

ST. NICHOLAS NEWS

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ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

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PALM (FLOWERY) SUNDAY

April 4, 2015

PARISH CALENDAR

Sun., Apr. 5 **PALM (FLOWERY) SUNDAY**

8:45 – 9:15 AM Confessions

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 188-192

Church School Meets

Sun., Apr. 12 **PASCHA: THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy – pp. 193-196.

Blessing of Baskets

Easter Egg Hunt for the kiddies.

Tue., Apr. 7 **FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION. GREAT & HOLY TUESDAY**

6:00 PM Confessions

6:30 PM Vespers and Divine Liturgy

Confessions: See *Parish Calendar* for days and times. The *last scheduled Confessions* are on *Great Thursday*.

Note: only the **Anointing of the Sick** will be celebrated on Great Wednesday. There will be no Holy Eucharist on that day, and so no Communion Fast.

Wed., Apr. 8 **GREAT WEDNESDAY**

NOTE SCHEDULE CHANGE:

6:00 PM Confessions

6:30 PM Holy Mystery of the Anointing of the Sick [no Presanctified Liturgy]

FASTING AND FEASTING

PALM SUNDAY is a day of rejoicing, and the Fast is mitigated (lessened) the same way as on *Annunciation* (see below).

Thu., Apr. 9 **GREAT THURSDAY**

6:00 PM *Last Scheduled Confessions*

6:30 PM Divine Liturgy of the Last Supper. Setting up the Tomb.

FOR HOLY WEEK:

THE GREAT FEAST OF ANNUNCIATION, APR. 7 (MARCH 25) is also *Great Tuesday* this year: Even so, the fast is mitigated (lessened) this day because of this Great Feast. The Traditional Rules say you may eat fish, oil and wine on this day. If you are not yet keeping the Traditional Fast, you may “step up” two steps on this day. For instance, if you are fasting from meat and dairy only, you may eat meat.

Fri., Apr. 10 **GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY**

10:00 AM Matins of the 12 Gospels

7:00 PM Vespers and the Procession with the Shroud

Vigil at the Tomb

TRADITIONAL RULES call for STRICT FAST (no meat, dairy, wine or oil products) *every other weekday* during the Holy Week, Monday through Saturday. Note that this is the only Saturday of the year on which

Sat., Apr. 11 **GREAT & HOLY SATURDAY**

8:00 PM Resurrection Matins

Blessing of Baskets

oil is not permitted (which is why there is no mirovanije at Liturgy on Pascha).

DIOCESAN RULES require the following for Holy Week: Monday through Thursday, no meat. Great Friday and Holy Saturday, STRICT FAST.

COMMUNION FASTING:

For the reception of Holy Eucharist in the morning, we must fast from bed-time until we receive, as usual. To receive Holy Eucharist in the evening (for instance, at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts), we must fast for *at least 3 hours before the beginning of the service.*

BRIGHT WEEK:

From Pascha through Thomas Sunday, there is *no fast* permitted, even on Wednesday or Friday, as we celebrate the great joy of our salvation in the Resurrection.

PEOPLE STUFF

Please remember in your prayers:

Deceased: Fr. Matthew Baker. Fr. Thomas Hopko.

Living: Fr. George Dursa. Fr. Donald Valasek. Matt & Lori Algar. Stephanie Bonk. Gloria Bracey. Tim & Christina Bracey. Bob Chalk. Susan Danchak. Ricky, Rick & Sarah. Michael Danchak. Jada Eiden. Ted Goosley. Tammy Hall. Heather Harris. Robert & Eddie Hawley. Lorraine Kacaba. Dawn & Warren Kieffer. Anna Mae Kuklis. John Lange. Dee Lositski. Peggy Majcher. Theresa Niester. Margie Pecuch. Mary Phillips. John Polanichka. Karen Rolka. Emma Sacco. Amy Shimo. Connie Lou Slater. Faye Snell. Marion Sosnowski. Russell Spilka. Jeff Thomas. Ann Marie Tigue. Gary Wassel. Julia Worobey.

At Home: Michael Andreosky. Elizabeth Basalyga. George & Anna Senich. Kathryn Stocoski.

Assisted Living Homes: Julie Kovacs. Julie Roberts.

Altar Vigil Lights: Health of Stephanie Bonk by Bonk, Pugh and Cardona families.

Eternal Light: Memory of Vladimer by family.

No Panachidas & Memorials for the deceased: As noted in last week's bulletin, no memorial services for the deceased are celebrated from Palm (Flowery Sunday) until Thomas Sunday (Sunday after Easter), as we are called to focus on the great Salvific Event of Our Lord's Death and Resurrection. Panachidas & other memorials may be celebrated again beginning on

Thomas Sunday after Divine Liturgy.

COMMUNITY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

Ongoing Food Collection Project: This past week, 6 boxes of food were delivered to the NEPA Bread Basket. They were very thankful for our continued generosity and thank the members of our parish for remembering those in need.

The food donation container continues to be available in the Church Hall. Please help fill this container with non-perishable food items: cans, dry goods, etc. This is an ongoing good thing.

YOUR GIFTS TO GOD AND HIS CHURCH

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH

MARCH 29, 2015

\$ 402.00	General Collection
\$ 2.00	1st Sunday
\$ 90.00	7 Day Light
\$ 28.00	Pirohi
\$ 623.62	Church Dues
\$ 3.00	Maintenance & Repairs
\$ 7.00	Eternal Light
\$ 15.00	Taper Candles
\$ 30.00	Flowers
\$1200.62	Total Collection

PARISH STUFF

Church School meets today.

Blessed, decorated candles are available. \$10 donation. Please see Frank Pucher or John Brizinski.

Tomb Set-up: We would like to set up the tomb after Liturgy on Thursday evening. It would help to have a few folks hang around to help with this.

Tomb Vigil Sign up Sheet As in past years, we are asking folks to sign up for the Great Friday-Saturday Tomb Vigil. The Sign-up sheet is in the church vestibule.

Easter Basket Blessing: Easter Baskets will be blessed on Saturday evening after Resurrection Matins, and on Sunday morning after the Divine Liturgy.

All are strongly encouraged to bring a basket to be blessed for Easter! Why? 2 reasons:

1. On this day, of all days of the year, we need to remember and keep with us the importance of the Resurrection of Our Lord, as He shows us his ultimate

love for us. By eating the Spiritual Banquet in church at Divine Liturgy, and then the blessed Physical Banquet at home with our family and loved ones, we celebrate the knowledge that Jesus Christ is both Divine and Human, and his Resurrection is both Spiritual and Physical.

2. Having our Easter dinner blessed means that it must be prepared ahead of time. This means that we are thinking about the Resurrection. It also means that the family cook doesn't have to drudge away in the kitchen on this most joyous day. Everyone in the house should have a chance to celebrate this day together!

"But I (we) can't eat the traditional foods - eggs, ham, kolbasi, etc. Or the kids don't like them. Or I don't know how to make Paska Bread. Or . . . "

The important thing is to have the Resurrection meal blessed – *whatever it is*. The main dishes are usually foods that people can't eat during Lent: meat, dairy products, etc. In Slavic countries that meant (in early spring), smoked meats and spring lamb, eggs, butter, milk, and vegetable that were preserved or left over in the root cellar (beets, horseradish). This does not mean that these are the only possible foods to be blessed. Whatever you are having for dinner on Pascha (and it *should* be some kind of special meal), whether it is Prime Rib, Chili Dogs, or Tofurky, bring it to be blessed for the Resurrection!

FROM THE DIOCESE & OTHER STUFF

Family Camp at Camp Nazareth June 5 – June 6. The Registration Form, Flyer and Schedule are all available on the Camp website: campnazareth.org. Planned are a variety of activities and events that will allow your family the opportunity to learn together, have fun together, pray together and simply be together in the peaceful environment of the Camp. Families will be staying together, and have to themselves a Camp cabin; plenty of space to rest and relax and simply be together during and after the weekend's festivities. Don't miss out on this opportunity for you and your family. Come and help us to make this an ongoing and rewarding event for our Diocesan families. Space is limited to the first 10 families, so please send in your registration forms soon. They are due by Friday, May 22, 2015.

THOUGHTS ON THE CRUCIFIXION

by Abba Isaiah

The ascent of the cross is made after closing the mouths of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Sadducees serve as a model of unbelief and hopelessness; the Pharisees, as a model of wickedness, hypocrisy, and vanity.

The mind which wishes to ascend the cross must pour out many prayers and many tears, must cast itself down hourly before God, surrendering itself to His will and begging help from His goodness, that it might strengthen it, protect it, and raise it up to a holy renewal no longer subject to defeat.

A great sorrow appears at the hour of the ascent of the cross. The suppliant needs to have Peter, John, and James accompany him, that is, healthy faith, courageous hope, and love for God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ bore for us suffering and death on the Cross and by these acts serves as a model for us. We must, as the Apostle says, "...know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death," that we might attain "to the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:10,11). The Lord tasted the gall for our sakes that we might drive all unclean desires out of ourselves, that we might block all their outlets and not permit them to be satisfied by means of our bodies and so destroy us. The Lord tasted vinegar for us, and we must quench all manifestations of anger and every vain confusion in ourselves. The Lord permitted Himself to be spat on that we might learn to have contempt for the opinions of men and the glory of this world. The head of the Lord was crowned with a crown of thorns that we might learn constantly to reproach ourselves and by this means to bear abuse without distress. The stick with which the Lord was beaten about the head is an image of humility for us by which, as with a club, we must rout the pride planted in us by the Devil.

The Lord Jesus, before being nailed to the Cross, was given over to be beaten. This too serves as an exhortation for us: before ascending the cross, we must endure the most varied abuse and accusations from men. The clothing of the Lord was divided by lot: this serves as an example for our emulation. Before ascending the cross we must despise the world

and bear without concern the loss of our perishable possessions, as the Apostle said: "... (you) joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven." (Hebrews 10:34). All this must a man do in order to ascend the cross. But if he does not perform all that our Lord did, so far as he is able, then he cannot ascend the cross.

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST?

Excerpts from St. Simeon the New Theologian

... what is the mystery of the resurrection of Christ our God, which mystically occurs within us, if we desire, and how Christ is buried within us as in a tomb, how He unites with our souls, resurrects within us and together with Himself, resurrects us as well. Christ our God, after He was hung on the Cross and nailed upon it the sin of the whole world, died, and descended into the depths of Hades. Then, rising from Hades, He again entered into His most pure Body and immediately rose from the dead, and afterwards finally ascended into the heavens with much power and glory. Likewise now, when we, leaving this world and worldly vanities, with the confession of the passion of Christ the Lord, enter into the tomb of repentance and humility, He Himself then descends from the heavens, enters into our body as into a tomb, is united with our souls and resurrects them, when they were dead in sin, and having resurrected them, grants the grace to behold the glory of this mystical resurrection....

PALM SUNDAY TO PASCHA: ORTHODOX CUSTOMS

Holy Tradition (written with a capital "T") encompasses the beliefs of the Orthodox Church which are set forth in Holy Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, the liturgy of the Church, and through oral transmission through the ages. An example of Holy Tradition is that Joachim and Anna are the parents of Mary the Theotokos. Their names do not appear in the Bible, but have been handed down to us since the beginning of Church history.

Orthodox traditions (written with a small "t") are defined as pious customs—they are things that we do,

not things that we believe. There are many examples of pious traditions in the week from Palm Sunday through Pascha, the feast of the Resurrection.

An Arabic tradition is to hold candles decorated with flowers for Palm Sunday along with palm branches. Greeks hold crosses woven from either palm branches or bay leaves on Palm Sunday. Slavic peoples receive pussy willow branches on Palm Sunday. These are adaptations due to climate in the country of origin of these people.

Greeks greet each other with "kali anestasi" or "Good Resurrection" on Great and Holy Friday.

In the Russian tradition, the faithful carry home the "Thursday Fire"—the candles that we hold during the reading of the 12 Passion Gospels on Holy Thursday night. The flame is used to light the lampada in the family's Icon Corner where it remains burning for the whole year.

In the Greek tradition, on the other hand, the Paschal light is taken home instead. After the Resurrection service, the faithful do not blow out the candles, but hold them during the entire Paschal Divine Liturgy. Every time the Troparion "Christ is Risen.." is sung or the celebrant exclaims "Christ is Risen!" everyone in the congregation lifts his candle high as the choir sings or responds with "Indeed, He is Risen!" After the service, the faithful take the fire home to light the lampadas in front of their icons. At mealtimes, the candle is lit as the family sings "Christ is Risen.."

The red egg that the celebrant presents to the faithful at the end of the Paschal Divine Liturgy is also a tradition. The egg represents Christ in the tomb. Breaking the egg is symbolic of the Resurrection.

Slavic people and some Greek families observe the tradition of bringing a basket of food to be blessed after the Paschal Divine Liturgy. The basket usually contains bread (made with eggs and milk), cheese, meat, eggs, butter, salt, and other foods that the family plans on having for their Paschal celebration. There should also be a lit candle, symbolizing the Light of Christ.

All of these traditions and customs are good—as long as they do not replace in our heart the memory of Christ Himself who died for us and has risen for our salvation.