

"Weep not for me, O Mother, beholding in the sepulchre the Son whom thou hast conceived without seed in thy womb. For I shall rise and shall be glorified, and as God I shall exalt in everlasting glory those who magnify thee with faith and love."

"O Son without beginning, in ways surpassing nature was I blessed at Thy strange birth, for I was spared all travail. But now beholding Thee, my God, a lifeless corpse, I am pierced by the sword of bitter sorrow. But arise, that I may be magnified. "By mine own will the earth covers me, O Mother, but the gatekeepers of hell tremble as they see me, clothed in the bloodstained garment of vengeance: for on the Cross as God have I struck down mine enemies, and I shall rise again and magnify thee."

"Let the creation rejoice exceedingly, let all those born on earth be glad: for hell, the enemy, has been despoiled. Ye women, come to meet me with sweet spices: for I am delivering Adam and Eve with all their offspring, and on the third day I shall rise again."

9th Ode of the Canon, Great Holy Saturday



24 April 2016 is Palm Sunday

Matins Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11; 15-17

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel: John 12:1-18

Resurrectional Apolytikion:

As by baptism we were buried with Thee, O Christ our God, so by Thy Resurrection we were deemed worthy of immortal life; and praising Thee, we cry: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

Seasonal Kontakion:

In Heaven, He is seated upon a Throne and on earth He rides upon a foal. O Christ our God, accept the praise of the Angels and the hymn of the Children who cry out to You, "Blessed are You who comes to recall Adam."

Readings and saints for this week:

Great & Holy Monday, 25 April: Matthew 21:18-43; Matthew 24:3-35
Apostle & Evangelist Mark; New Martyr Emmanuel & Companions

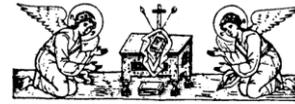
Great & Holy Tuesday, 26 April: Matthew 22:15-46, 23:1-39; Matthew 24:36-51, 25:1-46, 26:1-2
Hieromartyr Basil of Amaseia; Glaphyra the Righteous

Great & Holy Wednesday, 27 April: John 12:17-50; Matthew 26:6-16
Hieromartyr Symeon; Eulogios the Innkeeper

Great & Holy Thursday, 28 April: Luke 22:1-39; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32; Matthew 26:1-20; John 13:3-17; Matthew 26:21-39; Luke 22:43-44; Matthew 26:40-75, 27:1-2; The Twelve Gospels of the Passion of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Holy Thursday; 9 Martyrs of Cyzicus; Theocharus & Apostolus

Great & Holy Friday, 29 April: 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Matthew 27:62-66
Holy Friday; Jason & Sosipater of the 70; Martyr Cercyra

Great & Holy Saturday, 30 April: Matthew 27:62-66; Acts 12:1-11; Luke 9:1-6
Apostle James; New Martyr Agyre



Evangelion

A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith

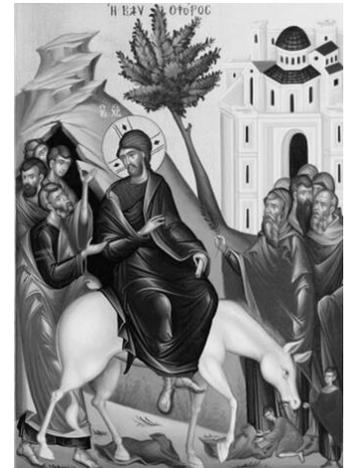
24 April 2016

Blessed is He Who Comes in the Name of the Lord

Today we enter the most sacred week of the Church's year. Yesterday we celebrated the raising of Lazarus from the dead, showing Christ's authority over death. Today, we commemorate His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, showing His identity as King and Ruler of all. By entering Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus Christ comes to us in a new way, and sets off the chain of events that will inaugurate His Kingdom.

With this triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem, we see Him revealed not simply as a teacher, but as the King who is welcomed by His subjects. However, He does not simply come as some general King "out there," but He comes to each of us personally. Just as the children welcomed Him into Jerusalem, so we are challenged to welcome Him into our hearts, to respond to Him with love and obedience, and to allow Him to reshape our desires according to His will.

Moreover, our King comes to us in meekness and humility, riding on a donkey. Unlike an earthly King, He comes to proclaim a Kingdom that is "not of this world," but which will still have an impact on the world. He comes to teach us the power of humility and the strength of love, a teaching that will find its ultimate expression in His death on the Cross, a death that is ultimately the supreme victory over death.



He who sits upon the throne of the cherubim, for our sake sits upon a foal; and coming to His voluntary Passion, today He hears the children cry 'Hosanna!' while the crowd replies, 'O Son of David, make haste to save those whom Thou hast created, blessed Jesus, since for this cause Thou has come, that we may know Thy glory.'

From Matins for Palm Sunday

A Guide to the Services of Holy Week

During the services of Holy Week we become eyewitnesses to and participants in the events of Christ's Passion and Death, which culminate in His great victory over death in the Resurrection. During the first three days, we have the services of Bridegroom Matins (held on the evening before) in which Christ speaks to us about the signs that will precede the last days, warning us of the judgment that is to come.



'Watch', Thou hast said to Thy disciples, O loving Saviour. 'For ye know not in what hour the Lord shall come to reward every man.'

Bridegroom Matins on Monday night

Both the Scriptures and the Fathers understand Jesus Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church. This expresses the profound union between Christ and the Church, as well as His deep and abiding love for her. During Holy Week, we see the immense love that Christ has for the Church as He empties Himself and accepts the humiliation of the Cross. Yet it is precisely in this humiliation that His true glory is revealed.

On **Sunday night**, the service focuses on the Patriarch Joseph (Genesis 37 and 39-40) whose innocent sufferings prefigure the Passion of Christ. They also commemorate the barren fig tree that was cursed by Christ (Matthew 21:18-20), a symbol of the judgment that awaits us if we do not bear the fruits of repentance.

On **Monday night**, the texts focus on the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), which provide the general theme for these first three days. We are told that the Bridegroom will come in the middle of the night, and "blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, but unworthy is he whom He shall find in slothfulness."

On **Tuesday night**, we commemorate the sinful woman who anointed Christ's feet (Matthew 26:6-13; Luke 7:36-50) and who provides us with an example of repentance and of transformation from a life of sin to a life of faith and obedience. Her faith is contrasted to the loss of faith that is shown by Judas, who not only betrays Christ, but who is also unwilling to repent of his sin.

On **Wednesday** of Holy Week the sacrament of the Anointing of the sick is celebrated, and all present are usually anointed, for we are all in need of spiritual healing.

The services of **Holy Thursday** take us into the Mystery of Christ's Passover. In the morning, with the Liturgy of St Basil the Great, we enter with Him into the upper room, where He establishes His New Covenant by instituting the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper. In the evening, we commemorate the undeserved sufferings of Jesus as we listen to the service of the Twelve Gospel Readings.

On **Holy and Great Friday**, the Royal Hours and Vespers are usually held in the morning. Towards the end of Vespers, the priest removes the Body of Christ from the Cross, wraps it in white linen and places it on the altar. He then takes the Epitaphios, the cloth on which the Body of Christ is painted or embroidered, from the altar and this is carried in procession before being placed in a sepulchre that represents Christ's tomb.



By being covered with the dust of the earth,
You renew the nature of mortals, O Creator;
The tomb and the winding-sheet reveal your deepest mystery, O Word;
The noble counsellor renders present the counsel of your eternal Father,
Who renews me in this wondrous way through you.

By your death, you transform that which is mortal;
By your burial, you transform that which is corruptible;
By your divinity, you draw us up from the abyss.
For, that which you assume, you make immortal;
Your flesh, O Master, did not undergo corruption,
And your soul did not remain in Hades where you were a stranger.

Hymn for Holy Saturday

On **Friday evening**, we keep watch at Christ's tomb. The service begins with lamentations, and we remember those who died before Christ's coming in the flesh. The theme is not so much that of mourning, but rather of watchful anticipation, confident that He has now descended to the dead in order to conquer the power of hell and release those who are held captive in the tombs.

On **Great and Holy Saturday**, Vespers is normally held in the morning, followed by the Liturgy of St Basil. This was originally part of the vigil for Pascha, and the texts are already full of the joyful anticipation of the Resurrection. In the Gospel reading we hear of the myrrh-bearing women who come to the tomb to anoint Christ's body, only to discover that He is Risen and that they are to share the news with the Apostles. To symbolise their joy, the priest scatters bay leaves and rose petals around the Church.

Finally, **towards midnight**, the Church gathers us together to celebrate the Pascha of the Lord with Matins and the Divine Liturgy. The Church is in darkness at the beginning of the service as we await the Light of Christ who conquers death.