

ORTHODOX NEWS

April 2012



PASCHA 2012

Patriarchate of Alexandria and all Africa
Holy Metropolis of Good Hope (Cape Town)

HOLY WEEK...an excerpt from *Greeks in a festive mood*

Institute of Modern Greek Studies, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki (Monolis Rriandaphyllidis Foundation), in accordance with its founder, is principally concerned with the cultivation of the language and the concern for Greeks living abroad. This present publication is addressed to children living outside of Greece whose daily life in their new country and their education has in some instances alienated them from their Greek language and traditions so often centered on the Holy Orthodox Church traditions.

Today is Thursday of Holy Week. The priest will read twelve lessons from the gospel, when he reads the sixth, the church bells will start to toll their lament... Thursday is the busiest day of Holy Week.

First we dye eggs. Mother hangs a red cloth on the balcony, a sign that we have dyed eggs red.

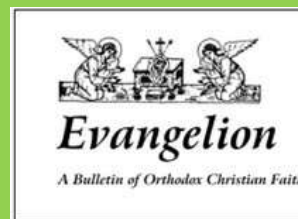
Here in Thessaloniki, if you go up to the Vlatadon Monastery and look down towards the , you will see a marvelous sight.

Candles light up the whole city as the "Epitaphios" from each church is carried in procession round the neighbourhood. You would think that God had sent His angels to light Christ's path.



Church of the Holy Archangels- George

New
Orthodox Weekly
Church bulletin



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***There laurel and palm leaves,
Censer and Incense
Blessing the swords and muskets.
On soil spread with vine-scarves
The smell of roasting lamb, Easter eggs cracking,
And "Christ is Risen"***

With the first salvos of the Greeks

By The Greek poet Elytis who was awarded the Nobel Prize

He is probably referring to the Revolution of 1821, when the Greeks celebrated their liberation from 400 years of Turkish occupation by saying "Christ is Risen" and firing guns or letting off crackers. A custom which is rarely practiced in these times.



**Christ Has Risen
Cathedral of Saint George
Cape Town**



**Church of the Dormition
Welkom**



**Christ has Risen
Church of the Holy Trinity
Durban**



**Church of Saint Mary of Egypt
Monastery of St John the Baptist
Robertson**



**Christ has Risen
Church of Saint George
East London**



***Bulgarian Easter
Eggs and Bread***

Easter is the most important Orthodox holiday of Ukraine. This is the celebration of the God's Resurrection In the evening people go to church for vespers service, bringing in beautiful baskets with a variety of foods in the Church - Paskha (sweet cream-cheese dish eaten at Easter), painted eggs, meat and food products, everything except vodka.

Like in Greece, the Easter Liturgy in Russia is held on Saturday night. Worshipers congregate in a totally darkened church, which symbolizes the despair of a world without faith in Jesus Christ.

As midnight approaches, worshipers light candles and then, at the strike of 12 o'clock, church bells announce the resurrection of Christ. An intensely joyful Orthodox liturgical chant can be heard throughout the streets of Russia until the conclusion of Easter Mass at dawn.

Monday 16 April Vespers Service Saint Raphael, Nikolaos and Irene



*Saints Raphael,
Nicholas and Irene
were canonized by the
Holy Synod of the
Ecumenical
Patriarchate of
Constantinople on the
11th day of
September in the Year
of our Lord, 1970.*



**His Eminence Archbishop Sergios seen censing relics
of Saint Raphael. The relics having arrived in
preparation for the consecration of the church.**

On Bright Tuesday, the first Tuesday after Pascha (Easter), we celebrate the memory of the glorious and newly manifested miracle-working neomartyrs **Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene** who suffered martyrdom by the Ottoman Turks on the island of Lesvos in 1463, ten years after the fall of Constantinople. Saint Raphael was the Abbot of a monastery at a place called Karyes, which is near the village of Thermi, with Nicholas as his deacon.

The Ottomans invaded the monastery on Holy Thursday, seized Saint Raphael and dragged him violently by his hair and beard. Then they tied him to a tree, beat him with a great force and struck him with preheated, red hot weapons of war for three days and nights. Finally, the Ottomans slaughtered him, first by sawing asunder his jaw from his head when he would not halt preaching his Paschal sermon.

Deacon Nicholas' heart gave out while enduring this witness and being tortured by the tyrants, he gave up his spirit to the Lord.

The twelve year old virgin Irene, daughter of the mayor of Thermi, was at the monastery with dozens of villagers who were also eventually martyred by the Ottomans. The sinister men cut off one of her arms, then threw her inside an earthen cask and boiled her in oil in the presence of her bewailing parents. The tortures of many martyrs that day have been compiled and are worthy of remembrance.

Five hundred years after their martyrdom in 1959, they began appearing to many residents of Thermi and nearby villagers in dreams and visions. They revealed the cruel torture to which they were subjected at the monastery. They offered guidance for the excavations there which led to major findings. By the Grace of God, Saint Raphael has been calling people to repent, giving spiritual counsel and consolation and curing every kind of disease.