to say who will sit on the thrones next to mine. Those places are reserved for the person my Father selects Matthew 20: 23.

Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking they would surely respect him Luke 20: 13; Matthew 21: 37.

Do you not realize I could ask my Father for thousands of angels to protect us and he would send them instantly? Then the high priest said to him, "I demand in the name of the living God that you tell us whether you claim to be the Messiah, the Son of God." "Yes, Jesus said, I AM. And in the future you will see me, the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God and returning on clouds of heaven" Matthew 26: 53, 63, 64.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of **\$1715.00** from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ Please be certain to see a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring and supportive and use Grocery Coupons for food shopping as we have gratefully realized \$5750 on this project to date!

+++ The **Clothing Drive** is a permanent on-going project in our parish. Please bring any type of clothing and fabrics along with stuffed animals and shoes for the benefit of our parish. The bags can be left in the vestibule or on the front porch of the rectory. Please invite your friends and neighbors to assist us in disposing of unwanted clothing, shoes and fabrics.

+++ We invite all pray the Lord our God grants us an enrichment of our spiritual lives for his glory. May we all be so enriched that this **Passion Week** is particularly rewarding for each of us, to triumph in **Resurrection joy!**

+++ May all glory, adoration and worship be accorded our God in the Holy Trinity by all the faithful of our parish with one mind, one soul and one heart each day of the week!

It

Is

In Response To God's

First Shown Love

That We Fill The Church During

All Passion Week Services

The Value Of Pain

The world will make you suffer. But be brave! I have overcome the world

John 16: 33.

Why is there suffering in this world? Why are there wars? Why does poverty exist? Why does injustice continue? Why does such blatant and obvious inequity surround us?

These perennial questions, are, perhaps more effectively answered during Holy and Passion Week than during any other liturgical season of the year.

The lonely, the sick and the troubled need only to look on the cross to realize Christ asks nothing of his followers which He has not first experienced himself. He was, indeed, bruised for our offenses, not his own; He did, indeed, die innocently because of our sins. Thus, sin is the root cause of all suffering; and sin – our own iniquity and the sin of others – is a more proximate cause of many of the evils we still continue to endure. Numerous personal conversions can bring about an alleviation of suffering in the world – because they represent a lessening of the selfishness which is productive of so much distress and affliction. And while personal conversion does not remove all suffering, it makes it possible to understand better and to view what remains in a Christian perspective – as a sharing in the suffering of Christ and as a real preparation for the glory of the grand and triumphant Resurrection.

The mystery of suffering has yet other aspects, however. It reminds man that he is not a law unto himself; it reminds him that he is not God the Creator; it reminds him that he is dependent and limited; it reminds him to be humble before the unlimited transcendent power and majesty of our heavenly Father. And finally, it is a rather stark reminder man has a relationship to maintain and fulfill with the God who made and created him for eternal life. Man has to recognize he is created in God's image. He must fervently labor to restore the likeness lost by Adam and Eve and thus is not able by himself to claim it as an inheritance. He must tap into heavenly provided grace to strengthen and assert himself as a child of God and warrior after sanctity.

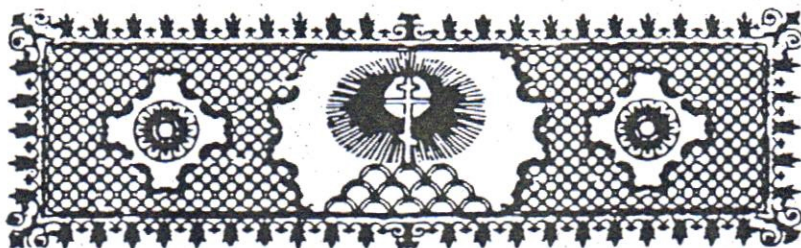
Suffering also reminds man of his need for one another. We were not created nor do we live in isolation. Those that are suffering come quickly to realize they cannot bear their burdens alone; those who reflect on the sufferings of others realize that they are, indeed, their brother's keepers, and that their concern must be genuinely extended to others and cannot be simply limited to self.

Suffering can also deepen and enrich the personalities of those who experience it, giving and imparting to them greater patience which word in its Latin root derivation, *patior*, actually means suffering. And sympathy, a word of Greek origin, *syn pathein*, which conveys the meaning of to suffer with. Compassion and understanding are more often found among those who have themselves borne burdens of anguish, sorrow, and deprivation. Superficiality and insensitivity can too easily become the characteristics and descriptions of those who have not experienced the crucible of suffering in daily life.

In God's revelation to us, the Book of Job provides a profound insight into the meaning of suffering – but the narrative of Christ's Passion is indispensable for those who would appreciate the redemptive value of suffering and for those who seek to realize what it actually means to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Without the example and life of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God who came into our midst, in our flesh, to save and redeem us, the mystery of suffering would be incomprehensible; for those who faithfully follow Christ, the sign of the Cross has become an unchangeable pledge of glory.

First we temporarily embrace the cross to achieve the eternal triumph of the crown!



play time



snack time



bath time



story time



me time



Each Is A Time For Christ-Like Opportunity

He Understands

Jesus understands every weakness of ours, because he was tempted in every way we are. But he did not sin! So whenever we are in need, we should come bravely before the throne of our merciful God. There we will be treated with undeserved kindness, and we will find help
Hebrew 4: 15.

Why did the throat of heaven grow raw? So we would know that He understands, so all who struggle would hear his invitation: "You can trust me."

The word *trust* does not appear in the passage about the wine and sponge, but we do find a phrase that makes it easier to trust. Look at the sentence prior to the declaration of thirst: "So that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty'" John 19: 28. St. John provides us with the motive behind Jesus' words. Our Lord was concerned with the fulfillment of Scripture. In fact, fulfillment of Scripture is a recurring theme in the passion. Consider the list:

The betrayal of Jesus by Judas occurred "to bring about what the Scripture said"
John 13: 18; 17: 12.

The gamble for the clothing took place "so that this Scripture would come true: 'They divided my clothes among them, and they threw lots for my clothing'" John 19: 24.

The legs of Christ were not broken "to make the Scripture come true: 'Not one of his bones will be broken'" John 19: 36.

The side of Jesus was pierced to fulfill the passage that says, "They will look at the one they stabbed" John 19: 37.

John says the disciples were stunned by the empty tomb since "they did not yet understand from the Scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead"
John 20: 9.

Why the recurring references to Scripture? Why, in his final moments, was Jesus determined to fulfill prophecy? He knew we would doubt. He knew we would question. And since He did not want our heads to keep his love from our hearts, He used his final moments to offer proof

that He is the Messiah. He systematically fulfilled centuries-old-prophecies. Every important detail of the great tragedy had been written down before hand:

the betrayal by a familiar friend (Psalms 41: 9)

the forsaking of the disciples through being offended at him (Psalms 31:11)

the false accusation (Psalms 35: 11)

the silence before his judges (Isaiah 53: 7)

being proven guiltless (Isaiah 53: 9)

being included with sinners (Isaiah 53: 12)

being crucified (Psalms 22: 16)

the mockery of the spectators (Psalms 109: 25)

the taunt of non deliverance (Psalms 22: 7, 8)

the gambling for his garments (Psalms 22: 18)

the prayer of his enemies (Isaiah 53: 12)

being forsaken by God (Psalms 22: 1)

the yielding of his spirit into the hands of the Father (Psalms 31: 5)

his bones not broken (Psalms 34: 20)

the burial in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53: 9)

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE!

Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. Entrance Hymn, Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

O Christ God, You confirmed the resurrection of all before the time of Your passion by raising Lazarus from the dead; therefore we, as the children of Israel, carry the symbols of victory and cry out to You, the Conqueror of death: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord." Troparion, Lazarus Saturday

In heaven, You are enthroned on high; on earth You ride upon a colt of a donkey. O Christ God, You received the praise of angels and the hymns of children crying out to You: "Blessed is He Who comes to restore Adam!" Kontakion, Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord; God is the Lord, and has revealed Himself to us. Prokimenon, Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

We have been baptized with You through baptism, O Christ our God! We have become worthy of immortal life through Your resurrection. We cry out to You: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord." Troparion, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Christ, the Joy of all, the Truth, the Light, the Life, and the Resurrection of the world, appeared to those on earth. Because of His goodness, He became also the image of resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all. Kontakion, Lazarus Saturday.

Let us all gather this day, the new Israel, the Church of the Gentiles, and with the prophet Zechariah, let us say, Rejoice, O daughter Sion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem: behold your King comes to you; He is the Saviour, meek and humble, seated on the colt of a donkey, a beast of burden. Carrying psalms, let us praise Him as did the children: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he Who is coming, the King of Israel." Vesper hymn, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Having first praised You with their palms, the ungrateful people then crucified You; but we honor You with our unchanging faith as our Benefactor, O Lord, and we unceasingly cry out to You: "Blessed is He Who comes to draw Adam forth from the tomb." Matins hymn, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord; God is the Lord, and has revealed Himself to us. Communion Hymn, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Did you know that in his earthly life, Christ fulfilled 332 distinct prophecies of the Old Testament? What are the mathematical possibilities of all these prophecies being fulfilled in the life of one man?

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That's ninety – seven zeroes! Amazing!

Why did Jesus proclaim his thirst from the cross? Simply to lay just one more plank on a sturdy bridge over which a doubter could walk. His confession of thirst is a signal for all who seek it; He is the Messiah!

His final act, then, is a warm and concerned word for the deliberately cautious: "You can trust in me!"

Do we not all need someone to trust; someone who is bigger than we are, more powerful, even the very Source of life itself?

Are we not tired of trusting people of this earth, like ourselves, for understanding?

Are we not weary of trusting the things of earth for strength?

Are we not sick of placing our trust in other created beings?

A drowning sailor does not call on another drowning sailor for help. A prisoner does not beg another prisoner to set him free. A pauper knows better than to beg from another pauper. He knows he needs someone who is strong and more able than he.

Jesus' message through the wine-soaked sponge is this: "I am that person. Trust me for your salvation, for your entire life!"

The Buzzing Of Flies

Oh, that my people would listen to me
Psalms 81: 13.

Heard at a fishing resort in Canada: "Worst year for flies we've ever seen!" "Man, you need a shotgun to protect yourself; they are just so huge." "No bug spray works this year!"

The bite of the black fly creates wounds that swell, get red, and itch like crazy. Get several and life is miserable, even when the fish are actually biting.

That is nothing compared with what happened when the fourth plague hit Egypt. "Thick swarms of flies entered the house of Pharaoh and the house of his servants; throughout Egypt the land was infested with flies" Exodus 8: 20. As Moses predicted, the air was thick with swarms of flies. They invaded Pharaoh's palace, filled the houses of government servants and officials and were found everywhere in Egypt, except in the land of Goshen where the Israelites lived.

By this time Pharaoh should have been listening intently to every word Moses spoke. But after the flies were gone, he hardened his heart and so he set himself and his people up for even more serious judgments from the Lord. "But once again, Pharaoh remained obdurate and would not let the people go" Exodus 8: 28.

Sometimes the Lord uses drastic measures to get our attention. The "swarms of flies" take different forms – trouble, recurring failure, guilt, the hurt looks of people we love. These are the times we especially need to listen to God and the message He is delivering to us. If we have a history of ignoring him, He will utilize methods that will actually attract our serious attention. If He is dramatic in a relating to us, it is because we have been deaf to his overtures for salvation and prefer our own approach.

So, let us listen carefully to the Lord while it is still quiet before the buzzing of the flies begins. Ask the Master to speak and make us ready so that when his voice is truly heard, with obedience steady and responsive, we are eager to follow every word. Hardening of the heart is more serious than hardening of the arteries.

The Entrance Into Jerusalem

For century upon succeeding century, followers of the Lord have considered with awe, silence, and renewed commitment his final days on earth. The culmination of his suffering moves us to tears and to action if we are really devout. We cherish his last words. We meditate on the hours leading up to the cross. We contemplate that rugged instrument of torture as a precious object because it measures the immeasurable. No matter how large we may imagine God's love to be, the cross shows us that his love is larger still.

During his last week among us in the flesh, Jesus taught, He argued, He cried out and He answered some questions, parried into others and challenged both enemies and friends with the never-ending truth. He stood before his accusers silently. He allowed himself to be crucified. He accepted and entered into the realm of death so He could defeat and overcome it. Those who loved him as well as they knew how buried his body and mourned.

But not for long. This new week ushers in a new world. The first day turns out to be so much more than the beginning of another week – Resurrection Sunday cast a bright new light on everything. That is why the experience of Christ's Passion did not end with the moment his heart stopped beating but continues through today and into eternity.

Today we participate in the joy of the capital city's inhabitants as we sing out, *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* Mark 11: 9.

Today's triumphant entry got so many things right, but the most crucial things wrong. Jesus receives a royal welcome for shortsighted reasons. Those who cut branches and spread their coats expected a great deal from Jesus, but they did not expect enough. They wanted a king, but they needed a Saviour!

The triumphant entry which we commemorate today represents all of those clear moments when humanity has expressed its strongest wishes for God to intervene, but has ;mistaken its own purposes for the heart an desire of God himself. This opening scene in the final week of Jesus serves to remind us all the way in which Jesus' entry into history was misunderstood even by those who were expecting him. The Triumphant Entry teaches us to acknowledge Jesus Christ for who He really is, not who we want him to be. We must learn today to allow God to be God!

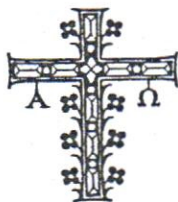
We learn today our human nature because of the sinful alienation we inherited from Adam and Eve is not eternal and our divine nature is not simply mortal. We can have a part in restoring it to its original pristine beauty. All of Christ's attributes must be understood in the very same way. It was not the human nature that fed thousands. It was not simply his like humanity to which we are called to aspire after by his grace that hurried to the fig tree. Who was weary from the journey and who made the world exist by his word? What is the brightness of glory and what was pierced with iron nails? What body is beaten in the Passion and what body is eternally glorified? This much is very clear: that the beating and blows belong to the servant who is the Lord, and honor belongs always to the Lord who among us is servant pre-eminent! As a result, Christ's natures are unified in such a perfect way and their respective attributes belong to both natures. Just as the Lord received the scars of the servant, the servant is glorified with the honor of God. For this is why the cross is called the glorious emblem of our Lord of glory and why every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

The primary reason we do not derive as much spiritual benefit from this coming week is that we look at the Lord from the slanted perspective of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. We want from him what we think we need. We look at Jesus in the wrong way and forget to explore his purpose which is to be understood in another way, perhaps even in direct contrast to our own understanding and expectation. Our understanding leads us to approach the Saviour in a convoluted way and therefore leads us to fail in grasping what this celebration ought to be today.

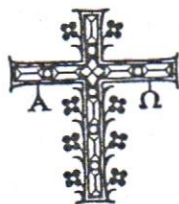
Above all else. Christ comes among us today to witness how dearly our heavenly Father holds the world and its inhabitants in value. He offers his only-begotten Son for every one in the world who will trust in him. Christ comes among us as one of us, as man, in

Who Is This Man...

**Who hangs condemned
upon a cross of shame,
Whose eyes look down with pity
on the ones who mock his name?**

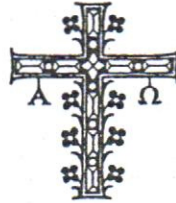


**Who is this Man from Nazareth;
is He not Joseph's son?
Why must He die a criminal;
what evil has He done?**

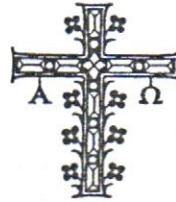


**Who is this Man who rode
into Jerusalem a king?
They say that all the countryside
could hear the praises ring.**

**Who is this Man they label as
“the King of the Jews”
and yet proceed to torture
with the cruelest of abuse?**



**Who is this Man who asks God
to forgive us of our sin,
who even dares to say that
in three days He will rise again?**



**Who is this Man called Jesus?
He is all He claimed to be.
He is our**

*Lord, Saviour,
Redeemer.*

And He is everything to me!

Judas



The Way Home

Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me

Psalms 119: 133.

A pious believer relates this story of her visit to a friend. She began her journey home, following the directions given her, through miles of beautiful farmland. Time lagged as she drove on and on past unmarked roads winding her way through fields of corn, thinking how beautiful it would be on the day of harvest. She began to have some doubts, however. Could her friend have made a mistake in the directions? Maybe she left out something or forgot an important turn. She almost turned to go a different way that she had a feeling might be correct. But then finally, common sense took over, and she realized she could trust the directions of her friend of many years who had moved to her new home, out of the way of familiarity for her. After all, she now lived in the area for some time, certainly the route she outlined would lead the traveler safely home. Sure enough, before long she reached the highway and headed home to familiar territory and security. The directions were perfect!

Our heavenly Father offers us direction in life. But often we doubt God's guidance or think maybe we have a better way. Sometimes we neglect to ask our heavenly Father for guidance at all.

The guidance we need comes to us through His Body and Bride, our blessed Church, through the Holy Spirit speaking to our hearts, through prayer, through situations we experience and through people God brings into our lives. God will give us directions if we sincerely ask and we can be certain that his guidance is always trustworthy. When we are burdened with sin and separation from him and from ourselves and loved ones, there is a way for correcting and overcoming the chasm we created between the Source of life and ourselves. We can reach the destination of heaven if we follow God's plan. We can travel over the road of holiness and be certain we arrive home safely.

The very first gift of grace our Lord offered the disciples as a direct result of his glorious Resurrection was to share his ability of forgiving man's sin. Living in sin is an unfamiliar place for the devout Christian. How grateful we are to the Lord for striving always to direct our life activities for our good, knowing that following his way will always bring us safely to our destiny as citizens of heaven. Certainly God's map for life is far more trustworthy than our own!

The Right Tools

Saul...put a coat of armor on (David) and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around..."I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off

1 Samuel 1;7: 38, 39.

Every would-be carpenter knows that when in the midst of a project, choosing the proper tool for the job is a serious challenge. Sometimes it is discovered later that the tool chosen is not the best one, for example, when a nail is used instead of a screw and the wood is split which means starting all over again.

Reflecting on tool choices, we remember that David was wise to choose the proper tools when he went into battle against Goliath. Saul sent him some armor, which was too big, too clumsy, and too heavy for David. David wisely chose his slingshot over the armor and a sword. The slingshot served him well in defending his flock.

As God's servants, we too make choices. When we rely on our own devices, on our own understanding and misdirected interpretation, we quickly find that the job overwhelms us. But when we step out in faith, relying on the power of our God and Creator and the grace He readily imparts to a willing and devoted soul, we come to realize there is no end to what we can accomplish.

When we encounter an opportunity for the forgiveness of sin, when we recognize the weight we carry as a burden in guilt, we do not ask the parish priest to help us remove our difficulty with the sacramental Mystery of Anointing with Oil indeed for the sick. We wish to overcome and rectify our sinful state by God's provided means. We do not want to split the wood of our own human personality because we know our Saviour has bequeathed to us the means of heavenly forgiveness in the Mystery of Confession or Reconciliation.

We must use the right tool to achieve the right end. Our God cannot be fooled and we only add to our separation by attempting to approach him on our own terms, by our own means. We cannot be doing a good thing for the wrong reason. On Holy and Great Wednesday the anointing of our frail flesh, our sick humanity is for strengthening us in avoiding and overcoming the sickness of our own limitations in falling victim to sin. It is for the strengthening of our will, our power of soul to resist separation from God. It is to cure our self-imposed resistance to the eagerly offered grace of forgiveness in the Mystery of Reconciliation!

Prayers for Priestly Fervor and Zeal

Divine Lord, Holy Saviour, sublime Redeemer, Master and Friend, Jesus Christ! In the incomparable love which You bear those to whom You have given a priestly vocation, humbly and confidently I implore You through the intercession of the Birthgiver, grant us, your faithful followers and believers, priests to labor in Your vineyard immersed in heavenly grace, who understand their priestly dignity and are fervent for salvation of souls. Grant them of heavenly treasure to be ever intent on making themselves worthy of the dignity of their vocation, through the practice of virtue, perseverance in prayer, a life without stain and reproach and eager for holy knowledge which leads them to provide worthy example for emulation to their flock. In the love which You so fervently prayed to the Eternal Father for priests, we ask and entreat you to so inspire all priests to ascend from their former nothingness to be apostles of reconciliation in the world. May they understand always the exaltation of their priestly functioning and abandon indifference, carelessness, impropriety and unworthiness. Grant that our priests celebrate the sacred Mysteries with lively faith, with great interior and exterior reverence and with a keen, glowing love that one day we may all behold and enjoy the results of their mission among as they witness being priests forever according to the order of Melchisedech. Amen.

Holy and Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, may the possession of the sacred priesthood fill us with equal measure of justified joy and deeply rooted humility. May our priests not be

surpassed by any in their devoted stewardship and care for all that pertains to the sublime mystery of the tabernacle which has been entrusted to our care. At the Holy of Holies, the Table of Sacrifice, let me be saturated with a keen awareness of the divine sublimity of that which, despite my miserable unworthiness and sinfulness, I am empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit to exercise. Day by day, dear Lord, merciful God, I implore You, with all priestly devotion, to let my heart and ears hear the admonition to make my life conform to the highest dignity and sacred functions of my lifelong state. With priestly abandonment let me put off more and more all that is of the temporal earth, all that belongs to the senses, all that is sinful, in order to think only of You, to live and labor only for You, who shall always be in time and eternity my God and my All. Amen.

Sweet Jesus, Who through Your singular kindness has preferred me before thousands of other men and called me to follow You in the exalted dignity of Your priesthood, grant to me divine support that I may live my vocation fittingly. I pray, Lord Jesus, that You quicken me today and everyday in Your grace which is placed in me through the imposition of episcopal hands. Grant that I may persevere in this most holy purpose, that I may be perfected ever more each day in the spirit of my holy vocation, that I may say "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me." Most powerful Doctor of souls, heal me, that I may never turn to vice; that I may fly from all temptation and sin; that I may please You until the hour of my death, there to surrender myself in body and soul to your loving and unending care. Amen.

Did You Know That ...

...we should always try to go a step past wherever people expect you to end up?

...in helping others get ahead, we always stand taller with someone else on our shoulders?

...nothing is easy to the unwilling?

...we should cherish our visions and dreams as they are the children of our soul?

...flexible people never get bent out of shape?

...success is not permanent and failure is not fatal?

...the remedies to our problems often lie within us?

...monuments are not erected to pessimists?

...if you change your thinking, you can change the world?

...millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday morning?

...a true friend recognizes your disabilities, but emphasizes your possibilities?

...truce is better than friction?

...education is when you read the fine print; experience is what you get when you don't?

...some think it is holding on that makes one strong; most of the time it is letting go?

...anger is the only thing to put off until tomorrow?

...while we cannot direct the wind, we can adjust our sails?

...worry is the misuse of imagination?

...personality opens doors, but only character keeps them open?

**Carry
the
Cross
with
Christ**



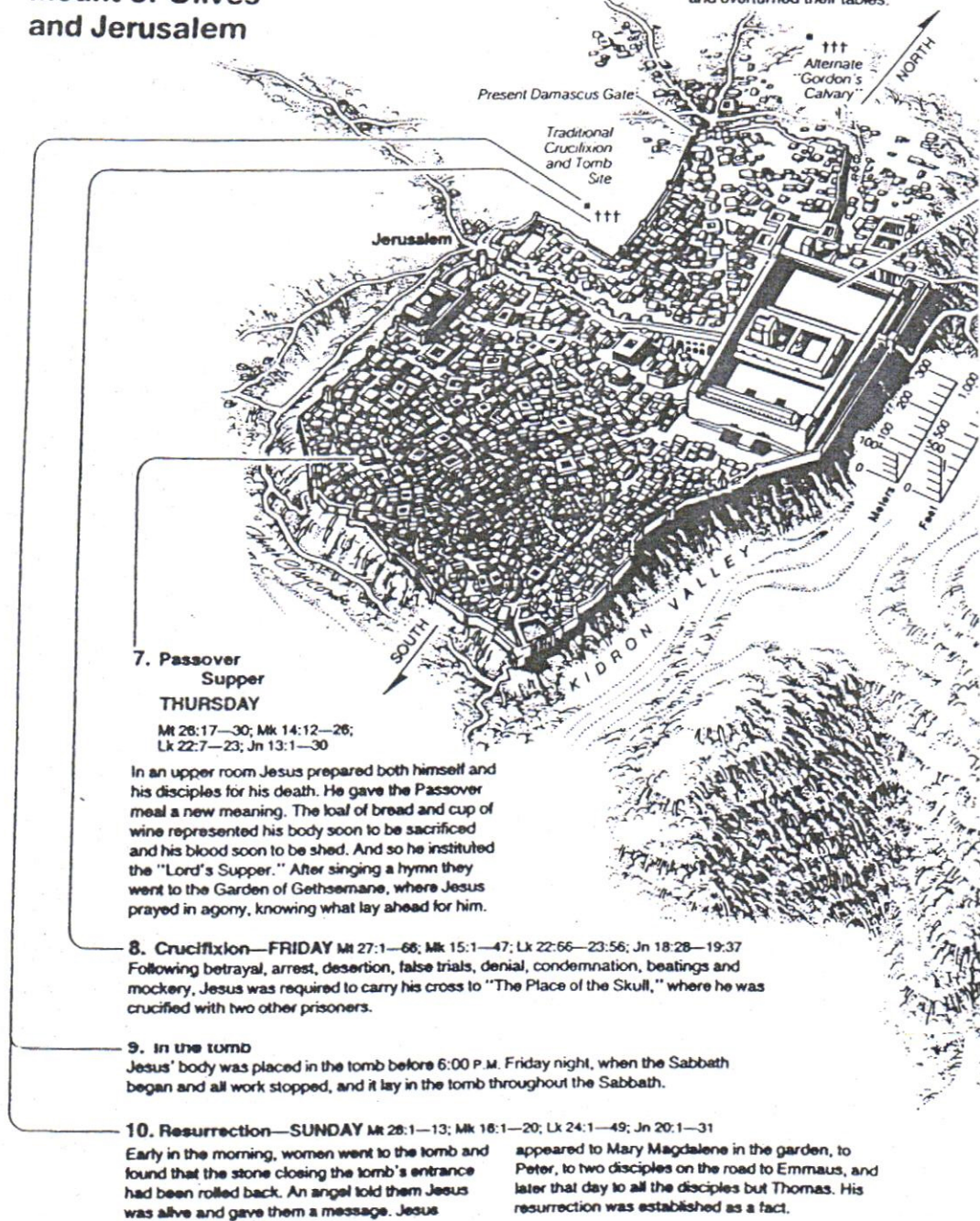
Passion Week

Bethany, the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem

4. Clearing of the temple MONDAY

Mt 21:10—17
Mk 11:15—18
Lk 19:45—48

The next day he returned to the temple found the court of the Gentiles full of traders and money changers making a large profit as they gave out Jewish coins in exchange for "pagan" money. Jesus drove them out and overturned their tables.



5. Day of controversy
and parables

TUESDAY Mt 21:23—24:51;
Mk 11:27—13:37; Lk 20:1—21:36

IN JERUSALEM

Jesus evaded the traps set by the priests.

ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES
OVERLOOKING JERUSALEM

(Tuesday afternoon,
exact location unknown)

He taught in parables and warned the people
against the Pharisees. He predicted the
destruction of Herod's great temple and told
his disciples about future events, including
his own return.

6. Day of rest

WEDNESDAY

Not mentioned in the Gospels

The Scriptures do not mention this
day, but the counting of the days
(Mk 14:1; Jn 12:1) seems to indicate
that there was another day
concerning which the Gospels
record nothing.

3. The Triumphant Entry

SUNDAY

Mt 21:1—11; Mk 11:1—11;
Lk 19:28—44; Jn 12:12—19

On the first day of the week
Jesus rode into Jerusalem on
a donkey, fulfilling an ancient
prophecy (Zec 9:9). The crowd
welcomed him with
"Hosanna" and the words of
Ps 118:25-26, thus ascribing
to him a Messianic title as the
agent of the Lord, the coming
King of Israel.

1. Arrival in Bethany

FRIDAY Jn 12:1

Jesus arrived in Bethany six days
before the Passover to spend some
time with his friends, Mary, Martha
and Lazarus. While here, Mary
anointed his feet with costly
perfume as an act of humility. This
tender expression indicated Mary's
devotion to Jesus and her
willingness to serve him.

2. Sabbath — day of rest

SATURDAY

Not mentioned in the Gospels

Since the next day was the
Sabbath, the Lord spent the day in
traditional fashion with his friends.

The Roman road climbed steeply to the
crest of the Mount of Olives, affording a
spectacular view of the Desert of
Judea to the east and Jerusalem
across the Kidron valley to the west.

Bethany

To Jericho and
the Dead Sea





PEACE
BE TO YOU
ALLELUIA



Great and Holy Thursday



Meditation

In Holy Week the Passover mystery of the death and Resurrection of our Lord is represented in a much more vivid way than the rest of the year. The

salvation accomplished then in history by Jesus, the Son of God and Messiah, is always present for our life, but when we commemorate it in the Holy and Great

Come, O faithful, let us
raise our minds on high
and enjoy the Master's
hospitality and the
table of immortal life
in the upper room; and
let us hear the exalted
teaching of the Word
whom we magnify.

— *Matins Ikos, Ode 9*

Readings

Exodus 19:10-19

Matthew 26:2-20

Job 38:1-21 42:1-5

John 13:3-17

Isaiah 50:4-11

Matthew 26:21-39

1 Corinthians 11:23-32

Luke 22:43-45

Matthew 26:40 — 27:2

(taken as one Gospel)



Week, it renews its pattern in the way we believe and live. The week begins in victory, Jesus enters the city as the King of Israel, and is welcomed by the people in a triumphal procession. However, in the middle of the week, He is betrayed by one of his disciples, as the Alleluia verse announces, "Thus even my friend, in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has turned against me." (*Psalm 40:10*)

The mystery begins with hope. Our Lord explains what He is about to do, and He makes it eternal by establishing the sacramental mystery of Holy Communion. Today begins the mystery, and our Lord tells us it will destroy our sins and bring us eternal life. The Divine Liturgy we celebrate today makes real for us the presence of the Son of God, whose love is present for us now as truly as the first Holy Thursday.

Today we are invited to

a double banquet, united in the one person, Jesus Christ our Lord. It is a banquet of words, for He tells us today of God's transcendent love for us in giving Himself entirely to us. "Today we have heard his sweet words, 'This is my Body which is broken for you and given for the forgiveness of sins.'" (*Ambon Prayer*)

Today He accomplishes his words by giving us his Body and Blood in the form of bread and wine. Only He can do this because Jesus is the incarnate Word of God.

Reflection Questions

- Do we come to the Passover mystery with the humility to accept the gift that is offered today — a gift beyond our power to comprehend?
- Is God's love the greatest reality in our lives? Do we love God with our whole heart and mind and soul and our neighbor as ourselves?

Great and Holy Friday

O, how could the lawless
council condemn to death
the King of Creation
without being ashamed
at the thought of his good
works which He recounted
to them saying: "O my
people, what have I done
to you? Have I not filled
Judea with miracles? Have
I not raised the dead with
a word? Have I not cured
infirmities and sufferings'?
So now, what do you give
to me in return'? Why have
you not remembered me?
For the healing you have
wounded me; for life you
give me death; you hang
me, your benefactor, on a
tree as a criminal.
You treat me, the Lawgiver,
as a lawbreaker. You
condemn the King of all."
O long suffering Lord,
glory be to You.

— *Vespers Hymn*

Readings

Exodus 33:1 1-23

Matthew 27:1-38

Job 42:12-17

Luke 23:39-43

Isaiah 52:13 — 54:1

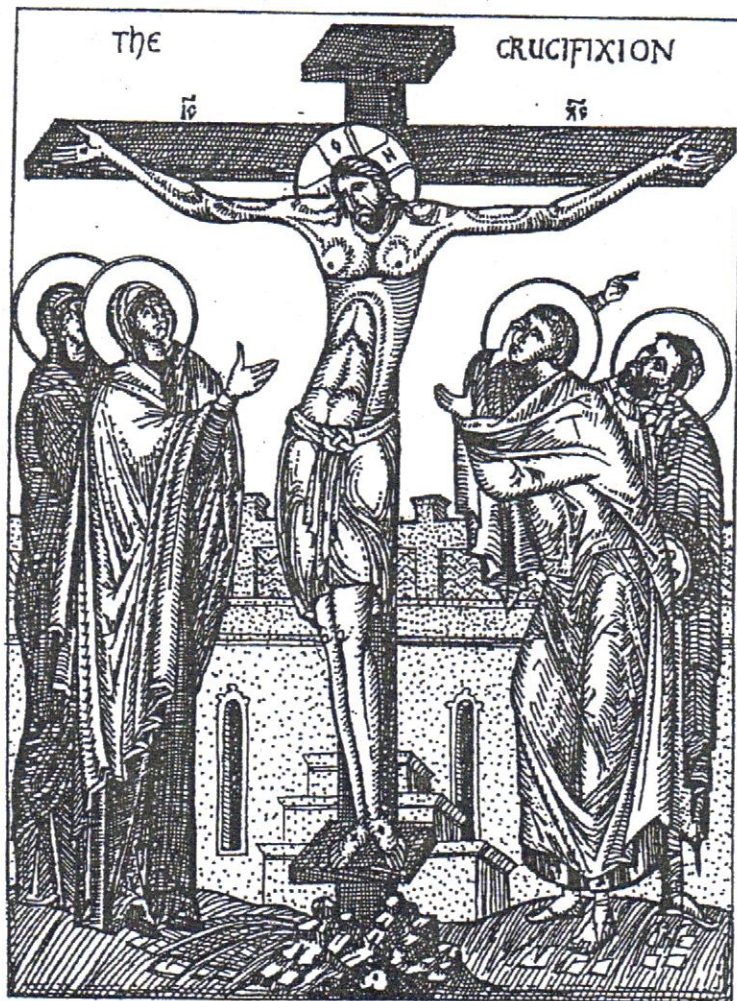
Matthew 27:39-54

1 Corinthians 1:18 — 2:2

John 19:31-37

Matthew 27:55-61

(taken as one Gospel)



Meditation

Recollections of Great and Holy Friday ... for some reason the sky always seemed gray — you didn't turn on the television or radio — even children wanted to keep the strict

fast — and most stores were closed from noon to three. You did two things that day — go to church, or get ready to go to church. Obviously, that was some time back, so how do we

meditate now, on the most solemn day of the liturgical calendar?

For the benefit of those not from the Eastern Christian tradition, or with limited experience, we can note that the services of the day are one continuous meditation. Plan to attend the matins service with 12 distinct Gospel readings, and/or the Burial Vespers (evening service).

The passion narrative is replete with images for thought. After the fourth matins Gospel, we sing: "O Lord, when you willingly came to the time of your passion, You cried out to your disciples: If you cannot keep watch with Me for just one hour, why did you promise that you would even die for Me?..."

Let's travel through time to that first Great and Holy Friday. We can identify with his disciples, not staying alert spiritually in prayer, or in real life situations by not attending

to those around us who are in need. We may not be sleeping, but our e-mails, voice mails, call waiting and other distractions are pulling us away from prayer and prayerful activity.

The disciples were not alone. "Joseph, with Nicodemus, took You down from the cross, your body clothed in glory as with a robe; but seeing You lifeless, naked and unburied, began to weep and lament ..." (*Vespers Aposticha*)

There were others, too — Simon of Cyrene, the myrrh-bearing women and the unnamed bystanders — all speechless because their leader, their Savior, was swallowed by death.

With them we wonder how He Who performed miracles, raised Lazarus and cured the sick is now treated as a criminal and condemned to death. (*Vespers, Hymn 6*)

God's plan is a mystery. As we grow in maturity, our understanding of this

plan is no clearer now than when we were children. Our only understanding is through faith, faith in Jesus Christ, today in the tomb, but only fully understood as our Risen Lord.

Reflection Questions

- Are we standing with the Arimathean and other followers, or are we meandering about with the unrepentant thief and the mindless soldiers who could think only of throwing dice for Jesus' garments?

- How have I grown in understanding through prayer, fasting and almsgiving?



Great and Holy Saturday

Readings

"All you
who have been
baptized
into Christ
have put on
Christ,
Alleluia!"

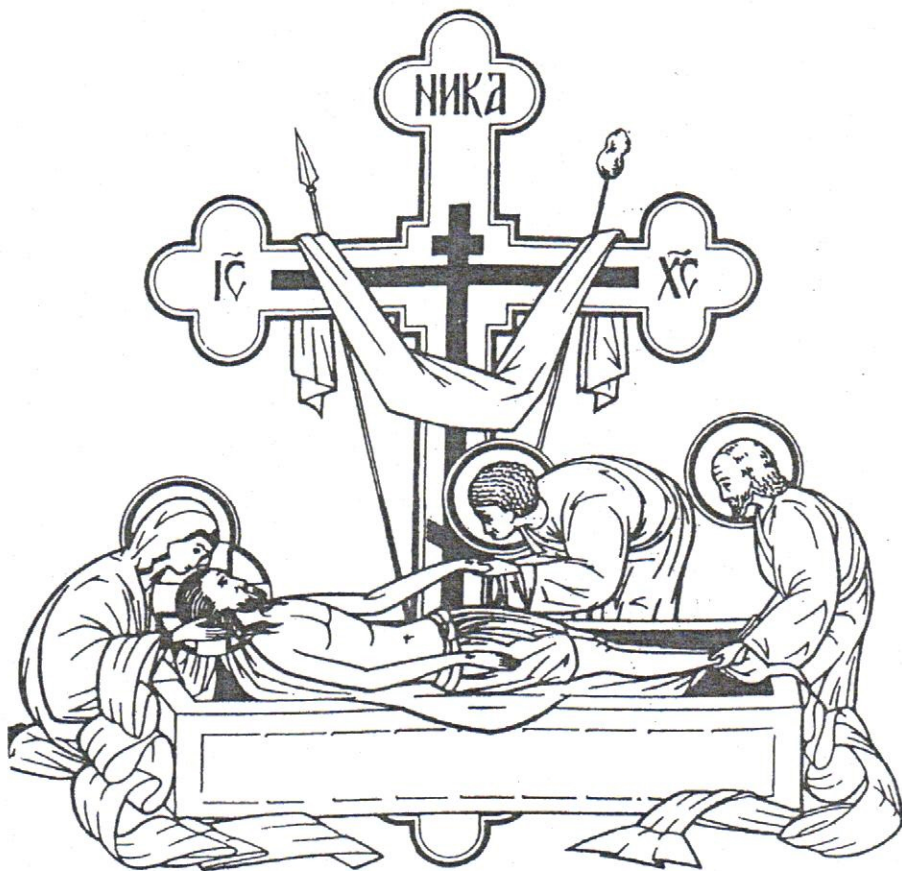
— *Galatians 3:27*

Ezekiel 37:1-14
Jonah 1:1 — 4:11
I Corinthians 5:6-8
Joshua 5:10-15
Galatians 3:13-14
Exodus 13:20—15:19
Matthew 27:62-66
Daniel 3:1-90
Genesis 1:1-13
Romans 6:3-11
Exodus 12:1-II
Matthew 28:1-20

Meditation

The Great Fast prepares us to go with Christ into Jerusalem and his passion, crucifixion and death and to his glorious Resurrection. There

is something about the Cross, passion and death of Christ that grasps our attention and many even find it appealing. We become captivated by



the Cross upon which hung the Savior of the world. At times a greater part of our observance centers therein and we remain steadfast at the tomb. In the meantime, the world weaves a new focus for Easter egg hunts, bunnies, Easter fashions, kolbasi and pretty Easter eggs — all given more attention than the glorious Resurrection.

Then the silence and the darkness, the fasting and prayer of Holy Saturday envelops us. We read from the Old Testament stories of "the beginning" and how "it was good" and then we hear Paul's question: "Are you not aware that we who were baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? . . . through baptism into his death we

were buried with Him, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father, we too might live a new life . . ." (*Romans 6:3-11*)

Remember, Christ said "For this hour have I come." (*John 12:27*) that the Son of God enters death — the duel between Christ and death — Christ and Satan. Christ as God-Man — the Source of Life — the Son of God, dies — and God Himself enters the realm of death and partakes of death, and from within God overcame and destroyed death and by death He conquered death.

We must come to see our world and ourselves in the light of God's grace. In Christ our lives are transformed and we must accept it — choose it and it will permeate our lives with blazing light of the glorious Resurrection. This same Christ calls us to renew and face struggle and change of heart within each of us — the struggle we were pledged into at our baptism.

We can live the true joy of the good news with all its truth and transforming power

— the struggle of putting off the old and putting on the new. We prayerfully discover more deeply each year that the way we have chosen is set against so much of the world. We must clear our sights, renew our baptism into Christ and undergo our own Passover from sin to freedom, from darkness to light and from death to life — only then do we dare to act as if God has reordered our life here and now.

The emerging shapes of our lives in Christ happens again every year. And then, in our transformation in Christ, we can burst forth from our tombs and celebrate our new lives in the Resurrected Christ a new people, full of joy and hope and confidence!

This day, Great Saturday, with its quiet space and deep silence, belongs to us. In our silence, prayer and fasting, it gives us the opportunity to renew and transform our lives. Then with uplifted hearts we may joyfully sing the paschal hymn:

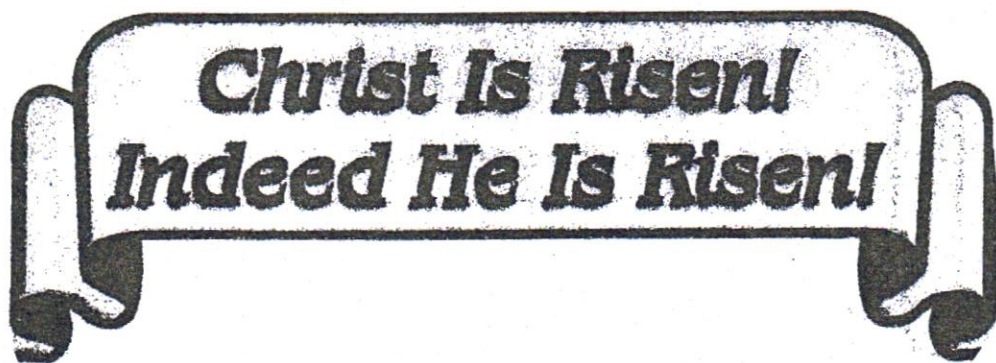
*"This is the Resurrection,
O people, let us be enlightened*

*by it. The Passover is the Lord's
Passover. He has brought us
from death to life ... yesterday
I was buried with You O Lord,
but today I rise resurrected with
You. Yesterday I crucified my self
with You O Savior, now glorify
me in your Kingdom."*

(Matins Canon, Odes 1 and 3)

Reflection Questions

- Am I not aware that we who were baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- Am I not aware that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we, too, might live a new life?



PASCHA

Early in the morning on
the first day of the week,
while it was still dark,
Mary Magdalene
came to the tomb.

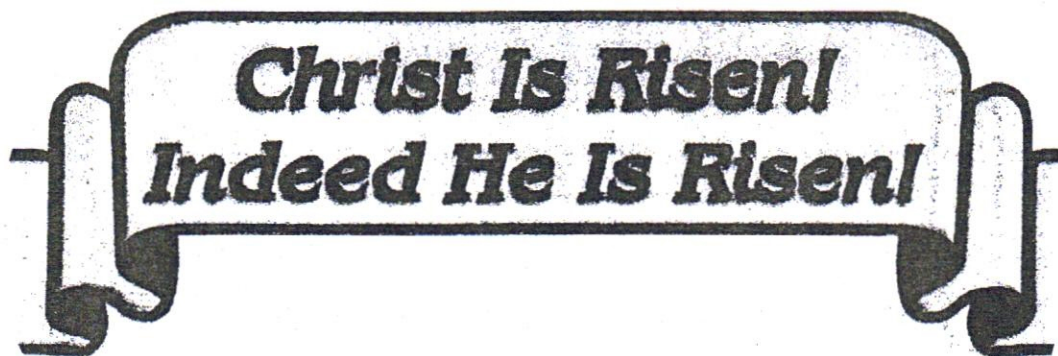
She saw that the stone
had been moved away.
so she ran off to Simon
Peter and the other
disciple and told them,
"The Lord has been taken
from the tomb.
We don't know where
they have put Him!"

— John 20:1-2

Readings

Acts 1:1-8

John 1:1-17





Patristic Reading

If there be any devout people who love God, let them enjoy this splendid and radiant Feast. If any of them be wise servants, let them blissfully enter into the joy of their Lord. If any of them have labored long in fasting let them now receive their reward. If any have toiled from the first hour, let them now receive their just wage. If any came at the third hour, let them gratefully join in the Feast. If any arrived at the sixth hour, they should not be afraid, for they will not be deprived of anything. If any of them tarried even until the ninth hour, let them approach without hesitation. If any arrived only at the eleventh hour, they should not worry on account of their tardiness. For the Master loves to grant honors and will receive the last just as the first. He gives rest to the one who came at the eleventh hour, just as He does to the one who toiled from the first hour.

He shows his mercy to the last and his care for the first. To the one He gives; on the other, He showers gifts. He accepts deeds and welcomes intentions. He honors labors and praises resolutions.

And so, let all enter into the joy of their Lord, and let the first as well as the last receive the reward. Let the rich and the poor celebrate together. Let the resourceful and the slothful honor this Day. Let those who fasted and those who did not fast be glad today. The table is bountifully set; let all be satisfied. The calf is fattened; let no one go away hungry. Let everyone enjoy the cup of faith. Let everyone receive the richness of grace. Let none grieve at the poverty, for the kingdom that belongs to all people has been revealed. Let none weep for their sins, for forgiveness shines forth from the tomb. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free.

The One Whom death imprisoned has extinguished death. The One Who descended into Hades made Hades the captive. He caused it distress when it tasted his flesh. When Isaiah foresaw this, he exclaimed: "Hades was all distressed by encountering You in the nether world." It was distressed because it was abolished. It was distressed because it was mocked. It was distressed because it was slain. It was distressed because it was overthrown. It was distressed because it was chained. It seized a body but discovered God. It seized the earthly but

encountered the heavenly. It seized the visible but was overcome by the invisible. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are abolished! Christ is risen, and the demons are cast down! Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is risen, and life now reigns! Christ is risen, and the tomb is emptied of the dead! For in rising from the dead, Christ became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

— *Resurrection Homily*
of John Chrysostom





**Paschal Season: A time to celebrate
and share the Good News**

At your conception, O Lord God, an angel said to her who is full of grace: Rejoice! At your Resurrection an angel rolled away the stone from the door of your glorious tomb. The first angel spoke with signs of joy instead of sorrow, and the latter brought us the good news of a Lord who gives life instead of death. Therefore, we shout to You, O Benefactor of all, glory to You, O Lord.

— *Matins of Bright Monday
at the Praises, Tone 2*

The season of repentance and fasting before the Feast of the Resurrection is well known and observed by all Christians. We enter into the preparations for the Feast of Feasts with a humble and contrite heart and a resolve to conquer the power of food over our lives by fasting.

Less well-known is the Paschal Season of equal length that follows Pascha. The Paschal Season is the forty-day period, from Pascha 'til Ascension Thursday, where fasting is abrogated and the joy of the Resurrection is to fill all of the corners of our lives. We proclaim "Christ is Risen" numerous times at every liturgical celebration as a constant reminder of the meaning of life.

The Period of the Fast is over, and the season of celebration begins. For forty days, we fasted and spiritually prepared for the

act of redemption. Now the "Great Day" has arrived, and we celebrate the Feast of Feasts with jubilation for another forty days. We carry the message of joy to the entire world that Christ is Risen! But the Paschal Season is also a continuing reflection on the incomprehensible act of salvation and God's love for the world.

We should be like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We have walked with and have been taught by the Lord Jesus on the holy road of the Great Fast. He journeyed with Cleopas and the other disciple to Emmaus, calming their fears and giving them the final teaching that explained all that they had witnessed.

Then, in a flash, at the breaking of the bread, they realized the magnitude of all that God had done for them. Suddenly, knowing the fullness of Truth, they felt

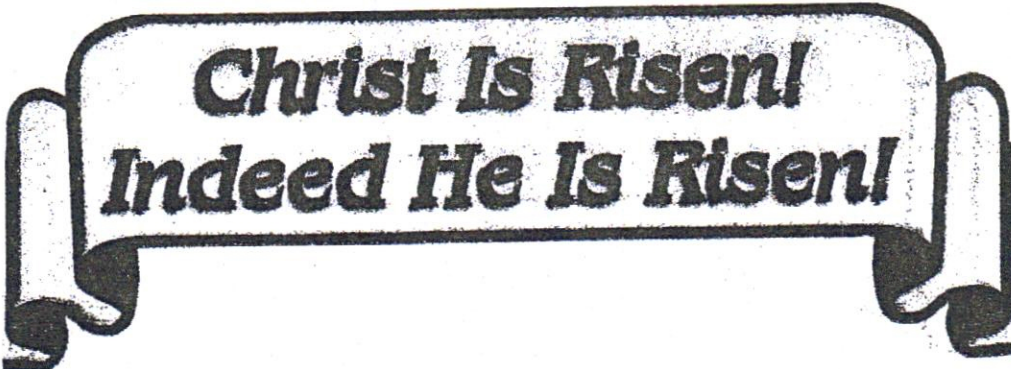
compelled to share the Good News with the other disciples still in Jerusalem. So strong was their desire to share this knowledge that they left immediately, in the dark, for the Holy City. So great was their joy, so great their intention of heralding the Good News about Jesus, they could not even wait until morning!

This is precisely the spirit of the resurrectional period. And such should be the fervor that must be instilled into our hearts. This resurrectional spirit has been the impetus for the Church's growth throughout the ages. Proclaiming this news about the Risen Lord was an all-consuming passion even when it meant death

to the messenger. Death has been conquered; Death reigns no more!

This faith keeps us from despair and free from the absurd. The Radiant Resurrection of Christ is the very foundation of the Church and each of its faithful. All of our hope rests on the reality of the Holy Resurrection. In the spirit of the Life-Creating Resurrection, we must exude the Good News about Jesus in all we say and do.

Eternal Life, the gift of the Lord's Resurrection, is meant to be shared with all peoples. We must radiate the same God-given joy that the disciples did on the road to Emmaus on that first "Great Day."



Christ Is Risen!
Indeed He Is Risen!

The Great Fast and "Empty Calories"

The wise believer in Christ benefits from the Great Fast both spiritually and physically. This sacred season has become a time of penance and self-denial, particularly by fasting and abstinence since the first ages of the Church. At the same time, if we utilize it wisely, it can be a great benefit not only to the enrichment of our soul, but to our physical health and well-being as well.

There is no reason why these two motives cannot be successfully combined to mutually strengthen each other. The freely assumed aspect of fasting, which formed so strong a part of Christian tradition, has almost been forgotten in our free-thinking and self-serving society. We must arouse within ourselves a greater appreciation for the rigors of this spiritual practice so that it can benefit us completely and fully. The Church has always looked to us to assume voluntarily acts of penance and self-denial, to literally make them our own. Our wavering wills can be strengthened if we realize that there is a definite way in which our bodies, as well as our souls can benefit from the Great Fast. This is, after all, the very fundamental reason for the entire endeavor.

Dietitians describe what they call the "basic four" food groups. The first of these is the milk group, which includes milk, cheese, ice cream and butter. The second group consists of meat, fish, poultry, eggs, with dry beans, peas, nuts, or peanut butter as alternates. The third group is the vegetable or fruit group which takes in all types of fruits, green and yellow vegetables, tomatoes, potatoes and melons. Finally, the fourth group is the bread and cereal group which has a wide variety. In it we find bread, cooked and ready-to-eat cereals, corn meal, crackers, grits, spaghetti and macaroni, noodles, rice, quick breads and other baked goods, if made with whole grain or enriched flour.

For proper nutrition, both children and adults need daily servings from all groups of food. The amount and combination of these servings depend upon the age, activity, type of work and state of health of each individual. Dietitians also speak of what they call "empty calories." These are foods and drinks which supply only calories but no mineral or vitamin enrichment. Such are, for example, soda, alcohol, candy, jams, jellies, sweet desserts, salad dressings, and other fatty foods.

Passion Week Service Schedule

Great and Holy Wednesday 7:30 PM Sacramental Mystery of Holy Anointing

Just as Christ on this day is anointed for burial, the Church lovingly anoints her faithful children for burial of imperfection and sinfulness... "...now consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Jesus Christ" Romans 6: 11.

Great and Holy Thursday 7: 30 PM Mystical Supper celebrated at Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great with Vespers.

We join the Master at the altar table to hear His prayer: "I have given them the glory you gave me that they may be one, as we are one – I living in them, you living in me – so that their unity may be complete" John 17: 22, 23.

Great and Holy Friday 10:30 AM Reading of the Passion Gospels of Christ

We witness the Passion of the Lord as we accompany Him for the arrest, trials, the denials, the sentencing and final execution on the Cross. "Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that make us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way, but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all" Isaiah 53: 4 – 6.

7:30 PM Vespers of the Passion with Procession and Entombment of Holy Shroud followed by Vigil.

We prayerfully participate in the burial of our Saviour. "They took Jesus' Body and in accordance with Jewish burial custom bound it up in wrappings of cloth with perfumed oils" John 19: 40.

Great and Holy Saturday 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

We pray and meditate as the Lord's body lies in the tomb, effecting salvation of our souls by His entrance into the place of the righteous dead. "In the place where he had been

crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried” John 19: 41.

7:30 PM Matins of the Resurrection with Procession followed by blessing of Paschal Foods.

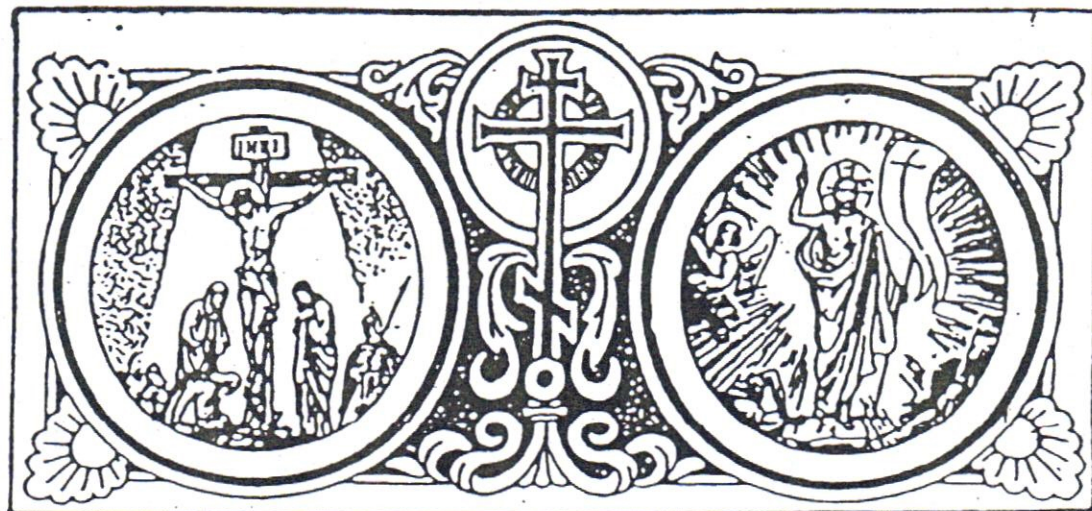
“I have seen the Lord...” John 20: 18. “You became a believer because you saw me” John 20: 29. “When he seated himself with them to eat, he took bread, pronounced the blessing, then broke the bread and began to distribute it to them” John 24: 30.

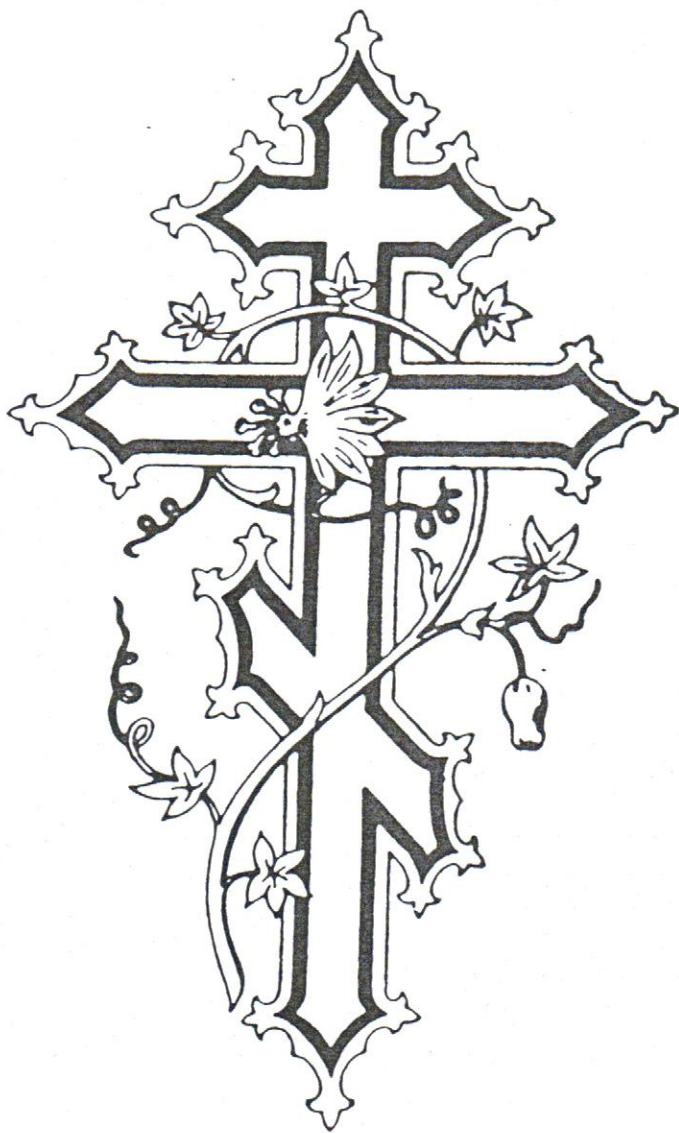
The Glorious Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom concluded with festal anointing and blessing of Paschal Foods.

“But these have been recorded to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, so that through this faith you may have life in his name” John 20: 30, 31.

Confessions are heard prior to and after all services so that by the feast of the radiant Resurrection we should all be prepared for triumphal celebration!





LET US FOLLOW CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM

We have come to the last week in Christ's earthly life, the time referred to as Holy Week. It was time for the Lamb of God to be offered up, to "take away the sins of the world." For more than three years, the Lord had gone from town to town proclaiming the Word of God. Now He was to be inaugurated and proclaim His Kingdom.

As that historic Sunday dawned, the Lord was set to enter Jerusalem. It was clear that Christ on this day finally presented Himself to the nation of Israel as its King. Up to this time, the Lord had consistently rejected the many attempts to proclaim Him. But now His time was at hand, and Jesus Himself arranged the acclamation. He directed His disciples to obtain the donkey -- never ridden before -- that was to bare Him in royal fashion.

The multitude responded to the awesomeness of the occasion. They recognized the fulfillment of prophecy: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass. . ." (Zachariah 9:9). Now He was acknowledged as the Messiah and Redeemer of Israel.

Many took off their coats and spread them along the way of the procession. Still others broke branches from the trees and waved them in joy. All raised their voices in proclaiming: "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest."

As the procession made its way to Jerusalem, "all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."