



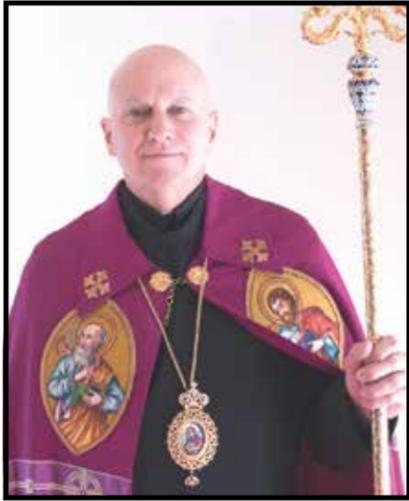
# EASTERN CATHOLIC LIFE

Official Publication of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

VOL. LVII, NO. 4

APRIL 2021

## CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!



### NEW LIFE

#### Bishop Kurt's Pastoral Message for Pascha

explodes by the day. The harsher the winter, the more spring is appreciated.

In the long history of the human race, most of our ancestors until recent centuries lived lives of hardship that we cannot imagine. They lived on meager food in good times, and a large percentage starved. If someone killed an animal, there was feasting and dancing as everyone ate well for a little while. Then it was back to seeds and berries and catching fish with primitive tools. The oldest astronomical observatory in the world was discovered a few years ago in, of all places, northern Scotland, right where the Burnet family comes from, though it predates my ancestors by thousands of years. It even predates Babylon and Sumeria by thousands of years. Anthropologists were fascinated that it was built so long ago and by hunter gatherers with no cities. What was the purpose of such a thing? It's possible that they simply enjoyed astronomy and investigating things the way we do today. After all, they are our ancestors. Anthropologists speculate that by tracking the sun it may have allowed these people living under such spare conditions to predict the movement of migrating animals for hunting.

No matter how much biology or chemistry that we learn, watching a plant begin to appear out of bare earth seems like magic. It is delightful even in tropical climates where life is abundant year-round, but it is especially so where a harsh winter has made all the trees bare and the land empty. After the snow is gone, or sometimes even when it is still on the ground, living, green creatures push aside the dirt and start to show themselves. If a rock is in the way, sometimes a sizable rock might be lifted up or pushed aside. It seems that life was hiding under the frozen ground the whole time. Especially in the northern climates, spring is an exciting time of new life.

After the Russian Revolution, many of the great artists fled the oppression, especially those who had travelled outside Russia before then. Their loss was our gain. Geniuses such as Sergei Rachmaninoff and Igor Stravinsky lived and traveled in western Europe and the United States for the rest of their lives. Did you know Rachmaninoff is buried in White Plains, New York? He lived in southern California, so when I moved there, I spent a long time trying to find out where he was buried. I'm sure it would be easy now with the internet, but it wasn't so easy a little while ago. I eventually found a biography with the information. When I moved to New Jersey I took advantage of the location to visit his grave. If you would like to visit the grave of Stravinsky, you will have to go to Venice and take a boat to the cemetery island. In the 1930's, Sergei Prokofiev surprised everyone by announcing he was returning to the Soviet Union, despite the increasing harassment of creative artists in Stalin's dictatorship. His reason? He said he wanted to live in a place where spring

At an exhibit in Oregon, I read the statement that the human race has had a special relationship with members of the grass family in recent millennia. That is an understatement! The seeds of grass—rice, wheat, barley, rye, sorghum, millet, oats, corn and so on—are what made civilization possible, so we don't have to track migrating animals anymore to keep from starving. We bury some grain, stay in one place, and wait for the food to arrive. It's too bad carbohydrates have gotten such a bad reputation nowadays after all they've done for us. It's another sign of our extreme wealth and abundance that we can afford to turn up our noses at bread and pasta. Civilization began in Mesopotamia when people began to plant crops instead of searching the wilderness for seeds and berries. As an aside, there is an interesting theory that what really triggered this period of domestic restraint was the discovery of beer, what the Germans call "liquid bread." We know that in the fertile crescent a



Icon of the Descent into Hades

good part of the land was used for barley, which was not the most efficient use of resources, and among the most ancient drinking vessels there is beer residue. One ancient tablet depicts a group of chubby men drinking from a single large pot with long straws. It's remarkably similar to scenes you can see today in New Orleans with parties sharing a single extra-large hurricane glass using long straws. One of the laws in the ancient Code of Hammurabi prescribes that a beer monger who cheats her customers (for some reason it seems to have been a woman's trade) should be drowned as a punishment. By the way, the Code of Hammurabi also prescribed a beer ration for each citizen provided by the state. Workers received two quarts a day, and higher-ups, including priests, received five quarts a day. If our government is sending us all checks now, shouldn't

our government be supplying us with daily beer as well? It seems like ancient Babylon was way ahead of us in some important areas of public life.

After our ancestors started planting crops and living off their own produce, it wasn't a return to the Garden Eden. Aside from all the trouble we cause each other amidst abundance, stealing, fighting, wars, and just lighting each other's fields on fire, for example, there were many natural hardships for ancient farmers, just as there are today. The entire prophecy of the Book of Joel is an interpretation of an historical plague of locusts or grasshoppers. Joel describes the terror as this army invades the land, marching in formation, climbing walls, and wearing shiny armor. But a human army might miss a few things if you hide them well. The

*continued on page 2*

## New Life

Continued from page 1



Wild Daffodils reviving after a long winter

grasshoppers missed nothing, entering houses, invading cupboards, invading storehouses, killing the crops, eating the grain, eating all the leaves on all the fruit trees and grape vines. The real terror was looking forward to a year of ugly deaths from starvation. Usually, the children would die first with their high metabolisms, and then the young people, and lastly, the elderly.

Looking back on this hard life of our ancestors, how much more delight must they have felt at the sight of tiny green leaves poking up through the dirt! What a sense of joy and relief they must have felt. If they still had seeds to plant, and they had the soil, and the water, and some warm weather, when they saw those leaves, they knew that in just a few months or maybe even a few weeks, they would have food again! If everyone was hungry, what a sacrifice it was, what a risk it was to save some of the seeds for planting instead of eating them.

If you have a few acres of land nowadays, you might consider yourself quite wealthy. If you had some land before the industrial revolution, it really was the source of all wealth. But in addition to land, you also needed some seeds to plant. If you had some baskets of seeds, or maybe even barrels of seeds, you had a difficult decision to make, truly a “life choice.” You could either eat them, or sell them, or pay taxes with them, or plant them. No doubt in every region the farmers had a rule from experience, how much to plant, how much to eat, how much to sell or pay in taxes. The nice thing about some seeds is that you get a mammoth return. One pumpkin seed produces enough pumpkins for you and all your neighbors. But the staple of life was grass seeds, that is, grain. If you planted a bushel of wheat, how much wheat did you get back? Your life

depended on the answer to that question. As a matter of fact, controlling the production and distribution of wheat was a major part of the Roman Empire and we have found records that the Romans kept, allowing us to know what the return was for crops all around the Mediterranean two thousand years ago. The Nile valley was the undisputed champ, and for that reason Rome conquered Egypt at the beginning of the imperial period and kept a tight rein on it for the next centuries. For most places though, the return on one bushel of wheat planted was nine or ten bushels in a good year and as little as three to five bushels in a bad year. If there was a drought and it was a region without irrigation, the return was zero. No wonder they tried to manipulate the gods for good weather. In the region where Israel settled, the pagans worshipped an especially cruel weather god whom they tried to appease with child sacrifice.

In this harsh world, the term “first fruits” had a meaning that we can only imagine in the farthest distance. After burying what was left of your food, after receiving the right amount of seasonal rain, after watching the grasses grow tall, having made it through this period without an invading army burning your field, or sudden abundance of insects eating everything, the ears of grain are shining in the sun and the grain is ripening inside the ears. Can we imagine the joy and relief that they experienced? For them the “first fruits” was the greatest gift of the year, or perhaps in hard times, the first good thing for several years.

When Saint John Chrysostom composed his Easter Sermon, a sermon so powerful and evocative that we still recite it fifteen centuries later, he structured it with the greatest care. It was

his most important sermon of the year. After pulling us all into the sermon with his joyful and inclusive invitation, he catalogues a series of dense and rich metaphors. Then he descends into hell, not in terror but in triumph. Emerging from the underworld, he announces the glorious conquests, and heavenly glories. What did he choose as the climax of this intricately constructed masterpiece? He quotes from Saint Paul, “For Christ having risen is become the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep, to Him be glory and honor forever. Amen.” Only by entering the world of 15 centuries ago, before the industrial revolution and easy travel, by entering into the ancient harsh world of

sight of the successor to Peter celebrating the Paschal Mysteries in front of an empty piazza on the Vatican hill. What a relief it will be this year to celebrate our beloved Easter in our churches with a congregation! Just as leaves coming out of the dirt have always been a delight to the eyes and cause of joy and hope, just as spring—at least in the northern climates—has always been a symbol of rebirth, this year our Easter celebration will be a reminder that God is still the Master of History. God is still present. God is still pro-life as he was when he told the chosen people “Choose life!” Two thousand years ago, it seemed that the evil one had consummated his evil plan when he



Wild Daffodils in the forest at Woodland Park

an agricultural community, can we understand what Saint Paul calls the risen Jesus—the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep. Of all the images in the Easter Sermon, it means the least to us, but the most to someone in the ancient world. The act of faith in burying part of your food supply, the hope of new life from the barren earth, the joy of the first green leaves, the patience and vigilance guarding the fields, and finally the first fruits—the joy of new life, the joy of survival, the joy of feeding your children and grandchildren. This intense joy is what Saint Paul means when he calls Jesus by this agricultural metaphor. Indeed, the ancient custom of Jews and then of Christians was to bury their dead in the ground like a seed. Saint Paul might be imagining God Himself as the great farmer who has been planting seeds in the earth for many millennia. After planting the fallen sons and daughters of Adam and Eve for so long, the earth finally received the body of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God, the Man born without seed. This one returned to life and took with Him the souls of all the just.

The past year has been a difficult year for many of us, and for some it was the final year. Last year we saw the astonishing

convinced the children of Adam to execute their Lord and Creator, and yet in a short time, it was God who had consummated his own plan, as Jesus came back out of the earth in a glorified body, which we can no more imagine than a pumpkin seed can imagine a vine with fruit. St Ignatius of Antioch says that God fooled the devil with the humility of Jesus. Saint Gregory says that the devil swallowed the bait when he killed Jesus. What seemed like evil’s greatest triumph was its greatest defeat.

No matter what seems wrong nowadays, wrong in our own lives, wrong in our families, wrong in our health, or wrong in the greater world, everything seemed much worse on a Friday two thousand years ago. If we are buried for a while under the ground, it is only because God has great plans for us—better plans than we have for ourselves. Saint Paul says in another place, eye has not seen nor ear heard the wonders that God has prepared for those who love Him. Every year, I am thrilled that I am a Christian and I am thrilled that I celebrate Easter in our beautiful Liturgy. I think this Easter will be the best Easter yet!

+Kurt Burnette

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Most Reverend Bishop Kurt Burnette  
President and Publisher  
Father James Badeaux, Editor  
Father Ronald Hatton, Associate Editor  
Father Lewis Rabayda, Layout Editor

Mrs. Maureen French, Circulation Editor  
(mfrench@eparchyofpassaic.com)

E-Mail us at:  
**ECL@eparchyofpassaic.com**

Eparchial Website:  
**www.EparchyofPassaic.com**



# FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## Ordination Announcement

On Saturday, April 10, 2021, Deacon James Fraser will be ordained to the Order of Presbyter by the laying-on of hands by The Most Rev. Kurt Burnette, Bishop of Passaic.

**NEW BYZANTINE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FORMING IN GREATER CHARLOTTE, NC, AREA**  
 Divine Liturgies at the Byzantine Catholic Mission of Fort Mill, SC, for the month of April will be broadcast online. Please contact Ron Somich by email at [ron.somich@gmail.com](mailto:ron.somich@gmail.com) for the link and dial in information. <https://carolinabyzantine.com/>

**April: 3, 10, 17, 24**



# CARPATHO-RUSYN SOCIETY

MANIFESTING CARPATHO-RUSYN CULTURE AND HISTORY

“Who are the Rusyns?” is a DVD presented by John Righetti, President emeritus of C-RS. It was released in 2019 for the 25th Anniversary of the Carpatho-Rusyn Society. This professional presentation clarifies the confusion and complicated

history of the Rusyns and how they almost became extinct. Not only will it be watched more than once, it is great to share with family and friends. The DVD can be ordered by making a check payable to: Carpatho-Rusyn Society for \$25, which includes postage and handling. Please mail with name of recipient(s) to Bonnie Burke, 1101 Tanner Crossing Lane, Indian Land, SC 29707. Orders will be processed immediately upon receipt. The information can also be found on [www.c-rs.org](http://www.c-rs.org) at the bottom of the homepage. Visit Carpatho-Rusyn Society YouTube for our most recent educational videos.



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### Session 1: June 1 to July 16, 2021

Theosis: East and West  
Desert Monastics in Context  
Research Methods

### Session 2: July 5 to August 20, 2021

Ecumenism  
History of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch



## The Liturgy of Jerusalem: History, Theology, and Lessons for Today

Tuesday, May 18, 2021, 7:00 PM  
online and in person



Fr. Deacon Daniel Galadza

The Church of Jerusalem was the cradle of Christianity. This lecture presents Jerusalem's liturgical year, its historical sources, and theology, pointing to the bond between the liturgy of Jerusalem and the current Byzantine Rite. It will also illustrate connections between the "Byzantinization" of the Eastern Patriarchates at the end of the first millennium after Christ and the Latinization of the Eastern Catholic Churches from the middle of the second millennium onward.

**Due to space limitations, registration is required if you plan to attend in person at:**

St. John Cathedral Center - 210 Greentree Road - Munhall, PA 15120

For in-person attendance, please register on-line at [www.bcs.edu](http://www.bcs.edu), or call 412-321-8383, x36; or email [development@bcs.edu](mailto:development@bcs.edu) or

For in-person attendance, you may also complete this form and return it to the address below by May 4, 2021

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Eparchy/Diocese (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: **Byzantine Catholic Seminary, 3605 Perrysville Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214**



# PEOPLE YOU KNOW AROUND THE EPARCHY

## IN LEVITTOWN...

### Children make Pysanky

On the weekend of March 20 and 21, 2021, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Levittown, PA, held a children's pysanky/Easter craft gathering. The children were excited to learn how to make beautiful pysanky. Father Paul Varchola West is the administrator of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.



### When traveling to the South, please visit our churches

**All Saints**

10291 Bayshore Road  
North Fort Myers, FL 33917  
1-239-599-4023

**Saint Anne**

7120 Massachusetts Ave.  
New Port Richey, FL 34653  
1-727-849-1190

**Epiphany of Our Lord**

2030 Old Alabama Road  
Roswell, GA 30076  
1-770-993-0973

**Saint Basil the Great**

1475 N.E. 199th Street  
Miami, FL 33179-5162  
1-305-651-0991

**Holy Dormition**

17 Bucksin Lane  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174  
1-386-677-8704

**Saints Cyril and Methodius**

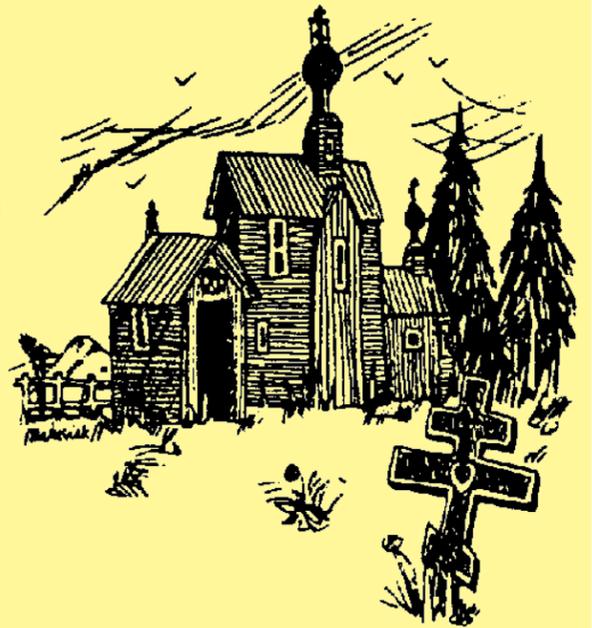
1002 Bahama Avenue  
Fort Pierce, FL 34982  
1-772-595-1021

**Our Lady of the Sign**

7311 Lyons Road  
Coconut Creek, FL 33073  
1-954-429-0056

**Saint Nicholas of Myra**

5135 Sand Lake Road  
Orlando, FL 32819  
1-407-351-0133

**Saint Therese**

4265 13th Avenue North  
Saint Petersburg, FL 33713  
1-727-323-4022

**Byzantine Catholic Outreach: The Villages, FL**

Address: 625 W. Lady Lake Blvd.  
Lady Lake, FL 32159 (at St. Alban's)  
1-352-530-9631

## ONLINE CHURCH SINGING CLASSES

OFFERED BY THE

## METROPOLITAN CANTOR INSTITUTE

The Metropolitan Cantor Institute offers an online, 2-year program in church singing for both new and experienced cantors. Tuition is \$75 for each eight-week class, which includes feedback to help you improve your singing and cantorial skills. Initial classes on liturgy and church singing are free. For details: <https://mci.archpitt.org/classes> or call Deacon Jeffrey Mierzejewski at (412) 735-1676. Classes are offered at no charge to qualified students from any parish with no current cantor.

## BYZANTINE CATHOLIC OUTREACH THE VILLAGES, FL

Address: 625 W. Lady Lake Blvd.  
Lady Lake, FL 32159 (at St. Alban's)  
Intersection of CR466 and Rolling Acres Rd., near the American Legion



Schedule: (note due to Covid Virus, Divine Liturgy every two weeks)

**February:** Sundays, 2:00 P.M., Feb. 7, Feb. 14,  
Pre-sanctified: Wed Feb. 17, 12:00 P.M.

**March:** Sundays 2:00 P.M., Mar. 7, Mar. 28 (Palm Sun.)  
Pre-sanctified: Wed. Mar. 17, 12:00 P.M.

**April:** 2, 1:30 P.M. Good Friday Vespers, Procession  
3: 3:00 P.M. Saturday: Resurrection Procession, Matins, Divine Liturgy, Blessing of Food

In-Person and LIVE at Facebook:  
Byzantine Catholic Mission The Villages FL

Local Contact: call or text: 352-530-9631



# belonging

SPRINGS OF HOPE  
VIRTUAL MOTHER'S DAY RETREAT

MAY 7-9, 2021

FOR ALL THOSE WHO LONG FOR MOTHERHOOD - WHETHER YOU ARE EXPERIENCING PRIMARY OR SECONDARY INFERTILITY, MISCARRIAGE OR LOSS, WITH OR WITHOUT A DIAGNOSIS- WE ARE HERE WITH YOU.

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## When traveling to the Mid-Atlantic, please visit our churches

**Maryland—  
Patronage of the Mother of God**

1265 Linden Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21227  
Phone 410-247-4936  
Web [www.patronagechurch.org](http://www.patronagechurch.org)  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 9:15 am

**Patronage at Abingdon  
meeting at:  
Stone Chapel at Saint Francis  
de Sales Church**

1450 Abingdon Road  
Abingdon, MD 21009  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 5:30 pm

**Patronage at Hagerstown  
meeting at:  
Saint Ann Catholic Church**

1525 Oak Hill Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21742  
Saturday Vigil Liturgy 6:45 pm 2 per month  
Call Baltimore for schedule

**Saint Gregory of Nyssa**

12420 Old Gunpowder Road Spur  
Beltsville, MD 20705  
Phone 301-953-9323  
Web [www.stgregoryofnyssa.net](http://www.stgregoryofnyssa.net)  
Sunday Divine Liturgies  
Church Slavonic 8:00 am  
Sunday Matins 9:30 am  
English Liturgy 10:30 am

**Epiphany Mission**

9301 Warfield Road  
Gaithersburg, MD  
Web [www.eolmission.org](http://www.eolmission.org)  
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 am

**Virginia—  
Epiphany of our Lord**

3410 Woodburn Road  
Annandale, VA 22003  
Phone: 703-573-3986  
Web [www.eolbcc.org](http://www.eolbcc.org)  
Sunday Divine Liturgies 8:00 am & 10:30 am

**Ascension of our Lord**

114 Palace Lane  
Williamsburg, VA 23185  
Phone 757-585-2878 (rectory)  
Web [www.ascensionva.org](http://www.ascensionva.org)  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 11:00 am

**Our Lady of Perpetual Help**

216 Parliament Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462  
Phone 757-456-0809  
Web [www.olphvb.org](http://www.olphvb.org)  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 8:00 am

**North Carolina—  
Saints Cyril and Methodius**

2510 Piney Plains Road  
Cary, NC 27518

Phone 919-239-4877  
Web [www.sscyrilmethodius.org](http://www.sscyrilmethodius.org)  
Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 am

**District of Columbia—  
Byzantine Ruthenian Chapel  
Basilica of the National Shrine**

400 Michigan Avenue, NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
Phone 202-526-8300  
Web [www.nationalshrine.org](http://www.nationalshrine.org)  
No regularly scheduled Sunday Liturgy.  
To reserve a date and time, priests must call the Liturgy Office and submit a current letter from their eparchy's Safe Environment Office.



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

February 22, 2021

Dear friends,

I pray that you and your family are safe, and I pray that you are experiencing a grace filled Great Lent and we will celebrate the Easter in a beautiful manner together this year.

Since Bishop Milan Sasik died unexpectedly, our mother church in Uzhorod has been experiencing severe financial distress. Even worse, many priests with families are not being paid any salary. In the poor mountain parishes, their entire salary was stipends that Bishop Sasik solicited from donors in the wealthier countries of western Europe. I very much would like to help these priests through this difficult time and difficult winter. I believe that stipends for Divine Liturgies have many good points. Here are some key points:

- 1) A stipend for a Divine Liturgy goes directly to the priest. No one is allowed to take a fee or percentage from the stipend by Church law.
- 2) The Eparchy of Passaic will pay the administrative costs, so that 100% goes to a priest and his family who need the help.
- 3) Your name will not be sent with the stipend. Only the nature of the request and initials of the person to be prayed for.
- 4) People in need are happier if they can do something in return for their assistance.
- 5) Prayers for the dead are an ancient and laudable custom.
- 6) Prayers for a sinner will not be wasted. God hears them and answers them at the best time.
- 7) In other European countries, the government pays the priests. Not in our mother eparchy.
- 8) NB Stipends are not tax deductible. You will receive a thank you, but not a "tax letter".

If you choose to participate, God will bless you doubly, for the prayers and also for helping those in need. I commend you to the care of the all holy Mother of God.

Your servant,

+ Kurt

Most Rev. Kurt Burnette  
Bishop of Passaic



445 Lackawanna Avenue • Woodland Park, NJ 07424-2969 • (973) 890-7777 • FAX (973) 890-7175

Please use form below to list the name or initials of the person you would like Divine Liturgy offered for. You may also list the intention, such as illness, deceased, or their relationship to you, mother, son etc.

Divine Liturgy Request Form

Divine Liturgy to be offered for	Intention (Optional)	Number of Liturgies	Stipend	Total Donation
			X \$15.00	

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to "Eparchy of Passaic". The full amount will be sent to a priest in Europe. Mail this sheet and your check to Eparchy of Passaic, 445 Lackawanna Ave, Woodland Park, NJ 07424. You will receive the same form in the mail soon, but you may use this one if you don't want to wait. NB Stipends are not tax deductible, but you will receive a "Thank You" acknowledgement.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_



*Today the Virgin is present in the Church And with the choirs of saints, Invisibly prays to God for us.  
The angels worship with the hierarchs, The apostles rejoice with the prophets;  
Because the Theotokos prays for us to the eternal God.*

### Origin of Icon

On Sunday, October 1 of the year 911, Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ and his disciple Epiphanius had a vision in the Church of the Blachernae in Constantinople. The Mother of God escorted by Saint John the Forerunner and Saint John the Beloved Disciple entered into the Church. She stopped at the ambo where she knelt and prayed fervently. She then proceeded to the altar where she prayed again, then removed her veil and spread it out as a sign of protection of the City.

### Description of this Pokrov Icon

This exquisite antique icon is in the Heritage Center of the Eparchy of Passaic. The Mother of God is in the center of the icon with her veil spread out as a symbol of her motherly protection of the city, and her arms raised in the “orans” posture, the prayer posture of the early Christians. Above her is Jesus Christ blessing with his right hand and holding a book in his left hand.

Starting from the center of the icon and moving outwards to our left, in the middle row, Saint Michael the Archangel is closest to the Theoto-

kos, then Saint John the Forerunner (the Baptizer), then Saint Peter the Apostle, Saint Paul the Apostle. Above Saint Michael is Saint Uriel the Archangel, and next to him is Saint Basil the Great, then Saint Gregory the Theologian, and Saint John Chrysostom (not the usual portrayal of him).

Starting from the center of the icon and moving outwards to our right, in the middle row are Saint Gabriel the Archangel, Saint John the Theologian (the Evangelist and Beloved Disciple), Saint James the Apostle, and the Holy Prophet Elijah. Above Saint Gabriel is Saint Barachiel the Archangel, then the Monks Saint Zosimus, Saint Savvaty, and Saint Sergei.

On the bottom row, Saint Romanos the Melodist is in the center of the icon. Moving outwards to our left, the one closest to Saint Romanos is the Patriarch Saint Gennadius, then Emperor Leo the Wise and his wife Zoë.

Moving in the other direction from the center next to Saint Romanos is Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ pointing to the Theotokos for the benefit of Saint Epiphanius his disciple. Finally, in the lower corner of the icon is the Mother of God appearing to Saint Romanos while he sleeps, bringing him healing and his vocation as a songwriter.

**How grateful we are for the Protection of the Mother of God  
of our families and loved ones this year!**

# A JOURNEY FROM HOLY WEEK TO THE RESURRECTION...



## Passion Week or Great Week

The Liturgical theme of Passion Week is the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. The services therefore reflect the terrible tragedy of Calvary. During the first three days, the Church invites us to pray in the words of the troparion: "Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight and blessed is the servant whom He shall find awake." Then, step by step, she leads us to every place which our Lord blessed by His presence at the end of His earthly life.

The triumphant entrance of our Lord to Jerusalem provoked the anger of the Jewish leaders to a point where they decided to put Him to death. This is why the liturgy on the evening of Palm Sunday asks us to hasten "from palm and branches to the fulfillment of the August and saving passion of Christ."

On Holy Thursday, three events are recalled in the liturgy: the institution of the Eucharist, the washing of the feet of the disciples, and the betrayal of Judas. Throughout the liturgy the following idea is repeated over and over again, as expressed in the troparion: "Receive me today, O Son of God, as a partaker of Your Mystical Supper, for I will not reveal the Mystery to Your enemies nor give You a kiss as did Judas, but like the repentant thief I will



confess to You: Remember me, O Lord, in Your kingdom." "Let no one, O believers, fail to join in the Lord's Supper, let no one whatsoever approach the table, like Judas, with deceit."

The wickedness of Judas is expressed very realistically. Judas is called "law-breaker," "son of vipers," and the "murderer" who sets up for himself

the gallows of wealth and loses both temporal and divine life.

During the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, the bishop blesses the chrism and the antimensia. Then, before the dismissal, he washes the feet of twelve persons, usually clerics or persons with minor orders, symbolizing Christ's washing the feet of the twelve apostles. The particular ceremony is a very old one and is already mentioned by Saint Augustine (430 AD).

## Good Friday

In the morning the Matins (Office of the Sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ) is performed. The characteristic feature of this service is the reading of twelve Gospel passages selected from the four evangelists. These twelve readings describe in detail the passion of our Lord, beginning at the Mystical Supper where He conducted the holy and touching discourse with His apostles prior to His departure for Gethsemane. The entire service has its aim on stirring up in the hearts of the faithful sympathy and love for Jesus, who willingly laid down His life to reconcile man with His heavenly Father and, thus, to obtain eternal salvation for us all.

The day of our Lord's passion is universally regarded as a day of mourning and sadness. There is scarcely any other point on which such perfect agreement exists in all lands and in all periods of Christian history. In the Middle Ages, however, a discussion arose over the question as to why the days of saints' deaths were kept as feastdays, but Good Friday as a day of mourning. The answer is obvious. Christ, unlike the saints, attained a yet higher degree of glory through His resurrection. He died not for His own sake, but for our sake.

On Good Friday, the Church strives to express her mourning over the passion and death of Jesus in every possible way. She even goes so far as to forbid the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Because Matins have already been celebrated, the Daily Hours are altered. They are somewhat expanded with sticheras, and readings from the Old and New Testaments. They are called "Royal Hours" because usually the emperor (or king) attended them. During these, the Church asks us to read once again the history of Christ's sufferings and death as described by the four evangelists. During the Royal Hours, the psalms, readings and hymns refer to the passion of Christ.

In the evening, Solemn Vespers are performed. At the end of Vespers, the priest, vested in full priestly vestments, makes a procession around the church

carrying the *plashchanitsa* and places it in the tomb made ready to receive it. The *plashchanitsa* is a winding sheet with a picture of Christ's body lying dead in the tomb. In English it may be called the "Holy Shroud." During the procession the people sing the following troparion: "The noble Joseph, having taken from the cross Your most pure body, wrapped it with pure linen and anointed it with fragrant scents, placed it in a new tomb."

As mentioned already, there is no Divine Liturgy on Good Friday. If, however, the feast of the Annunciation should fall on the same day, then the Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is celebrated before the service just described.

## Holy Saturday

Holy Saturday is dedicated to the memory of Our Savior's entombment and to His descent into Hades to save the souls of the just and to open for them

Having suffered for  
Jesus Christ,  
have mercy

the gates of Heaven. This, too, is a day of mourning. It is numbered among the fast days, although originally in the East, no Saturday was kept as a fast. But the sadness of the day is already lightened by the approaching Resurrection. This anticipation of Christ's victory is already evident in the Liturgy.

On Holy Saturday the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is celebrated together with Vespers. Instead of the trisagion (since formerly on this occasion the catechumens used to be baptized) another hymn based on Galatians 3:27 is substituted: "All you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia."

The priest begins Vespers and the Divine Liturgy in dark vestments, but before the Gospel he changes into white vestments because in the Gospel of the day, Christ's resurrection is already mentioned. During the Divine Liturgy, instead of the Cherubic Hymn another hymn is sung: "Let all mortal flesh keep silence."

## The Resurrection Period

For a long time, by many prayers, liturgical services and ceremonies, the Church has been preparing us for the glorious day of Christ's Resurrection, Pascha. Hoping that during Lent everybody had an opportunity to be cleansed from his personal sins, the Church now celebrates externally and with

beautifully joyous ceremonies the final triumph and life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. After the long ages of darkness brought about by the Fall, after the seemingly endless expectation of the prophets, after the thirty hidden years and the three years of public life, after the frightful passion which had seemed to be the end of all hope, after the three days in the depth of the tomb, behold: Christ is risen! The time of weeping is over; now is the time for joy. Christ's resurrection is the greatest miracle. It is the most divine and the least human, for it took place when the Man-Christ was in the grave. We now know that Christ is God and we rejoice.

## Resurrection

The festivities of Pascha begin with the Resurrection Matins. There is a procession around the church during which the people chant the troparion: "Your Resurrection, O Christ our Savior, the angels praise in Heaven. Grant us on earth with pure heart to glorify You." Wherever it is not possible to have a procession outside of the church, it is held inside. This procession symbolizes the myrrh-bearing women who "very early in the morning, the first day of the week" came to the tomb to anoint the body of the Lord.

Following the procession, Resurrection Matins begin. Preceded by candle bearers and by bearers of the processional cross, church banners, an icon of the resurrection and the Gospel book, the priest goes to the main church doors and from outside, after incensing the closed doors, he intones: "Glory be to the holy, consubstantial and indivisible Trinity always, now and ever, and forever and ever." After the people answer with "Amen," the priest sings the glorious Paschal troparion: "Christ

*the passion for us,  
Son of God,  
mercy on us!*

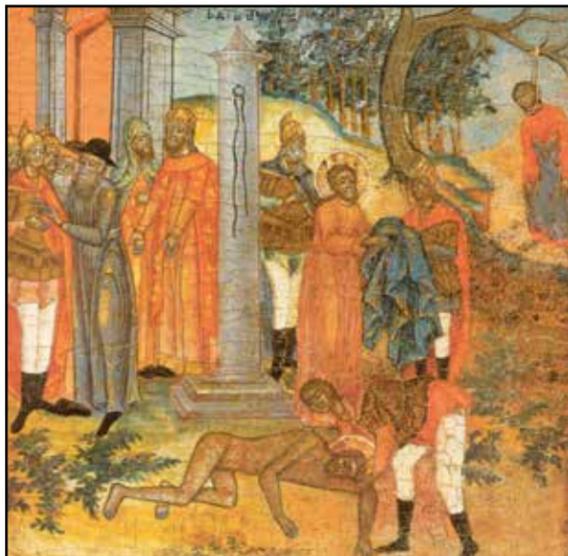
is risen from the dead, by death He conquered death, and to those in the graves, He granted life. After the celebrant finishes, the whole congregation bursts into a joyous, jubilant singing of the same troparion twice. But all this is only the beginning of the jubilation. The priest sings to the Risen Christ, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face." The congregation replies spontaneously: "Christ is risen from the dead - *Christos voskrese!*" "As smoke vanishes so let them vanish, as wax melts before a fire," the priest continues. Again a thundering *Christ is risen!* closes the priest's intonation. "So let the wicked perish at the presence of God and let the righteous ones rejoice," proclaims the celebrant. Another *Christ is risen!* Then, "This is the day which the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it." Another *Christ is risen!* In conclusion the celebrant again sings, *Christ is risen!* As he reaches the words, "and to those in the graves He granted life," he strikes the doors with the cross. They are then opened and he enters, followed by the entire congregation. The priest in front of the closed doors represents the angel announcing the joyful news of the resurrection. The people represent the myrrh-bearing women. The striking of the doors with the cross and their opening symbolize the fact that Christ by His death on the cross opened for us the gates of Heaven.

The priest then comes to the altar and, after singing the Great Litany, begins the Paschal Canon, the Canon of the Resurrection. This Canon, composed by Saint John Damascene (675-748 AD) is a series of hymns written according to certain rules, hence its name "canon (rule)." It is a type of liturgical poetry, especially interesting because of its specific form and content. Similar hymns appeared in the East already around the middle of the seventh century. It replaced the kontakion, a type of liturgical poetry composed of 24 short odes or strophes with the purpose of conveying to the people a certain religious message.

The Canon of the Resurrection, as any other canon, is composed of nine odes, with the exception of the second one, each containing three or four troparia, the first of which is called an "irmos." The first troparion or "irmos" contains the chief theme of the ode and serves as a model for other troparia of that particular ode. The Canon of the Resurrection is a hymn of victory, both an expression and a description of the joy and fruits of Christ's victory as crowned by His glorious Resurrection. As the Jewish Passover was celebrated to commemorate the exodus of the Jews from Egyptian captivity, so also the Christian Pascha is an exodus "from death to life and from the earth to heaven." A certain victorious atmosphere pervades the entire canon. Perhaps the third troparion of the first ode expresses this mood best: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth exult. Let, moreover, the whole universe, both visible and invisible, celebrate; for Christ is risen, joy eternal."

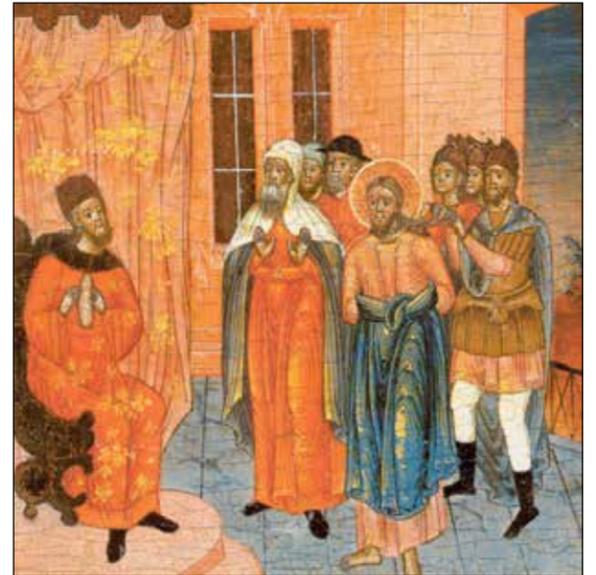
The prototype of the ninth ode is the song of the Mother of God, "My soul magnifies the Lord" and recalls the Angelic Salutation: "The angel exclaimed to her, full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin! And again I say: rejoice! Your Son is risen from the grave on the third day and has raised the dead. O People, rejoice!" The angel brings the joy of the Resurrection to Mary also, and this joy is indeed a double one: Her Son is risen and by His resurrection has saved others. The words of the ninth ode are a response to words of the Mother of God, in which she expresses her humility in the yard of Zachary's house: "He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because He who is mighty has done great things for me." (Luke 1:48)

The Canon of the Resurrection ends with the hymns of Lauds, which exhort us "to sing hymns to Your (Christ's) saving passion and glorify Your Resurrection." Christ must be glorified on this day for "He has endured crucifixion, overthrown death and risen from the dead." Today, "we praise Your divine condescension and sing hymns to You, O Christ! In order to save the world, You were born



of a virgin without leaving the Father. You suffered as man and willingly endured crucifixion, and You rose from the tomb. O Lord, glory to You."

The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom has a slight deviation from its ordinary celebration. Immediately after the initial invocation, the celebrant sings the Paschal troparion in order to emphasize the joy and solemn happiness brought by the glorious Resurrection of Christ. The Gospel, taken from John 1:1-17, is divided into twelve verses.



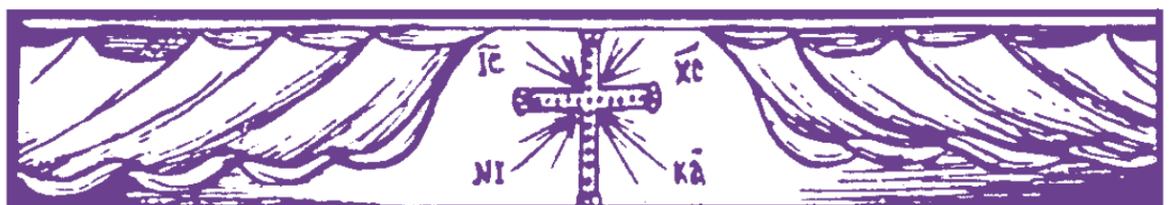
After reading each verse, the celebrant pauses and all the bells are rung. The Gospel is read in various languages, signifying that the redemptive work of Christ applies to all peoples, to the whole world. During the Eucharistic commemorations, instead of the usual hymn in honor of the Mother of God, "It is truly proper to glorify you ..." the Angelic Salutation from the Resurrection Service with the irmos of the ninth ode is sung: "Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem..." After the Communion, all hymns are replaced by the Paschal troparion.

A special feature of Pascha is the blessing of the Paschal food. Cleansed in body and soul, it is only right that our food also should be blessed so that we may in every way enjoy our pasch - great, solemn and sanctified - the feast of Christ's glorious and victorious Resurrection.

During Vespers, instead of the usual introductory prayers and Psalm 103, we repeat many times the Paschal troparion because the Resurrection of Christ is the crowning point of all the prophecies of the Old Testament. During the procession around the altar the priest carries the Gospel book and after the prokimenon reads the section which describes the apparition of the Risen Christ on the evening of the first Paschal Sunday and the doubting of Saint Thomas the Apostle. At the end of Vespers, the Paschal sticheras are sung while the people kiss the cross.

Pascha is celebrated publicly as a solemn feast for three days. Liturgically, it is observed for the whole week, called "Bright Week", and its post-festive period lasts until the Ascension, that is, for 39 days.

(From: *The Liturgical Year of the Byzantine Rite* by Rev. Basil Shereghy, 1968, Seminary Press. Imprimatur: Most Reverend Stephen Kocisko, DD)



# WHAT'S COOKING FOR PASCHA?

By Georgia Zeedick

Slavic people everywhere will be taking baskets loaded with holiday foods to church for the traditional Paschal blessing which is a *must* prior to eating those exquisite foods.

Neatly arranged in the baskets will be *sunka* (ham), *slanina* (bacon), *chrin* (beets with horseradish), salt, *pascha*, *kolbassi*, *hrudka* (*sirets*), butter, *pysanki* (ornately decorated eggs for decoration), colored eggs for eating, and *kolachi*. Some people may add candy and a bottle of wine (or other items of Lenten sacrifice) to their baskets.

After the foods are placed in the basket, an embroidered cloth cover is placed over them and a blessed candle is fastened upright near the basket handle.

For the first-timers who have never put together a Paschal basket, let alone prepared foods for it, the whole process can be mystifying. Every cook has his or her favorite way of preparing these foods and of measuring the ingredients for them, and asking for recipes can result in confusion.

To take some of the mystery out of the preparation of the traditional foods, here are a few recipes gleaned from my own experience and a few Slavic cookbooks.

## Hrudka (Sirets) \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 doz. eggs
- 1 or 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 qt. milk
- ½ cup sugar

Combine all ingredients in a white enameled pan. Cook over medium to low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture curdles. Pour mixture into a colander that is lined with several thicknesses of cheesecloth. Once mixture is drained, pick it up, cheesecloth and all, and shape into a ball by twisting the top part of the cheesecloth. Tightly tie open end with string, placing string very close to top of ball. Caution: This will be hot. Hang over sink until cool. Remove cheesecloth when cool; wrap and refrigerate. (The whey from the *hrudka* can be saved and used when making *pascha*. To conserve the whey, place the colander over a large pot before pouring mixture into cheesecloth.)

## Pascha \_\_\_\_\_

- 3 cups scalded milk, or enough scalded milk added to whey from *hrudka* to make 3 cups
- ½ tsp. salt
- 6 beaten eggs
- ½ cup lukewarm water
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup melted butter
- ½ large cake yeast or equivalent

portion of dry yeast  
12 to 14 cups flour.

In a large bowl, combine milk, sugar, with butter and cool to lukewarm. Save 2 tablespoons of the eggs and add the rest of the eggs to the milk mixture. In a separate bowl, crumble yeast in water and let stand for 10 minutes. Add to above mixture. Add flour, about 2 cups at a time, until the dough can be handled.

Knead on floured board for 15 minutes. Place dough in greased bowl, grease top and let rise in a warm place for about 1½ hours.

Punch down, and let rise a second time for about 45 minutes.

After second rising, shape into four balls and place into greased pans. Small, 1½ quart enameled saucepans can be used for baking. Let rise. Brush tops with 2 table-spoons eggs to which some milk has been added. To achieve that glazed appearance on the loaves, brush tops several times prior to removing them from the oven. Bake at 325 degrees for about 1 hour.

soup. Add horseradish to beets; mix well, refrigerate. An empty horseradish jar (washed, label removed and dipped in boiling water to sterilize it) can be filled with the mixture and placed in the Easter basket. The jar's cap can be disguised with aluminum foil, thus hiding any advertisement.

## Kolachi \_\_\_\_\_

### (Nut and poppyseed)

- 8 egg yolks
- 8 cups flour
- ½ lb. butter
- 1 cake yeast
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups scalded milk
- 4 tbs. shortening

Beat eggs and sugar. Melt butter and shortening in hot milk, saving ½ cup for the yeast. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm milk and let stand for a few minutes. Combine both mixtures in large bowl.

Add flour and mix well with hands until dough leaves the hands. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning, divide the dough into eight balls

milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly. Bring to boil, remove from stove; let cool. Roll out dough to ½-inch thick; brush with butter; place filling on dough and roll up. Bake.

## Poppysed Filling

- 1 lb. ground poppyseed
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 Tsp. butter, melted
- ½ cup milk

Combine sugar with poppyseed. Add melted butter. Then add honey and milk. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until blended. Cool and spread over dough that has been rolled out to ½-inch thickness and brushed with butter. Roll up and bake.

## Ham \_\_\_\_\_

The ham is decorated and baked according to your favorite recipe. How large a ham you buy and use depends on how many people you are serving. For a 20-pound ham: Cut it in half, decorate the halves, bake them and place one of them in the basket.

## Kolbasi \_\_\_\_\_

Again, the amount of kolbasi purchased depends on how many eager eaters you are serving.

Place the kolbasi in a pan, cover with water and boil for about 45 minutes. Some cooks, after the kolbassi is boiled, place a few into a baking pan and sprinkle them with about 2 tablespoons of brown sugar and honey. This is then popped into the oven for about 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool before refrigerating.

## Butter \_\_\_\_\_

If you prefer not to use already prepared butter for the Easter feasting, the butter can be made by whipping heavy cream. Use either one pint or one-half pint heavy whipping cream. Place in bowl and mix with hand beater until butter forms. Place sample of butter in a small fancy bowl and decorate for use in Easter basket.

(The above is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in the April 10, 1979, edition of the *Homestead, PA, Daily Messenger*.)



Photo by Bob Bruce.

Note: Before placing dough in pans, about 1 cup of the dough can be saved and shaped into designs (plaits, crosses, etc.) and placed on top of the unbaked *paschy*. These fancy shapes can be prevented from scorching in the oven by placing aluminum foil on top of the *pascha* during baking.

## Hrin \_\_\_\_\_

### (Beets with Horseradish)

- 8 cans whole beets, drained
- 3 bottles horseradish (Do not use creamed horseradish.)

Grind beets, using fine grinder attachment. The juice can be saved for

and let rise for one hour. Roll out on floured board and spread with filling. Roll up gently, tucking in ends.

Bake at 350 degrees until brown, about 45 minutes.

Brush tops of rolls, prior to putting into oven, with an egg-milk mixture. Doing so produces beautifully browned, shiny rolls.

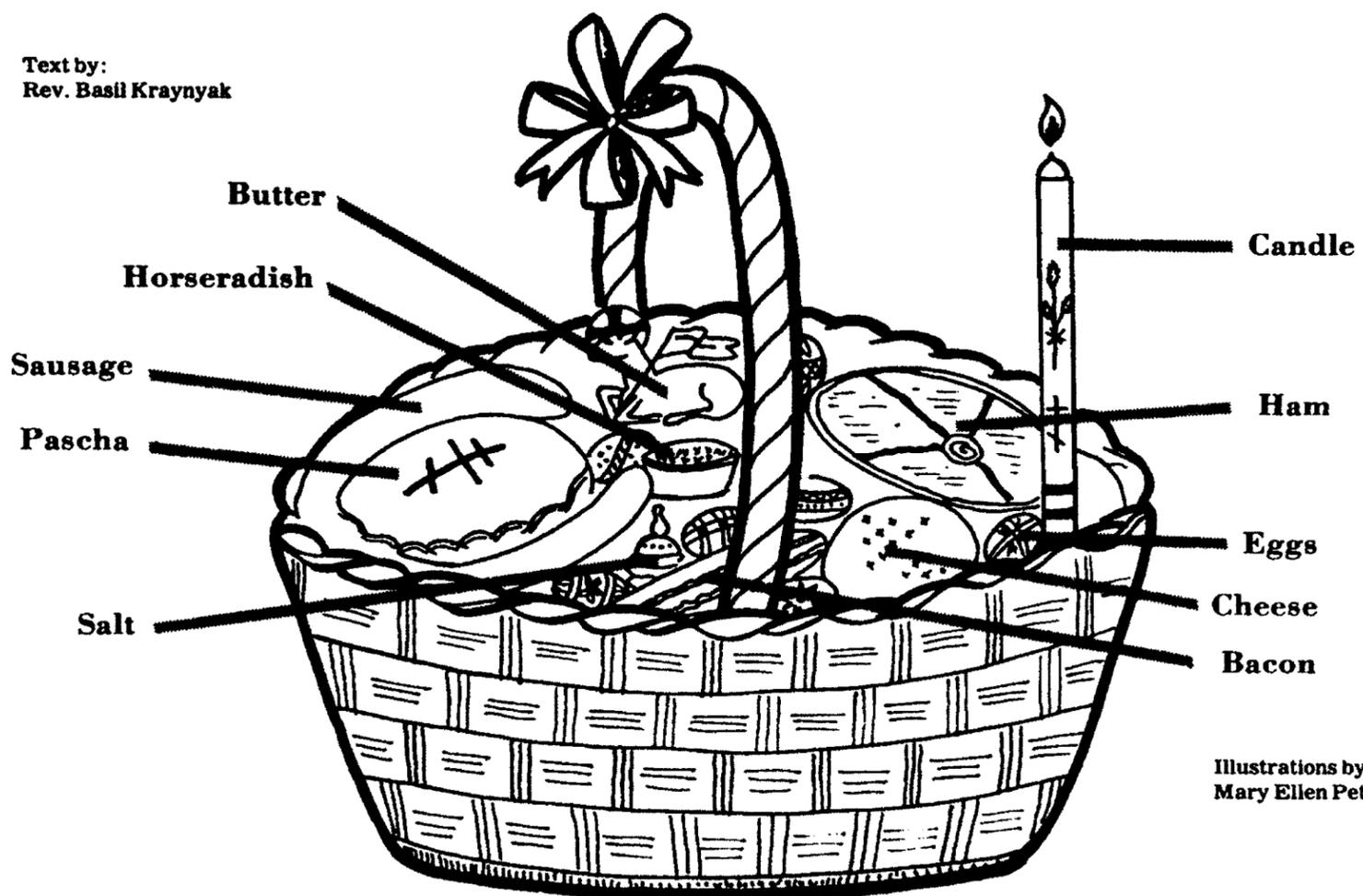
## Nut Filling

- 1 lb. ground walnuts
- 1 cup canned milk
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup honey (optional)

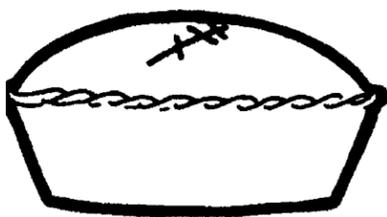
Combine sugar and nuts. Beat eggs and add to mixture, add honey and

# How to Put Together a Traditional Easter Basket

Text by:  
Rev. Basil Kraynyak

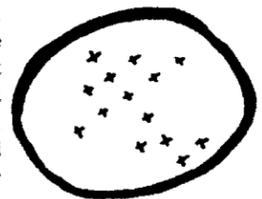


Illustrations by:  
Mary Ellen Petro

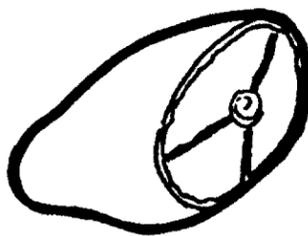


**PASCHA** - The Easter Bread (pron. pá-ska.) A sweet, yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually a round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait giving it a crowned effect or Greek abbreviations for the name of Christ. The letters XB indicate the Slavonic for Christ is Risen.

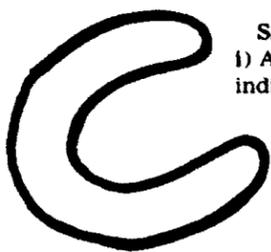
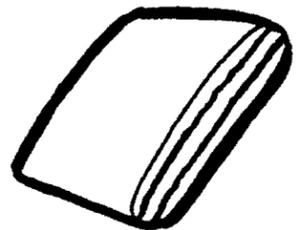
**CHEESE** (Slav. Hrudka or Sirets pron. hrood-ka or si-rets) A custard-type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also, creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha) out of cloves or pepper balls.



**HAM** (Slav. Šunka - pron. shoon-ka.) The flesh meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer Lamb or Veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats so that the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.



**BUTTER** (Slav. Maslo pron. má-slo) This favorite dairy product is shaped into a figure of a Lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. This reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.



**SAUSAGE** (SLAV. Kolbasi - pron. kol-buš-i) A spicy, garlicky sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity.



**SALT** (Slav. Sol' pron. sol') A condiment necessary for flavor reminding the Christian of his duty to others.

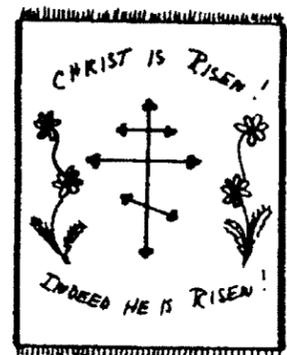
**EGGS** (Slav. Pisanki pron. pi-sún-ki) Hard-boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. Indicative of new life and resurrection.



**HORSERADISH** (Slav. Chrin pron. khrin) Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

These articles are placed in a wicker basket and a ribbon or bow is tied to the handle. A decorated candle is placed in the basket and is lit at the time of blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food when brought to the Church.

In some places a large Easter Bread (Pascha) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing area, a sweet wine may be brought.



## CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

# PRIESTLY REFLECTIONS

Father Paul Varchola West



## A LIFE AND DEATH SITUATION

**T**he LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (RSV, Gen 3:14-15)

These words are the seeds of our salvation. Having been sewn in iniquity, in disobedience, these words are not a threat, but a promise. These words give humanity hope. These words are the seeds from which the Word would ultimately spring forth.

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you

shall bruise his heel...” a promise that humanity was not doomed to death, but rather, poised to inherit eternal life; eternal life in Christ, Jesus. Yes, man must face the consequence of his actions in the Garden of Eden. Yes, humanity was set on a path of toil and travail ultimately leading back to the dust from which it came. Yes, through man, sin entered the world, and through sin, death; but God would never leave man alone.

At the moment of man’s first, miserable fall, God promises us that, the serpent, the harbinger of death, will surely be crushed by the offspring of a human. This offspring of a woman, the son of Mary, God Incarnate, crushed death by his death, thereby restoring Adam and all of humanity to its former grace.

Through the sin of one man, death entered the world. Through the ultimate sacrifice of one man, God in the flesh, death was overthrown, Adam revived, the curse wiped out! Let us praise His Resurrection! Let us give glory to the Timeless One, who, in time, gave all that we might inherit all: eternal life in the Heavenly Kingdom! Let us never forget that the He died that we might live! We owe it to Christ, our Lord, God, and Savior, to realize that there was and is only one human who could crush the death-laden head of the serpent, and that is the One Who Is! I believe C.S. Lewis said it best in his seminal work *Mere Christianity*:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I

don’t accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. (p. 55)

Let us choose to proclaim to the ends of the world: *Christ is Risen! Christos Voskrese!* **ECL**



## LIFE, LOVE, AND THE HUMAN PERSON

By Ann M. Koshute, MTS

### BURNING HEARTS

**I**n our post-modern world, the subject of spiritual warfare, or the idea that such a thing might actually exist, is viewed one of two ways. First there is the enlightened, sophisticated and scientific view that there is no “war” in the spiritual realm, much less one that reaches our earthly plane. One’s decision to be “spiritual” is a personal and has no bearing on what is real, tangible, able to be observed and measured. On the other side of the spectrum, we find spiritual warfare to be the subject of entertainment, judging by the plethora of paranormal television shows and late-night talk radio, not to mention the many podcasts dealing with everything from demons and ghosts to aliens and other strange phenomena. Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in the middle of these two poles, and indeed it is to be found in our Faith. Both Testaments, the Gospels, Saint Paul and Jesus Himself assure us that here are “powers and principalities” that are at war with us, seeking to corrupt, deceive and most of all to draw us away from the love of God.

The devil is, according to Jesus, “a murderer from the beginning... and the father of lies” (John 8:44). From start to finish, when he engages us in conversation (which manifests in that internal dialogue with ourselves, the temptation and rationalization we entertain) he tells half-truths and outright lies. The devil twists, exaggerates and makes false promises. He pretends that what is evil is actually for our good, and like

any conman, smooth-talking but unscrupulous, he tries to convince us that he’s on our side. His tricks are old as Eden but shined up just enough to appeal to our weakness and selfish interests. We shouldn’t be afraid of the devil, though. To fear him is to give him power he doesn’t possess. He wants us to be confused about him just enough to capture our attention. The devil wants us to either be afraid (thus exalting him) or to believe he isn’t real (making us easier to manipulate). In any event, his goal is for us to cause as much destruction in this world as we can, so that we would destroy our souls. The devil’s end game is for us to be with him forever, but not because he loves us. Satan lives among flames of hatred, and he wants us to *burn*.

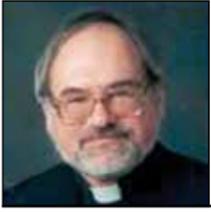
We’ve just come through another season of the Great Fast, hopefully having prayed more, tried to be more generous with our money and our presence, and deprived ourselves of a few things we enjoy. The purpose of the Fast is to prepare us for the joy of Pascha. In fact, we might say that while the Fast is meant to help us get our unhealthy desires under control, it is also meant to stoke the flames of desire for God so that it will *burn* brightly within us. This is a decidedly different kind of flame from the ones the devil lives in. Hatred burns white hot in him, but in us there should burn a flame of *love* – for the One who so loved *us* that He sent His only Son that we might live in pure joy with Him forever.

As much as the devil hates us, he hates Pascha even more; the fact that God became man, that even though He was covered in shame and put to death, He arose triumphant, conquering death and closing off any possibility that Satan might pull off a “surprise victory.” While he continues to wreak havoc in our lives (the spiritual warfare we will engage in until the end of time), there is no scenario in which he comes out ahead. Christ is Risen! And the devil will certainly get his due. In the meantime, we have to recognize his attempts to deceive us into believing that we are not worthy of God’s love, or that God does not want what is best for us. Those are lies, and when we are at our weakest and most vulnerable, the devil preys on our insecurity and doubt. Those are the moments he seizes upon to convince us that our Pascha joy is a farce, that God has no place for us, that we are abandoned.

After the sad and frightening events of Jesus’ arrest and conviction, His torture, crucifixion and death, some of the disciples left Jerusalem dejected. Their lives were suddenly and unexpectedly changed with Jesus’ death, and the hope that had been enkindled by His words and actions was extinguished. Two of them were walking on their way to Emmaus, when a fellow traveler came alongside them and joined their conversation. They told the man all about what had happened over the last few days, and all about Jesus. The man listened and began

to explain to them the meaning behind all that had happened, connecting the events – and Jesus Himself – with the Scriptures and the messages of the Prophets. When they stopped for the evening the two disciples invited their fellow traveler to dine with them. When they sat down to eat, rather than offering thanksgiving, the man blessed the bread, broke it and gave it to the two disciples. In that moment He was gone from their sight, and they recognized immediately that the man was Jesus. “Were not our hearts *burning* within us?” they asked each other.

Our Pascha celebration is more than cultural (blessed baskets and bread “just like Baba made”), and even more than all of the services through Great Week leading to the ringing bells and the constant refrain, “Christ is Risen!” Traditions and rituals are outward signs of what must be for us an interior reality. Just as the disciples’ hearts *burned* at the words of Jesus, all the more so when He revealed Himself to them, so must ours. Saint Anthony, the great monk of Egypt, said that the devil “is especially afraid when we love Jesus very much.” Our greatest weapon against the devil is our faith that Jesus died for us and rose again, so that His love would burn within us forever. **ECL**



# THE BYZANTINE LITURGY

By Archpriest David Petras, SEOD

## THE ANAPHORA: WE REMEMBER THE DEPARTED

When the anaphora is said, we know in faith that our Lord is present among us, not just in spirit, but by way of his precious Body and Blood. The presence is real by way of mystery. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem said, "This teaching of the Blessed Paul is alone sufficient to give you a full assurance concerning these Divine Mysteries ... Since then, He himself has declared and said of the bread, "This is my body," who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since He has affirmed and said, "This is my blood," who shall ever hesitate, saying, that is not his blood?" (*Mystagogical Catechesis* 4,1) Saint John of Damascus wrote that, in the Eucharist, "the bread and wine are miraculously changed into the body and blood of God." (*On the Orthodox Faith* 4, 13) Our eyes see and our mouths taste the form of bread and wine, but they have become the physical presence of the Lord. It is our resurrection appearance of the disciples in the village of Emmaus: "And it happened that, while He was with them at table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, but He vanished from their sight." (Luke 24:30-31) Jesus "vanished" because He was present in the meal of thanksgiving. The disciples recognized Him when He blessed the bread and broke it and gave it to them as food.

If Christ is truly present among us, then we can pray to Him what we need. This prayer that incorporates the needs of the local community expresses our communion in the Body of Christ. It is we who need this solidarity, because God knows our needs in advance, as the Liturgy of Saint Basil so eloquently points out: "Remember, O Lord our God, all your people... granting those petitions which are for their salvation... because, O God, you know the name and age of all, You know each one even from his mother's womb... You know each one and his requests, each home and its needs." The petitions awaken in us an awareness of our dependency upon God for everything and for the needs of our neighbors. In both the remembrance of the dead and the living, the presiding priest begins the commemoration.

In the Byzantine Liturgy today, those who have departed into eternal life are remembered first. The priest says, "We offer you this spiritual sacrifice for those departed in faith" then remembers the saints by category: 1) forefathers; 2) fathers; 3) patriarchs; 4) prophets; 5) apostles; 6) preachers; 7) evangelists; 8) martyrs; 9) confessors; 10) ascetics; 11) every just spirit. This commemoration is almost exactly the same in the Anaphoras of Saint Basil and John Chrysostom. If you omit the first and last categories ("forefathers," which is a duplication of "fathers," and "all the just") you are left with nine

categories of saints, arranged in three groups: 1) fathers, patriarchs, prophets (Old Testament); 2) apostles, preachers, evangelists (New Testament); 3) martyrs, confessors, ascetics (Church). These would then correspond to the nine choirs of angels.

The celebrant then continues, "Especially for our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary." Some might find it strange to offer the Liturgy "for" the Mother of God and the saints, as they are already saved, sanctified and deified, but this is not a real problem. The Liturgy, which is our participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord, is accomplished for all people, and Mary is the first and foremost among those people who are saved. After the Mother of God, then, one particular prophet, John, is named and the apostles are commemorated as a group again. The priest continues by remembering the Saint commemorated on the day and all saints. Then

he may name those he wishes of the departed. Originally the deacon would read the names of the departed written on diptychs ("double writing tablets"). This structure was introduced into the Byzantine Church in the time of the Patriarch Gennadios. Today the priest has taken over what diptychs for the dead remain.

The incensing that takes place at this point is not an incensing of the altar, nor is it in honor of the Mother of God. The general rule was that when the dead were commemorated, incense was offered on their behalf. Incense had come to represent our prayer rising to God. "Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a gold censer. He was given a great quantity of incense to offer, along with the prayers of all the holy ones, on the gold altar that was before the throne. The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the hand of the angel" (Revelation 6:3-4).

In the Anaphora of Saint Basil, we pray instead, "with our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary." Truly, after Christ, Mary stands in the center of our communion of faith. This affirms that every Divine Liturgy is truly the whole Church, both departed and living, in heaven and on earth, gathered together in the presence of the Lord. We are all "with" one another, with Mary in the prime place. This is the greeting we give each other before praying the anaphora, "Christ is among us," "He [both] is and will be." This is both the present reality, humble though it may be, and our future hope, as Saint Paul envisions, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation ... He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He himself might be preeminent. (Colossians 1:16.18)" **ECL**

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## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

Father Jack Custer, S.S.L., S.T.D.

### RECOGNIZING THE RISEN LORD

Isn't it odd that Cleopas and (according to Tradition) Luke didn't recognize the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus? They had spent so much time with Him. They were even talking about Him when He joined them. Saint Luke wrote that their eyes were kept from recognizing Him (Luke 24:16). Was Jesus somehow disguised? Was His glorified body so different? Or was the problem the disciples' eyes?

Why had they left the community of the disciples in the first place? Had they just given up? Were they returning to their old way of life (like the seven disciples in John 21)? Were they trying to run away from the power and presence of God (like Peter in Luke 5:10)? Clearly, they are headed the wrong way.

By their own admission, the disciples were deeply disillusioned by the events of Holy Thursday and Good Friday. They expressed their disappointment that Jesus turned out not to be the Messiah they had expected: an earthly king who would liberate Israel from the Romans (Luke 24:21). Their misguided expectations impaired their vision. They could recount the Gospel facts: how Jesus performed signs and wonders, how He died innocently, how

His tomb was now empty and how the angels and the women claimed He had been raised, but they tell it as if it were all bad news! They seem unwilling to entertain the possibility that Christ is risen, even though He had prepared His disciples for this event on six occasions (Luke 9:18-22; 9:44; 12:50; 13:32-33; 17:25; 18:31-34).

Pondering why the majority of Jews failed to recognize Jesus as the Messiah even though they read the Law and the prophets Sabbath after Sabbath, Saint Paul concluded: "But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2 Corinthians 3:14-16). The two fleeing disciples refused to believe the women (one of whom was Clopas' own wife!) and failed to understand the Scriptures. Their eyes were blinded by their own expectations, by their disappointment, perhaps even by their fear that, if true, the Resurrection would change too much in their lives.

Jesus opened their eyes in two steps. First, He systematically explained to them the Scriptures that showed how the Messiah must suffer and rise. Saint Luke did not record the details of that Bible lesson because it would have been repeated by every apostle and evangelist every time they brought the Gospel to a new town or village. We can deduce from the rest of the New Testament that some of the key texts would have been Isaiah 53, Psalm 2:7; Psalm 16:10; Psalm 110; Psalm 118:22; and Daniel 7:13.

This explanation prepared Luke and Clopas for the next step. At table, Jesus took bread and re-enacted what He had done at the Last Supper and on the several occasions when He multiplied bread for crowds: He said the Jewish blessing, broke the bread, and gave it to them. Saint Luke reports that immediately their eyes were open and Jesus vanished from their sight. That was all that was needed: the two returned to Jerusalem and reported how they had "recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:25).

The Lord's mysterious arrival and departure might overshadow another purely human but vitally important

detail here. If Clopas and Luke had not invited Jesus to stay with them in Emmaus, they would never have recognized Him at all! The simple moral message here, as in the story of Abraham, Sarah and the Angels (Genesis 18; Hebrews 13:2), is that we should be hospitable. But specifically, in this case, we are taught that the first step toward recognizing the Risen Lord is to let Him into the intimacy of our real lives.

The combination of explaining the Scriptures and breaking the bread should sound familiar. They form the most basic outline of every Liturgy of every authentic apostolic Church. Reading and preaching the Scriptures are absolutely essential to Christian life, and our Liturgy insists again and again that we "be attentive" to the "Wisdom" they contain (and that Wisdom is not an idea but a person—Jesus Christ [1 Corinthians 1:24]). This pattern was repeated again in Galilee (John 21:13) to drive home the point that the Risen Lord is to be found where the Church gathers to hear the Word and to break the bread of the Eucharist. The Risen Lord is a real, concrete, personal presence, not just a comforting idea. Therefore, every Sunday is Pascha. **ECL**

## SCHOOL OF PRAYER

Father G. Scott Boghossian



### SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE

We don't think about heaven enough. After all, we won't ever be perfectly happy until we get there. Our life in this world is a test (Dt. 8:2), and tests are rarely entirely pleasant. Our true home is heaven, and the more we think about heaven, the better Christians we will be.

Heaven is better than we can ever imagine. Imagine the happiest and most perfect place you can, multiply it by a thousand, and you haven't even come close to grasping heaven. "No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). The world imagines heaven as floating on clouds and playing harps. But heaven will be infinitely better than that.

Our true home is heaven. Here on earth, we are pilgrims, exiles, aliens, and foreigners (1 Pt. 2:11). "For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come" (Heb. 13:14). Our supernatural origin (Jn. 3:3) is heavenly (the new birth through faith, repentance, and baptism), and our goal and destiny are heavenly as well. It's no wonder we cannot be perfectly happy on earth; we don't belong here.

The Old Testament saints "acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth." They were "seeking a homeland," they desired "a better country, that is a heavenly one" (Heb. 11:13-16). The Old Testament saints understood that they were seeking a heavenly homeland. How much more should we, who know Jesus Christ and possess the fulness of divine revelation in the Catholic Church, understand these things? Sadly, we rarely give our heavenly home a second thought.

Saint Paul, the Apostle, wanted to go to heaven. He writes, "for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21). "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Phil. 1:23). "While we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord," and "we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6,8). He wanted to die and go to heaven. To be with Christ in heaven is "far better."

We want to see Jesus Christ (and Our Lady, the saints, and our friends and loved ones who left this world in the state of friendship with God through faith in Jesus Christ). In this life on

earth, "we walk by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). We do not see Jesus, the saints, and the heavenly paradise here in this world. "Without having seen Him you love him; though you do not now see Him you believe in Him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy" (1 Pt. 1:8). But in heaven, we won't need faith. We will see Jesus, our Savior. We will know and experience all the people, places, and realities of paradise.

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Col. 3:1-2). Scripture directs us to seek heaven and to set our minds on heavenly things. The statement that "some people are so heavenly minded that they are of no earthly good," attributed to Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. (d. 1894), is sheer rubbish.

To be truly "heavenly minded" is to be of the greatest earthly good because heavenly minded people "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure" (2 Pt. 1:10). They "work out their salvation with fear and trembling"

(Phil. 2:12). They "strive to enter the narrow gate" (Lk. 13:24). They "lay up treasures heaven" (Mt. 6:20) by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (good works) (Mt. 6). They are known to be, like Tabitha, "full of good works and acts of charity" (Acts 9:36). They seek to bring others to heaven with them by their faith, prayers, testimony, personal witness, good example, and spirit of service. The more heavenly minded we are, the more earthly good we will be.

Think about heaven. Jesus Christ suffered and died to give us heaven (Jn. 3:16). Renew your commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Make sure He says to you, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34). Our true home is heaven, and the more we think about heaven, the better Christians we will be. Set your mind on things above (Col. 3:2). **ECL**

# SEASONAL REFLECTIONS

Father Ronald Hatton



## THE MYSTERY OF OUR SALVATION

*You annulled the sentence of the tree of disobedience, O Savior, by being nailed willingly to the Tree of the Cross. And by descending into Hades, O Mighty One, as God You destroyed the bonds of death. Wherefore, we worship Your resurrection from the dead, while crying out to You: O Almighty Lord, glory be to You. –Vespers for Bright Tuesday*

*O Lord, when the grave had been sealed by the lawless ones, You came forth from the tomb in the same manner as You were born of the Theotokos. Your incorporeal angels did not know how You were incarnate; the soldiers who guarded You did not perceive when You arose: for both these things are sealed fast against the inquisitive, but the wonders are made manifest to those who worship the mystery of faith. Grant to us who praise it exceeding joy and great mercy. –Matins for Bright Thursday*

We come once again to the season of great mysteries: The Mystery of the Cross and the Mystery of the Resurrection. All those who call themselves Christian contemplate these mysteries to one degree or another, struggling with why Christ had to suffer betrayal, arrest, desertion, public mockery, and condemnation to death, and a horrible death on the cross. They also struggle with how (and even if) the Resurrection occurred and all the attendant mysteries that happened af-

ter the Resurrection: the appearance to His disciples although the doors in the Upper Room were locked, His sudden appearance and disappearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and yet the mystery of His appearance being a physical one. So much for our minds to take in and to process. We are called to belief, but in this day and age, what we are called to believe is, in worldly terms, beyond belief. And so this season is also a time to reaffirm our faith and belief in the One Whom we follow. We must remember that even during His three-year ministry, lesser struggles confronted His disciples: how can this Man give us His flesh to eat (cf. John 6, especially verses 52 and 66)? They all ran away on the night He was arrested, and Peter denied he knew Him, even after professing, even boasting that, even if everyone else fainted away, he would never betray Him.

And so, I have chosen these two hymns for us to ponder. I cannot go too deeply into the mysteries here but maybe I can offer food for serious thought. First is the cross. My favorite “theological” Christmas song is “I Wonder as I Wander.” “How Jesus the Savior did come for to die/For poor on’ry people like you and like I...” The first hymn above answers that for us in that, as one tree, in the Garden of Eden, led to sin and death through the first Adam, so the second tree led to the end of sin

and death through the second Adam. As our Anaphora of Saint Basil the Great so beautifully puts it, “For since, through a man, sin entered the world, and through sin, death, so it pleased Your only-begotten Son...to condemn sin in His flesh, so that those who are dead in Adam might be brought to life in Him, Your Christ.” Why? “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

We also contemplate His resurrection. Nothing is so controversial as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. How many people do not believe based on this one part of the Christian Faith? And yet it is central to the Faith. The Holy Apostle Paul says, “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied” (I Cor. 15: 13-19).

There are those who believe He never really died on the cross; others hold to the story that His disciples stole His body, in the same manner as is related in Matthew 28: 11-15. But we who believe are offered this mystery as it is presented in the second hymn above: in the same manner as Christ was born of the Virgin Mother without violating her virginity, so too was His rising from the dead. “[B]ut the wonders are made manifest to those who worship the mystery of faith.”

But we do hold to this faith. Again, going back to I Corinthians: “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (vv. 20-22). Paul, and all the apostles, had to constantly re-teach the early Christians this fact, and we must be reminded of this teaching every Easter, every Sunday.

This is the season of the Great Mystery of Christ. This is the season of faith. This is the season of belief. **ECL**

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Below are just a few examples from our eparchy

Below is a list of many of the Parishes of the Eparchy of Passaic which are Live streaming Divine Liturgy on Saturday, Sunday, and Holy Days. You may access the links to their streaming sites (Facebook, Youtube, etc.) on our website: [www.eparchyofpassaic.com](http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com).

**CONNECTICUT**

Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Danbury, CT  
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 Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church—Perth Amboy, NJ  
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 Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Somerset, NJ  
 Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Jersey City, NJ  
 Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church—Bayonne, NJ  
 Nativity of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—East Brunswick, NJ  
 Saint Thomas the Apostle Byzantine Catholic Church—Rahway, NJ  
 Saint Elias Byzantine Catholic Church—Carteret, NJ  
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Saint Andrew Byzantine Catholic Church—Westbury, NY  
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 Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic—Mahanoy City, PA  
 Saint John Byzantine Church—Wilkes-Barre, PA  
 Saint John the Baptist Byzantine Catholic Church—Lansford, PA  
 Saints Peter and Paul Byzantine Catholic Church—Bethlehem, PA  
 Saint Nicholas Byzantine Catholic Church—Old Forge, PA  
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 Saint Michael Byzantine Catholic Church—Dunmore, PA  
 Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Hazleton, PA  
 Saint John Byzantine Catholic Church—Hazleton, PA  
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 Saint Mary Byzantine Catholic Church—Scranton, PA  
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**GEORGIA**

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**VIRGINIA**

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 Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church—Annandale, VA

**FLORIDA**

Holy Dormition Byzantine Catholic Church—Ormond Beach, FL  
 Saint Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church—Orlando FL  
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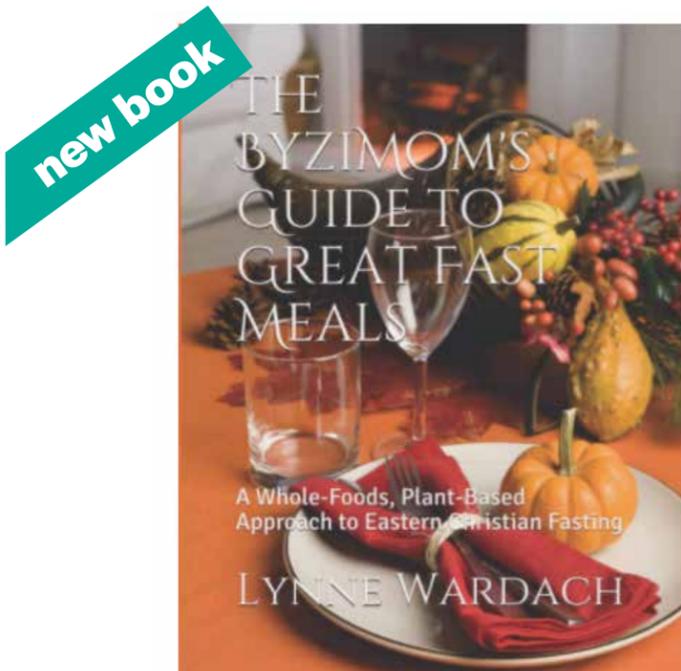
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**UPCOMING EPARCHIAL AND PARISH EVENTS**

**APRIL, 2021**

- 1 Great and Holy Thursday  
*Chancery closed*
- 2 Great and Holy Friday  
*Chancery closed*
- 3 Great and Holy Saturday
- 4 PASCHA \* THE GREAT DAY  
*The Holy Resurrection of Our Lord*
- 5 Bright Monday  
*Solemn Holyday \*Chancery closed*
- 6 Bright Tuesday  
*Solemn Holyday*
- 11 Sunday of Saint Thomas
- 18 Sunday of the Holy Myrrh-bearers
- 23 Holy Great Martyr George  
*Simple Holyday*
- 25 Sunday of the Paralytic
- 28 Mid-Pentecost

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