

Greeting: *"Christ is Risen!"* Response: *"Indeed, He is Risen!"*



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

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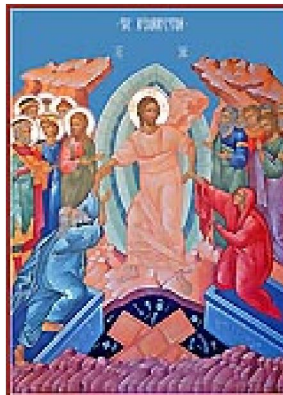
Sunday, April 12, 2015

Gospel: John 1:1-17

Tone 3

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8

Great and Holy Pascha: The Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ



**Христос
Воскресе!**

**Восстину
Воскресе!**

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:

Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say:

Rejoice, your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!

With Himself He has raised all the dead. Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!

The glory of the Lord has shone on you.

Exult now, and be glad, O Zion!

Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!

Hymn to the Theotokos

Today the Church Remembers

St Basil the Confessor the Bishop of Parium • Hieromartyr Zeno the Bishop of Verona • St Isaac the Syrian, Abbot of Spoleto • Monkmartyrs Menas, David and John of Palestine • The Venerable Anthusa of Constantinople • Venerable Athanasia the Abbess of Aegina • Venerable Acacius the Younger of Mt Athos • Icon of the Mother of God of Murom • Icon of the Mother of God of Belynich

Weekly Bulletin Sponsors

For Health of:

All our parishioners, their families and friends

In Eternal Memory of:

All our loved ones, family and friends.

Liturgical Schedule:

2015 Holy Week Services

Saturday, April 11th

11:30 pm: Holy Pascha Vigil (Nocturns, Matins, Divine Liturgy)

Sunday, April 12th

Blessing of food - after midnight Divine Liturgy)

Wednesday, April 15th – NJ Deanery

7 pm: Bright Wednesday Vespers with Archbishop Michael @ Christ the Savior Church, Paramus, NJ

Saturday, April 18th – NJ Deanery

10:00 am: Bright Saturday Divine Liturgy with Archbishop Michael, Paschal Buffett and Fellowship @ St. Andrew's Camp, Jewell, NY

Saturday, April 18th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, April 19th

9:30 am: Church School
9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: Choir Rehearsal
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Readings:

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8

In the first book, O Theophilos, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when they had come together, they asked

him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

Gospel: John 1:1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John bore witness to him, and cried, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.'") And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

“Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Joy of all the Sorrowful” founded in 1966



Bulletin Sponsor: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend, for a donation of \$10. Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one and \$2 for a small one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times.

General Confession: Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:

Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

Volunteers are needed to clean the church. Please use the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board downstairs or candle stand, to indicate when you can help.

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

Announcements:

Reader Charles has accepted the call to once again serve with an **OCMC Youth Outreach Mission Team** going to Albania June 15 to July 1, 2015 and to go on a pilgrimage to **Mt. Athos** (the Holy Mountain) in Greece July 1 to July 9, 2015. Please remember him in your prayers in his many preparations. If your heart is moved to support him financially, please speak to him for information on how to do so. Every dollar donated over the cost of the trip will be given to the orphanage (Children's Home of Hope on the grounds of the Shen Vlash Monastery and Resurrection of Christ Theological Academy in Durres, Albania).

The Parish Council will be meeting on Sunday, April 26th downstairs in the community room right after Divine Liturgy and Coffee Hour.

“Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Joy of all the Sorrowful” founded in 1966



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God News

As you can see in the financial snapshot, our expenses have not exceeded our offerings. Though we entered 2015 with a deficit of almost \$3,600, your generosity has almost eliminated that deficit. Glory to God! May He bless you for your generosity! Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to speak to our Treasurer, Andy Romanofsky or Council President, Trudy Ellmore.

Financial Snapshot

	January	February	2014 Deficit Carried over	1st Quarter To date
Income	\$3,157.00	\$2,770.00		\$5,927.00
Expense	<u>\$1,836.96</u>	<u>\$1,854.65</u>		<u>\$3,691.61</u>
Balance	\$1,320.04	\$915.35	-\$3,560.80	-\$1,325.41



Sisterhood of the Protector of the Mother of God News

New section, information and news to follow.



NY/NJ Diocese News

Celebration of Archbishop Michael's 5th Anniversary of his Consecration on Saturday May 9, 2015. Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 9:30 am, St. John the Baptist Church, 170 Lexington Avenue, Passaic NJ 07055. Followed by a luncheon at 1 pm at The Brownstone, 351 West Broadway, Paterson, NJ 07522. Reservations Required, \$50 Adults, \$10 Children, 5 years & under free. Reserve on-line at form.jotform.us/form/40903603006139 or contact Father Joseph Lickwar at 201-434-

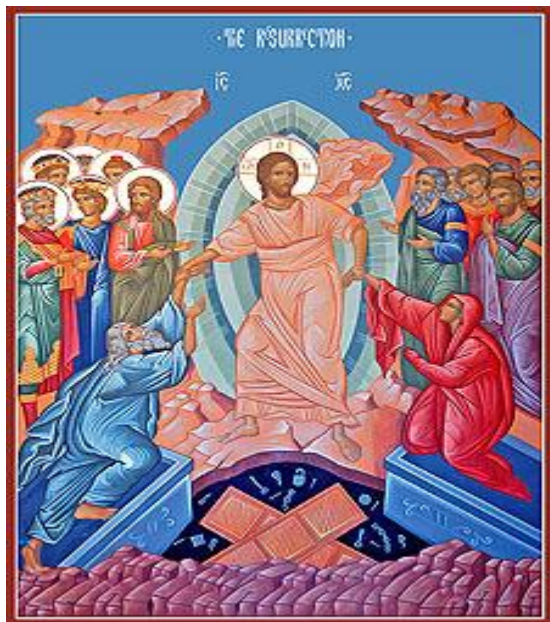
1986 or by email at josephlickwar@gmail.com

Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

New section, information and news to follow.



Holy Pascha: The Resurrection of our Lord



Pascha (Easter)

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith; receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness.

(Sermon of St John Chrysostom, read at Paschal Matins)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the center of the Christian faith. St Paul says that if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and faith are in vain (I Cor. 15:14). Indeed, without the resurrection there would be no Christian preaching or faith. The disciples of Christ would have remained the broken and hopeless band which the Gospel of John describes as being in hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They went nowhere and preached nothing until they met the risen Christ, the doors being shut (John 20: 19). Then they touched the wounds of the nails and the spear; they ate and drank with Him. The resurrection became the basis of everything they said and did (Acts 2-4): “. . . for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39).

The resurrection reveals Jesus of Nazareth as not only the expected Messiah of Israel, but as the

King and Lord of a new Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . the holy city, new Jerusalem. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:1-4).

In His death and resurrection, Christ defeats the last enemy, death, and thereby fulfills the mandate of His Father to subject all things under His feet (I Cor. 15:24-26).

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (Rev. 5: 12)

The Feast of Feasts

The Christian faith is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. True celebration is always a living participation. It is not a mere attendance at services. It is communion in the power of the event being celebrated. It is God’s free gift of joy given to spiritual men as a reward for their self-denial. It is the fulfillment of spiritual and physical effort and preparation. The resurrection of Christ, being the center of the Christian faith, is the basis of the Church’s liturgical life and the true model for all celebration. This is the chosen and holy day, first of sabbaths, king and lord of days, the feast of feasts, holy day of holy days. On this day we bless Christ forevermore (Irmos 8, Paschal Canon).

Preparation

Twelve weeks of preparation precede the “feast of feasts.” A long journey which includes five pre-lenten Sundays, six weeks of Great Lent and finally Holy Week is made. The journey moves from the self-willed exile of the prodigal son to the grace-filled entrance into the new Jerusalem, coming down as a bride beautifully adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2) Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, fasting,

almsgiving, and study are the means by which this long journey is made.

Focusing on the veneration of the Cross at its midpoint, the Lenten voyage itself reveals that the joy of the resurrection is achieved only through the Cross. “Through the cross joy has come into all the world,” we sing in one paschal hymn. And in the paschal troparion, we repeat again and again that Christ has trampled down death—by death! St Paul writes that the name of Jesus is exalted above every name because He first emptied Himself, taking on the lowly form of a servant and being obedient even to death on the Cross (Phil. 2:5-11). The road to the celebration of the resurrection is the self-emptying crucifixion of Lent. Pascha is the Passover from death to life.

Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ. Today I arise with Thee in Thy resurrection. Yesterday I was crucified with Thee: Glorify me with Thee, O Savior, in Thy kingdom (Ode 3, Paschal Canon).

The Procession

The divine services of the night of Pascha commence near midnight of Holy Saturday. At the Ninth Ode of the Canon of Nocturn, the priest, already vested in his brightest robes, removes the Holy Shroud from the tomb and carries it to the altar table, where it remains until the leave-taking of Pascha. The faithful stand in darkness. Then, one by one, they light their candles from the candle held by the priest and form a great procession out of the church. Choir, servers, priest and people, led by the bearers of the cross, banners, icons and Gospel book, circle the church. The bells are rung incessantly and the angelic hymn of the resurrection is chanted.

The procession comes to a stop before the principal doors of the church. Before the closed doors the priest and the people sing the troparion of Pascha, “Christ is risen from the dead...”, many times. Even before entering the church the priest and people exchange the paschal greeting: “Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!” This segment of the paschal services is extremely important. It preserves in the experience of the

Church the primitive accounts of the resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The angel rolled away the stone from the tomb not to let a biologically revived but physically entrapped Christ walk out, but to reveal that “He is not here; for He has risen, as He said” (Matt. 28:6).

In the paschal canon we sing:

Thou didst arise, O Christ, and yet the tomb remained sealed, as at Thy birth the Virgin’s womb remained unharmed; and Thou has opened for us the gates of paradise (Ode 6).

Finally, the procession of light and song in the darkness of night, and the thunderous proclamation that, indeed, Christ is risen, fulfill the words of the Evangelist John: “The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:5).

The doors are opened and the faithful re-enter. The church is bathed in light and adorned with flowers. It is the heavenly bride and the symbol of the empty tomb:

Bearing life and more fruitful than paradise Brighter than any royal chamber, Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our resurrection (Paschal Hours).

Matins

Matins commences immediately. The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of St John of Damascus. The paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Matins the paschal verses are sung. They relate the entire narrative of the Lord’s resurrection. They conclude with the words calling us to actualize among each other the forgiveness freely given to all by God:

This is the day of resurrection.

Let us be illumined by the feast.

Let us embrace each other.

Let us call “brothers” even those who hate us, And forgive all by the resurrection. . .

The sermon of St John Chrysostom is then read by the celebrant. The sermon was originally

composed as a baptismal instruction. It is retained by the Church in the paschal services because everything about the night of Pascha recalls the Sacrament of Baptism: the language and general terminology of the liturgical texts, the specific hymns, the vestment color, the use of candles and the great procession itself. Now the sermon invites us to a great reaffirmation of our baptism: to union with Christ in the receiving of Holy Communion.

If any man is devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. . . the table is fully laden; feast you all sumptuously. . . the calf is fatted, let no one go hungry away. . .

The Divine Liturgy

The sermon announces the imminent beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, normally follows immediately after paschal Matins. Foods from which the faithful have been asked to abstain during the Lenten journey are blessed and eaten only after the Divine Liturgy.

The Day Without Evening

Pascha is the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. Something of this new and unending day is conveyed to us in the length of the paschal services, in the repetition of the paschal order for all the services of Bright Week, and in the special paschal features retained in the services for the forty days until Ascension. Forty days are, as it were, treated as one day. Together they comprise the symbol of the new time in which the Church lives and toward which she ever draws the faithful, from one degree of glory to another.

O Christ, great and most holy Pascha.
O Wisdom, Word and Power of God,
grant that we may more perfectly partake of

Thee in the never-ending day of Thy kingdom
(Ninth Ode, Paschal Canon).

The V. Rev. Paul Lazor
New York, 1977

Patristic Wisdom for Daily Living with the Church Fathers:

Nature shows us the Resurrection

St. Clement of Rome tells us that belief in the resurrection should come naturally. God has given us signs everywhere; in the day and night, in the way seeds disappear and grow into fruitful plants. We should contemplate the constant resurrection of the natural world and learn from its example.

Think, dear friends, how the Lord continually proves to us that there will be a resurrection to come, of which he made the Lord Jesus Christ the first-fruits by raising him from the dead.

Contemplate the resurrection that is always going on. Day and night declare the resurrection to us. The night sinks to sleep, and the day rises; the day departs, and the night comes on. Look at the crops, how the grain is sown: the sower goes out and throws it on the ground, and the scattered seed, dry and bare when it fell on then ground, is gradually dissolved. Then out of its disintegration the mighty power of the Lord's providence raises it up again, and from one seed come many bearing fruit.

—St. Clement, *1 Corinthians*, 24

In God's Presence, consider....

If we are like seeds destined to grow into plants, what does that tell us about our life with God after we die?

Closing Prayer:

Father, you are the only source of growth and abundance. You help us plant our crops, and they yield their produce by your power. Lead me to share forever in the even greater gifts of heaven that are signified by the fruits of the earth.

***Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai
Velimirovich:***

*Who put me in this bed of worms? Who buried
me in the dust, to become a neighbor of snakes
and a banquet for worms?*

*Who pushed me off the high mountain, to
become a companion of bloodthirsty and godless
men?*

*My sin and Your justice, O Lord. My sin
stretches from the creation of the world, and it is
swifter than Your justice.*

*I count my sins throughout my entire life,
throughout the life of my father and all the way
back to the beginning of the world, and I say:
Truly, the name of the Lord's justice is mercy.*

*I bear the wounds of my fathers on myself—
wounds that I myself was preparing while I was
still in my fathers—and now they have all
appeared on my soul, like a spotted hide on a
giraffe, like a cloak of vicious scorpions that
sting me.*

*Have mercy on me, O Lord, open the floodgate
of the heavenly river of Your grace, and cleanse
me of leprous evil, so that without this leprosy I
may dare to proclaim Your name before the
other lepers without them ridiculing me.*

*At least raise me up by a head above the rotten
stench of this bed of worms, to inhale the
incense of heaven and return to life.*

*At least raise me up as high as a palm tree so I
can laugh at the serpents chasing my heels.*

*O Lord, if there has been even one good deed in
the course of my earthly journey, for the sake of
that one deed deliver me from the
companionship of bloodthirsty and godless men.*

*O Lord, my hope in despair.
O Lord, my strength in weakness.
O Lord, my light in darkness.*

*Place just one finger on my forehead and I shall
be raised. Or, if I am too unclean for Your
finger, let a single ray of light from Your
kingdom shine upon me and raise me—raise me,
from this bed of worms, O my beloved Lord.*

***The Archpastoral Message of His
Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon on the
Great and Holy Pascha 2015***

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy,
Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church
in America:

*It is the day of Resurrection! Let us be
illuminated, O ye people! Pascha! The Pascha of
the Lord from death to life and from earth to
heaven has Christ our God led us, as we sing a
song of victory. (Paschal Canon, Ode I)*

**CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS
RISEN!**

Today, on this radiant Feast of feasts, let us all
rejoice as newly illumined souls, basking in the
brightness and joy that is the Resurrection of our
Lord! Christ's triumph over corruption and
death is a victory for all people; there is none
vanquished but death and wickedness, for it is a
victory that has made salvation possible to
all. We offer our expressions of joy and
exhilaration today; joining the countless
Orthodox Christian faithful who, for more than
two millennia throughout the world, have bore
witness to the Pascha of Our Lord.

Today's world is yearning for satisfaction, and
hungry for love, truth and righteousness. We
have a precious responsibility to proclaim Christ
Jesus – the Risen One – of Whom Christians of
the second century said,

*This is the Alpha and Omega! This is the
beginning and the end, the ineffable beginning
and the incomprehensible end. This is the
Christ! This is the king! This is Jesus! This is
the commander! This is the Lord! This is He
Who rose from the dead! This is He Who sits at
the right hand of the Father! He bears the*

Father and is borne by Him! To him be the glory and the might forever. Amen! [On Pascha, Saint Melito of Sardis].

Christ’s victory over death and corruption is also our victory, for the divine Pascha of the Lord has brought us who are mortal and earthly “from death to life and from earth to heaven.” It is likewise He, the risen Lord, Who gave us the struggles of the Great Fast, that image of the “narrow path” of life, because indeed, our journey does not end with our Lord’s Pascha. Rather, today we are beginning that journey anew which ultimately leads to our own death, and resurrection at the glorious and awesome Second Coming of Christ. Today’s celebration prepares us for that journey to the eternal Kingdom.

The Resurrection opens for us a path of joyful repentance, so that like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, our heart may burn within us as our Lord opens to us the Holy Scripture, so that truly there is no longer anything standing in our way of knowing Him as “the Resurrection and the Life.”

As we continue on our path to salvation, we are given the Resurrection as a motivation and strength to accomplish every good thing necessary to expand His earthly Kingdom, the Church. Each of us is worthy of our calling to strengthen our personal faith in the risen Lord - and, like the disciples after the Resurrection, to share it in love and joy with all who would accept it.

There are still those, either by choice or circumstance who continue to sit in darkness - hungry, naked, alone, imprisoned, and in desperate need of Christ’s love and compassion. As St. Tikhon of Moscow wrote to his new flock in America, “It is our obligation to share our spiritual treasures, our truth, our light and our joy with those who do not have these gifts. And this duty lies not only on pastors and missionaries, but also on lay people, for the Church of Christ, in the wise comparison of St. Paul is a body, and in the life of the body every member must take part.”

It is my prayer today on this Feast of feasts, that this Holy Day of holy days, this Triumph of triumphs will strengthen all of us to embrace, continue and expand the mission of our Lord. And that He will give us the courage and fortitude necessary to engage the world with Christ’s message of love and salvation, and proclaim to all:

Christ is Risen!

With my Archpastoral blessings and love in the Risen Lord,

+TIKHON
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church

God and Us – Happiness:

How mistaken are those people who seek happiness outside of themselves, in foreign lands and journeys, in riches and glory, in great possessions and pleasures, in diversions and vain things, which have a bitter end!

It is the same thing to construct the tower of happiness outside of ourselves as it is to build a house in a place that is consistently shaken by earthquakes.

Happiness is found within ourselves, and blessed is the man who has understood this.

Happiness is a pure heart, for such a heart becomes the throne of God.

Thus says Christ of those who have pure hearts: I will dwell in them, and will walk in them, and I will be a God to them, and they will be my people (II Cor. 6:16).

What can be lacking to them? Nothing, nothing at all! For they have the greatest good in their hearts: God Himself!

St. Nektarios of Aegina,
Path to Happiness, I