

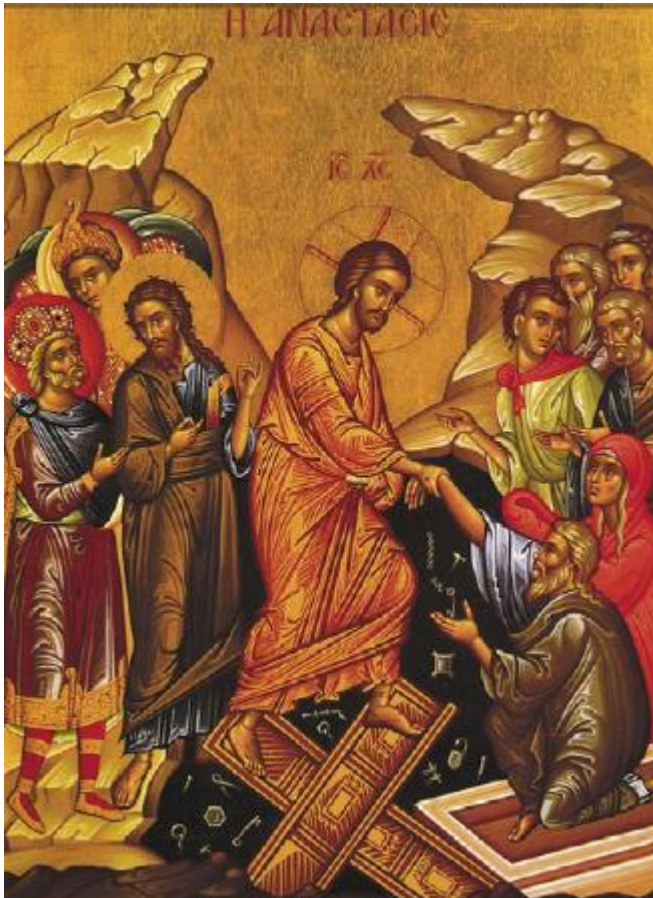
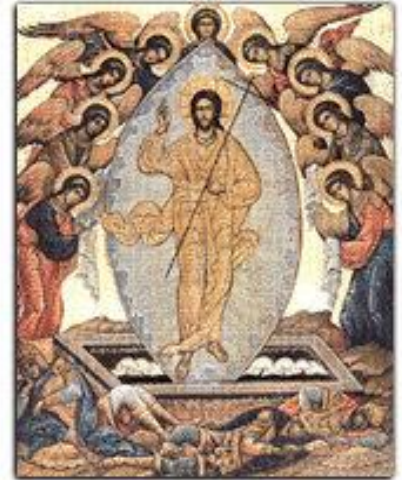
# The Voice In The Wilderness

*"A voice crying in the wilderness:  
Prepare ye the way of the LORD..."  
Matthew 3:3*

The Newsletter of St. John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, an Orthodox Christian witness to Cedar Park and Central Texas. Saint John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Church is a local parish of the Self-Ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America and is in the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America.

Volume 5 Number 10

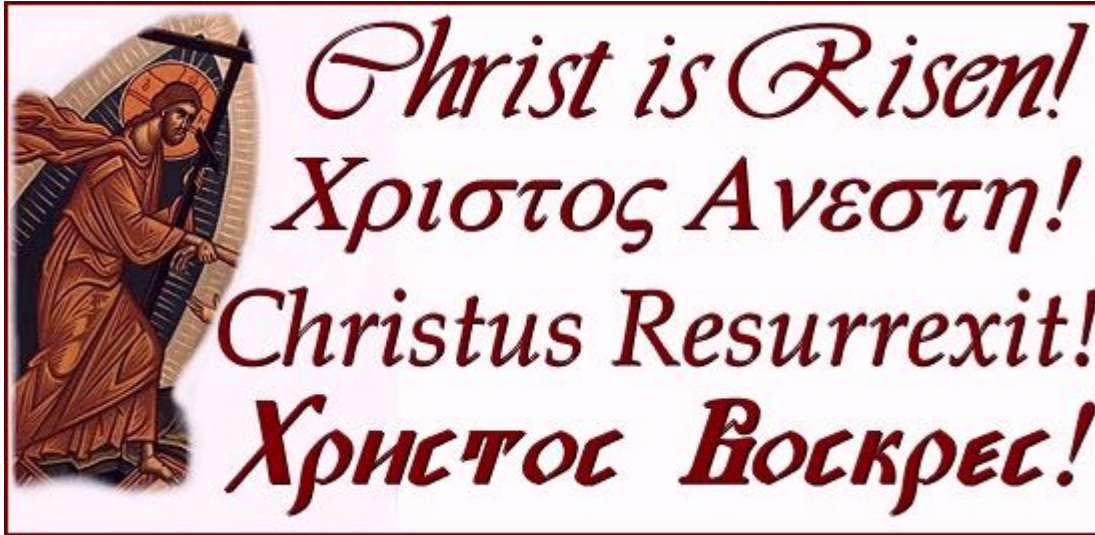
April/ Pascha 2007



## Holy Week and Pascha 2007 Services St John the Forerunner Antiochian Orthodox Church, Cedar Park Texas

### HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE April 1 – April 8

<b>Palm Sunday</b>	8:00 am	Orthros
	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy
	12:00 pm	Festal Potluck (Fish Allowed)
	7:00 pm	Bridegroom Service
<b>Monday</b>	9:00 am	Presanctified Liturgy
	7:00 pm	Bridegroom Service
<b>Tuesday</b>	9:00 am	Presanctified Liturgy
	7:00 pm	Bridegroom Service
<b>Wednesday</b>	9:00 am	Presanctified Liturgy
	7:00 pm	Unction Service
<b>Thursday</b>	9:00 am	Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil
	7:00 pm	Service of 12 Gospels
<b>Friday</b>	9:00 am	Royal Hours
	3:30 pm	Descent from the Cross Vespers
	7:00 pm	Lamentations
<b>Saturday</b>	9:00 am	Vesperal Liturgy
	11:00 pm	Rush Service
<b>Pascha</b>	12:00 am	Paschal Liturgy
	2:00 am	Paschal Potluck
	2:00 pm	Agape Vespers with Picnic



*From  
the  
Pastor's  
Desk*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

*Christ is Risen!*

*On this day of days, I greet you with joy and thankfulness. Joy, because our Savior is risen and Death has been cast down, Thankfulness, because I have the honor of being your pastor. St John is an amazing place, and you are wonderful people. Kfouria Cynthia, Brendan and Katie also join with me in wishing each of you a grace-filled feast. May the Paschal Season bring Light and Peace and Great Mercy to all the people of our parish, and may those blessings abound for all the people of Central Texas!*

*your unworthy priest*

*Aidan +*

***CHRIST IS RISEN!***

**By Protospesbyter Alexander Schmemmann**

My belief in Christ does not come from the opportunity given to me to participate since earliest childhood in the paschal celebration. Rather, Pascha is made possible, that unique night fills with light and joy and such victorious power in the greeting "Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!" because my faith itself was born from experience of the living Christ. How and when was it born? I don't know, I don't remember. I only know that every time I open the gospel and read about Christ, read his words, read his teaching, I consciously repeat, with all my heart and being, what was said by those who were sent to arrest Christ but who returned to the Pharisees without him: "No man ever spoke like this man" (Jn. 7:46).

Therefore what I know first of all is that Christ's teaching is alive, and that nothing on earth can be compared with it. And this teaching is about him, about eternal life, about victory over death, about a

love that conquers and overcomes death. I know as well that in a life where everything seems so difficult and tiresome, the one constant that never changes and never leaves is this inner awareness that Christ is with me. "I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to You" (Jn. 14:18).

And he does come and give the feeling of his presence through prayer, through a thrill of soul, through a joy so incomprehensible, yet so very alive, through his mysterious, but again so certain, presence in church during services and in sacraments. This living experience is always growing, this knowledge, this awareness which becomes so obvious that Christ is here and that his word has been fulfilled: whoever loves Me, "I will love him and manifest myself to him Jn. 14:21). And whether I am in a crowd or alone, this certitude of his presence, this power of his word, this joy of faith in him remains with me. This is the only answer and the only proof.

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? Why do you mourn the incorrupt amid corruption?" All Christianity, therefore, is the experience of faith repeated again and again as if for the first time, through its incarnation in rites, words, music, and colors. To the unbeliever, it may indeed seem like a mirage; he hears only words, he sees only incomprehensible ceremonies, and he understands them only outwardly. But for believers, all of this radiates from within, and not as proof of his faith, but as its result, as its life in the world, in the soul, in history.

Therefore the darkness and sadness of Holy Friday is for us something real, alive, contemporary; we can cry at the cross and experience everything that took place in that triumph of evil, treachery, cowardice, and betrayal; we can contemplate the life-bearing tomb on Holy Saturday with excitement and hope. And therefore, every year we can celebrate Easter, Pascha, the Resurrection. For Easter is not the remembrance of an event in the past. It is the real encounter in happiness and joy, with him whom our hearts long ago knew and encountered as the life and light of all light.

Easter night testifies that Christ is alive and with us, and that we are alive with him. The entire celebration is an invitation to look at the world and life, and to behold the dawning of the mystical day of the Kingdom of light. "Today the scent of Spring begins," sings the church, "and the new creation exults..." It exults in faith, in love and in hope.

**This is the day of resurrection, Let us be illumined by the feast, Let us embrace each other, Let its call "brothers" even those that hate us, And forgive all by the resurrection, And so let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, Trampling down death by death, And upon those in the tombs bestowing life.**

## *Christ is risen!*

[Fr Alexander Schmemmann, Dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, NY, and a leading Orthodox theologian, died in 1983 at the age of 62. Eternal Memory](#)



**Our Father Among the Saints,  
RAPHAEL  
Bishop of Brooklyn**

*Good Shepherd of the Lost Sheep in America*

November 8, 1860 – February 27, 1915  
Feast Day: First Saturday in November



**Shrine and reliquary in honor of  
St. RAPHAEL AT  
St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox  
Cathedral of Brooklyn, New York**

God of Truth and Love, Father Son , and Holy Spirit  
Hear our prayer for those who do not know You  
especially (insert your prayer list here). That they  
may come to a saving knowledge of the truth, and  
that Your Name may be praised among all peoples of  
the world. Sustain, inspire, and enlighten Your  
servants who bring them the Gospel. Bring fresh vigor  
to wavering faith; sustain our faith when it is still  
fragile. Continually renew missionary zeal in ourselves  
and in the Church, and raise us up as missionaries who  
will follow You to the ends of the world. Make us  
witnesses to Your goodness -- full of love, full of  
strength, and full of faith -- for Your glory and the  
salvation of the entire world. Through the prayers of  
St. Raphael of Brooklyn, St. Paul, St. Fotini, Ss. Cyril  
and Methodios, St. Innocent of Alaska, and all the  
missionary saints, Have mercy on us and save us.  
Amen

## An Introduction to the Church April 20 – 21

The St. Raphael Project is going to bear the fruit of your prayers as we sponsor, "*An Introduction to the Church*". It will be held at our building on Friday, April 20, and Saturday, April 21. The event will consist of four presentations. Here is a schedule for the April event:

### Friday, April 20

7pm **The History of the Church**

(Light Refreshments will be served on Friday night)

### Saturday, Apr 21

9am **Holy Tradition**

10:15 **Worship**

Noon **Lunch**

1pm

When you invite people, please remember to make the invitation a personal one. In other words, invite the person to your home or take them out for coffee—and plan on attending the event with the people you invite. In fact, it is a good idea to offer them a ride on both Friday night and Saturday; that way, they will not have to walk into a building full of strangers, and they will be able to ask you questions afterwards.

Because space is limited in our facility, the only members of the parish who will be able to attend the event will be those people who are actually bringing guests. And because we want to be sure and have enough food and seating and study materials, please let Father Aidan know ahead of time how many people you will be bringing with you.

If you have any questions or if you need some suggestions as to how to actually invite people to this event, call Father Aidan or send him an email or catch him after a service.

# The Icons of Pascha

There are several prototypes of icons that are prominent during the season of Pascha. Each tells a portion of the story surrounding the Feast of Feasts, the Holy Pascha. The prototypes primarily include the resurrection icons, the myrrh-bearing-women icons, and the Mary Magdalene icons.

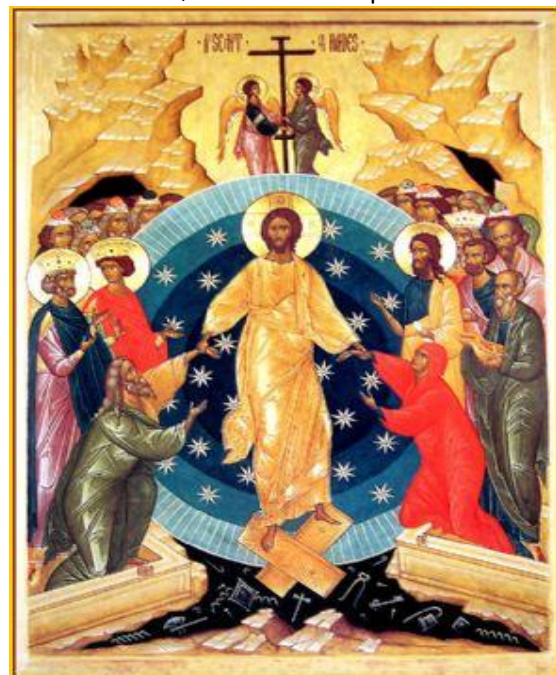
## The Resurrection Icons

The "Resurrection" prototypes include the well known "Harrowing of Hell", the lesser known "Christ rising from the Tomb", and the western influenced "Christ Victorious" icons. While all focus upon the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus, they each add additional information that open the story to our souls. These prototypes appeared after the victory of the icons in 843 a.d.



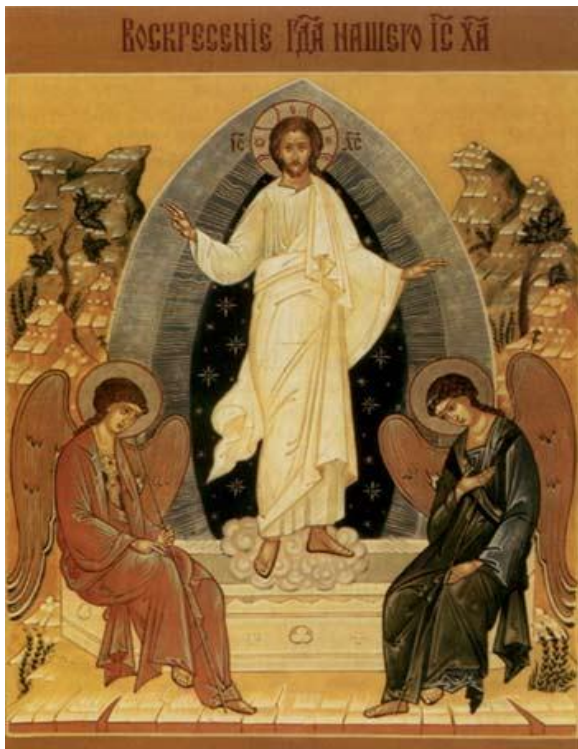
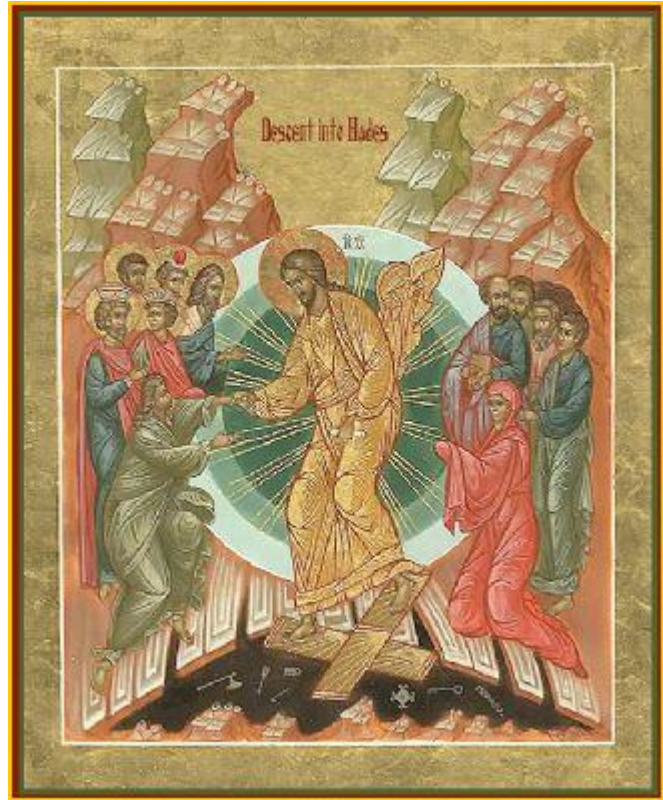
An excellent example of the "Harrowing of Hell" is this Fresco dating to 1315 of Christ's descent into Hades, depicting the liberation of the dead from Hades' bonds. This Icon is from the walls of the Church of the Holy Savior of Chora, Istanbul, Turkey. As with most icons of this prototype, the resurrected Christ is surrounded by an almond-shaped aureole surrounding him is called a 'mandorla'. The mandorla is portrayed because after his resurrection Christ was a purely divine figure and no longer a human being. He is clothed in white. Christ is standing feet firmly planted upon the ground, over the broken gates of Hell as Adam and Eve are lifted out of Hades. The locks and chains of death are broken and an old man signifying death/devil is bound and chained. On the right of Christ, Amos with a shepherds crook, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, Zachariah & Elias look on. On the left are the Old Testament kings, David and Solomon, along with the Forerunner, St. John the Baptist.

This Modern Slavic Icon labeled in English "Descent into Hades". It is an example of the bright colors used in eastern European Icons of the Harrowing of Hell. This icon expands the basic prototype by including additional information. Two angels at the top hold the empty cross a sign of the powerlessness of the world over the Lord. The resurrected Christ surrounded by the mandorla is clothed in gold, a sign of his resurrected state and glory. In this icon, He stands victoriously upon the broken Gates of Hell as Adam and Eve are lifted out of tombs in Hades. Hell is shown as a gaping black hole into which Christ descends as conqueror. The gates are shattered and shown lying across one another in the shape of a cross. The locks and chains of death are shown broken and empty to indicate that death no longer binds mankind. On the right we see St John the Forerunner, Moses is seen with the 10 Commandments, King Josiah, the Prophets Amos, Isaiah, Elias, , Zachariah and many other minor prophets look on. On the left are the Old Testament kings, David and Solomon, the Three Youths in Babylonian headgear, Daniel the prophet, along with other souls awaiting Christ in Hades.



This modern rendition of an older 15<sup>th</sup> Century Russian prototype of the Harrowing of Hell is labeled in English "Descent into Hades".

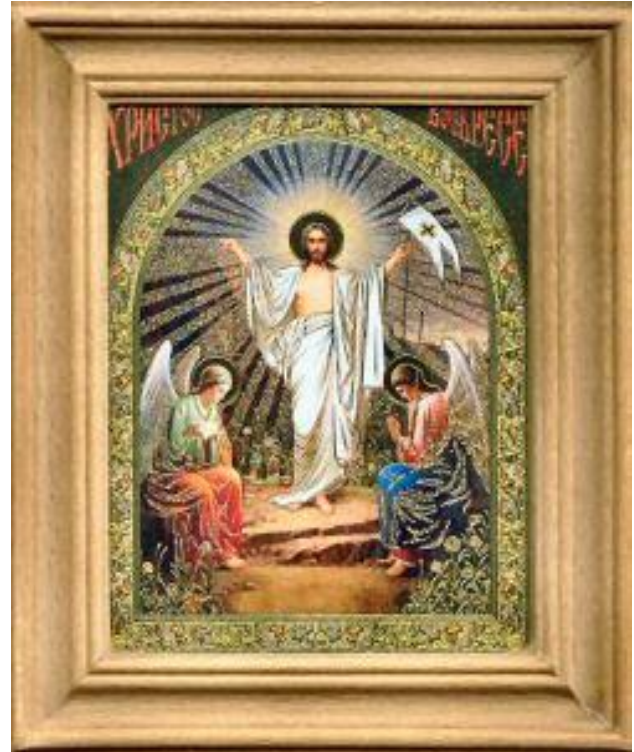
In this icon, the resurrected Christ surrounded by round mandorla with rays of glory coming from Christ. He is clothed in gold in recognition of His resurrected state and glory. In this icon, He stands victoriously upon the broken Gates of Hell as Adam and Eve have been lifted out of Hades. Hell is shown as a gaping black hole over which Christ stands as conqueror. The gates of death are shattered and shown lying across one another in the shape of a cross. The locks and chains of death are shown broken and empty to indicate that death no longer binds mankind. On the right we see Moses holding the book of commandments. Amos, Isaiah, Elias, and many other minor prophets look on. On the left are the Forerunner St. John the Baptist, the Old Testament kings, David and Solomon, and in the rear Daniel the Prophet is seen in Babylonian headgear.



This modern Russian Icon, Christ rising from the tomb, is actually modeled on western paintings of Christ coming from the tomb dating from the middle ages. As you will note, it has been successfully adapted using the rules of iconography and is now accepted as an Orthodox icon.

In the Icon, the resurrected Christ is surrounded by an almond-shaped aureole surrounding him is called a 'mandorla'. The mandorla is portrayed because after his resurrection Christ was a purely divine figure and no longer a human being. The darkest part of the mandorla represents the unseen light, too bright to be depicted, with rays of golden light emanating from Christ. He is clothed in white. Sitting on either side of him are two angels, one carrying the staff of a messenger (he will be the angel at the tomb), the other with his hand over his heart showing obedience and honor to the Resurrected Christ. Christ stands upon clouds indicative of His resurrection and immortal condition.

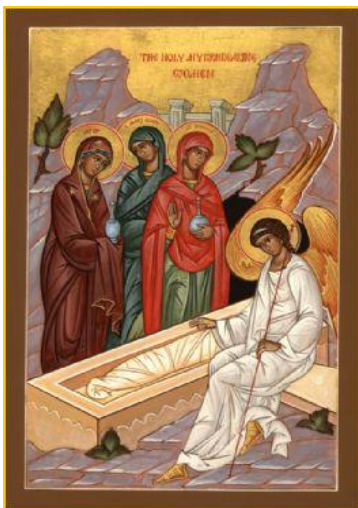
This icon is often called "Christ Victorious" or simply the "NIKA" icon. This very western image of the resurrected Christ coming out of the tomb has also found its way into Orthodox Iconography in both Greece and Russia. I have seen adaptations of this image down to the cross banner on posters sold in Greece and images painted in Orthodox Churches in Russia when a western style of iconography has been employed.



The more traditional rules would indicate that the resurrected Christ is surrounded by an almond-shaped aureole surrounding him is called a 'mandorla'. Here however, the mandorla is shown just as rays of light and dark but are still indicative of the resurrected Christ, now a purely divine figure. Depending on the level of adaptation the Mandorla may also be all of gold and white or more traditional as noted on the icon above. Christ is seen in white but with his robe open to reveal the wound to his chest. This is unusual for Orthodox iconography as the wounds are visible in this icon. This icon shows two angels in worship of the resurrected Christ. Often this icon may also show soldiers passed out in fear or two angels holding the instruments of the passion.

### The Myrrh-Bearing Women Icons

Below you will note three very similar icons from the same prototype, "the Myrrh-Bearing Women" This may also be known as the "Angel at the Tomb"

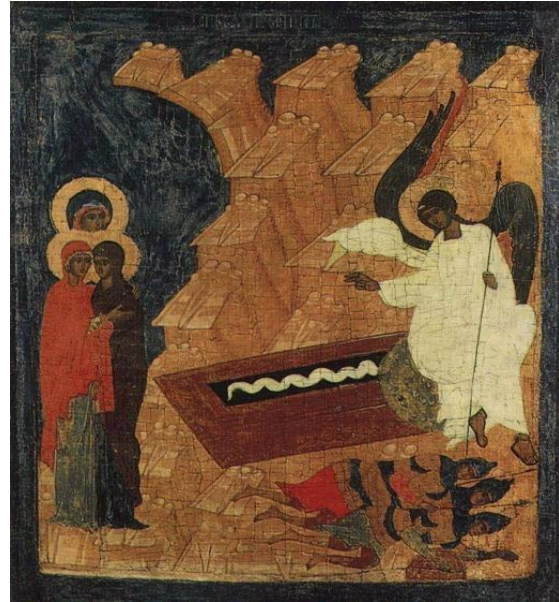


The icon of the Holy Myrrh-bearers depicts the biblical story of the women arriving at the tomb to anoint the body of Christ. Usually three women are depicted, Mary the Theotokos, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. In their hands a seen the left and right Greek School icons are vials of myrrh oil to anoint the body and the angel in white is seated upon the stone that covered the tomb, and he is pointing to the empty burial clothes showing that Christ has risen from the dead. Holy tradition is that the angel, who holds a staff of a messenger, is the Archangel Gabriel.



This icon is one of the older versions of the Myrrh-bearing women prototypes. From one of the Eastern European Slavic schools of iconography we see, the three women arrive. They stand in wonderment as they see the tomb unguarded and observe the angel is seated upon the stone that closed the door of the tomb. At his feet are soldiers who have passed out in fear, and he is pointing to the empty garments showing that Christ has risen from the dead. The angel carries a staff symbolic that he is a messenger from God. Holy Tradition states that the angel, who holds the staff, is the Archangel Gabriel.

The icon shows only three women but the holy Scriptures identify by name some of the others: the most holy Virgin Mary, who in Matthew 27:56 and Mark 15:40 is called "the mother of James and Joses " (these are the sons of Joseph by a previous marriage, and she was therefore their step-mother).



Also identified are Mary Magdalene, Mary, the wife of Clopas; Joanna, wife of Chouza, a steward of Herod Antipas; Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee; Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus; and Susanna. Holy tradition indicated that many women visit the tomb of Jesus, however the evangelists have kept silence about their names. (Matthew 27:55-56; 28:1-10. Mark 15:40-41)

### **Mary Magdalene and the Resurrected Christ**

The prototype of this icon shows Christ robed but his wounds of the passion still showing as a method of identifying him as the Christ and not merely a gardener. The icon has precedent in many of the religious paintings of the thirteenth and fourteenth century in Western Europe.

The icon to the right is an excellent example of the prototype of the "Do Not touch me" icon. In this icon Christ appears before His tomb to St. Mary Magdalene after His Resurrection, and she kneels before Him in worship and love. Jesus says to this repentant myrrh-bearer, full of faith and awe, "Do not touch me; for I am not ascended to my Father..."

The icon painted in 1657 is much the same as the icons and western paintings of the thirteenth and fourteenth century. The earliest surviving icons of this prototype are found in eastern Europe and indicate a western source as seen by the flowing hair and red robe. Mary kneels, hair flowing in remembrance of her kneeling to anoint her Lord's feet before his crucifixion. The tomb of Christ in the sepulcher cave has the burial clothes still upon it. This icon is very Orthodox in all aspects. Christ's appearance is that of Christ as God-Man robed in his traditional red and blue robes. He bears the marks of the crucifixion but they are not graphically represented as in western paintings, but merely dots representative of His passion.



By the hand of Emmanuel Tzanes 1657



This modern icon entitled "The Risen Christ Appearing to St. Mary Magdalene" is by Greek-American iconographer Nicholas Papas (a member of St. Michael's Antiochian Orthodox Church in Greensburg, PA) and is located at Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Elmswood Pa.

It is representative of the "Do Not touch me" icon. We see St. Mary Magdalene kneeling before Christ, her arms crossed in worship and love. Christ's wounds here are also visible but symbolically shown without the pouring of blood often seen in the western counterparts. Jesus says to this repentant myrrh-bearer, full of faith and awe, "Do not touch me; for I am not ascended to my Father..." Of interest in this icon is the stone that has rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. The stone resembles a red egg. This is one of the connections with the red eggs that are blessed and distributed at Pascha, as they symbolize the stone that had been rolled away, not to let Christ out, but to reveal that He had risen from the dead! The tomb still has the burial clothes with in it.

Icons used in this article may be found at <http://www.comeandseeicons.com> , [www.skete.com](http://www.skete.com), [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org) many are available for purchase thru those websites. If you are interested in learning more about Icons may we suggest **For Further Reading:** Leonid Ouspensky and Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 575 Scarsdale Road Crestwood NY, 10707 or Olga Dunlop, trans. *The Living God: A Catechism for the Christian Faith*, St. Vladimir's Seminary, NY

### 3rd Annual DOWAMA Parish Life Conference

Host Parish: Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, Topeka, KS  
Presiding Hierarch: Bishop BASIL

June 14-17, 2007

Keynote Speaker: H. Tristram Engelhardt, Ph.D., M.D.

Host Priest: Rev. Fr. Joseph Longofono

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## Orthopraxis: Orthodox Customs for Palm Sunday to Pascha

Orthopraxis involves the traditions and practices or customs surrounding the day to day living of the Orthodox Life. Some of these come from Holy Tradition (written with a capital "T") which encompass 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 beginnings of Church history. But Orthopraxis is more than this it also includes the 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 they 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, it is 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 priest 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. The traditional Orthodox Paschal greeting is: "Christ is Risen!" The answer is: "Indeed He is Risen". This is the greeting during 40 days after Pascha. Also, These greetings are exchanged during the tapping of the eggs, mentioned above: They are repeated 3 times and the actual tapping is after that.
- ❖ In Bulgaria and the Middle East, One or two days before Easter each Christian family would send presents to their Moslem friends: a loaf of bread and 10-15 red eggs. The Moslems feel honored by the gifts, so common is this tradition that Moslem neighbors often felt hurt if they don't receive it. After the Agape vespers, the Monks of St Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai offer small Pascha sweet yeast breads and two eggs to the area Bedouin tribesmen.
- ❖ A Slavic tradition for Pascha is to take particular pity upon those who were in prison on Pascha night. Slavic parishioners send gifts on this day of kulich, Pashka cheese, and a red egg -- to those ailing in hospitals, and to those incarcerated in jail. Another Slavic tradition is to exchange a Paschal kiss [\*khristosovat'sya\*] with the dead who lie in their graves. The Orthodox Slav's go to the cemetery, place a red egg on each Orthodox grave, and sing Paschal hymns, in order that the dead, too, might hear: \*"Khristos voskrese!" or Christ is Risen !
- ❖ Ukrainian Orthodox give Pysanky (intricately designed Pascha Eggs) to family members and respected outsiders. To give a pysanka is to give a symbolic gift of life, which is why the egg must remain entire. Furthermore, each of the designs and colors on the pysanka is likely to have a deep, symbolic meaning. Traditionally, pysanky designs are chosen to match the character of the person to whom the pysanka is to be given. Typically, pysanky are displayed prominently in a public room of the house throughout Pascha to Pentecost.

- ❖ In Lebanon, Antiochian Orthodox Christians spend the afternoon, after the Agape service, visiting as many people as possible to greet them with "Eel Messieh Kahm" [Christ is Risen!] Each household has some delicious date filled maamoul cookies laid out on a big plate with other delicacies such as chick peas covered with sugar and sugared almonds, which are offered to visitors.
- ❖ In Greece, the Bells of Pascha are rung throughout the day of Pascha accompanied by the sharp retort of fireworks going off well into the night. Likewise in the Middle East, fireworks and sometimes guns are fired to announce the resurrection of Christ.
- ❖ In Russia, The bells of all Orthodox Churches, those now opened and those still being restored and repaired, sound out the glad tidings of **Χριστός Βοσκειν!** **Christ is Risen!**
- ❖ A popular tradition in our parish is shared by both Slavic families and by some Greek families. We bring 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. We then have a common meal after the Liturgy in which these blessed foods are shared with others in the church. A common practice is to have a lit candle in the basket, symbolizing the Light of Christ, when the priest blesses the basket.
- ❖ Sweet egg and yeast breads known as *Kulich* (Slavic) and *Tsourekia* (Greek) are baked and served with the first meal of Pascha and throughout Pascha in celebration of the Feast of Feasts. These breads are spread with rich fresh butter or a sweet cheese called Pashka. These foods, rich with items not allowed during the fast, are symbolic of the festal nature of this Feast of Feasts, the Pascha.

**CHRIST IS RISEN! Χριστός Ανέστη! Χριστός Βοσκειν! El Messieh kahm! Kristus vstal a mrtvych! Cristo ha resucitado! Christus ist erstanden!**



## Red Pascha Eggs

You may want to ask why Red Eggs? Why the Coloring of the pascha eggs"? There are several traditions surrounding this coloring of the Pascha Eggs.

- 1) The red eggs symbolize the resurrection Jesus Christ, red for his blood and egg for life.
- 2) Another, that shortly after the resurrection, Mary Magdalene traveled to Rome and presented the Emperor with a red egg while exclaiming "Christ is risen"

A Pious tradition is that the cracking of eggs symbolizes the shattering of Hades by the victorious Christ.

### Ingredients:

- Uncooked eggs (brown eggs will produced richer and darker dyed eggs, but white eggs are OK)
- Water
- 3/4 cup Vinegar
- Red food dye or coloring (Greek Powder Red Food Dye is best but you can also use American Red Food Coloring with a nice color also following the instructions below)
- Vegetable oil
- A few cotton balls

**Directions:** Carefully wash and dry each egg. Set a large pot of water to boil. Add a red dye or food coloring and 3/4 cup of vinegar to the water, and boil for a few minutes. Slowly lower the eggs into the pot, and when the water comes to a boil, lower the heat. Let eggs simmer for 15 min., then remove them carefully from the pot. If you plan

to cook more eggs, add an additional 2 tbs. vinegar to the water. Wipe cooked eggs with an oil-soaked cotton ball, then wipe each egg with a clean dry, cloth leaving a nice shine to the egg.



## *Food For The Kingdom*



Here are some traditional pascha recipes to help you to have a traditional Pascha Celebration in your home. The recipes are different from the ones we published last year. Eggs, Rich Breads are all feasting and appropriate to the celebration of the Feast. May you have a Blessed Pascha!

### **Sweet Greek Easter Bread (Tsourekia)**

Tsourekia is a special sweet bread that is prepared at Pascha.. It is usually decorated with a red egg or eggs These red eggs symbolize the blood of Christ redeeming the world. The bread is braided and a red egg is added. You can use several red eggs and braid the dough in a round pan or in a single braided straight loaf as shown on the left. The recipe in this issue varies only slightly from last year's recipe. The use of a triple braid is symbolic of the Holy Trinity in Three Persons but One God. It is traditional to use either 1 Red Egg for the One God or three eggs one for each member of the Holy Trinity.

#### **Ingredients:**

- 3 packages (or 2ozs. of fresh yeast) yeast
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 1 c milk
- 10-11 c flour
- 7 cups eggs
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 cup (melted) butter
- 1 tablespoon powdered anise seeds
- lemon rind
- 1 or more red dyed eggs

#### **Directions:**

1. Dissolve yeast in warm water. Add milk, 1 teaspoon sugar and 2 cups of flour. Stir batter, cover and set in a warm place for about 1 hour.
2. Beat 6 eggs, sugar and lemon rind over hot water.
3. Stir mixture into batter. Add remaining flour.
4. Put dough on floured pastry board and knead, adding the butter, until smooth and elastic.
5. Place in a large buttered bowl and brush surface lightly with melted butter.
6. Cover with a cloth and let it rise in a warm place until it has doubled its size, about 2 hours.

7. Shape dough into long ropes 3/4 to 1 inch diameter and cut into 12 inch lengths.
8. Braid together loosely 3 ropes on a greased baking sheet.
9. Let it rise, covered, until doubled-about 1 hour. Brush with beaten egg and bake in moderate oven 25 to 30 minutes.
10. Note: You may also press into the braids one or more dyed eggs. In addition, you may also sprinkle the breads with sesame seeds and/or shredded almonds.



### Russian Easter Bread KULICH

This is a new recipe from last years. It is interesting because it has a Orange Sauce to glaze it. The Easterbread is a cross between brioche and challah, this bread (called *kulich*) is a lightly sweetened, egg-glazed cylinder, often baked in a coffee can to make a tall loaf, then drizzles with a white icing. Sometimes the Russian letters XB or a three bar Orthodox cross will be done in icing, colorful candies, or candied fruit. The *kulich* would sit proudly in the center of the family Easter basket, surrounded by meats, cheeses, butter, and eggs. It's a central part of the Easter meal, served with sweet Pashka cheese and unsalted butter.

#### Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. Sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. Salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water
- 4 cups sifted flour
- 1 tsp. grated lemon peel
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup seedless raisins
- 2 Tbsp. chopped citron
- 2 Tbsp. grated orange peel
- 1 pkg. or cake yeast, active dry or compressed
- 2 Tbsp. fine bread crumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup soft butter

#### Directions:

1. Scald milk, and stir in 1 Tbsp. sugar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt.
2. Pour into a large mixing bowl, and stir in 1 cup flour. Add yeast dissolved in water (use warm, not hot, water for active dry yeast, lukewarm water for compressed yeast). Cover, and let rise in a warm place, free from draft for about 45 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, cream the butter and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, and blend in beaten eggs (setting aside 1 Tbsp. beaten egg to glaze bread later).
4. Stir in remaining 3 cups flour, raisins, citron, orange peel, and lemon peel, and combine with yeast mixture. Turn out onto a floured board, and knead until dough is smooth and elastic.
5. Divide dough into 4 equal parts, and round into balls. Place each ball of dough in a separate well-greased 1-lb. can, such as an empty baked bean, corned beef hash, or coffee can. (Dough should fill each can about  $\frac{1}{2}$  full).
6. Cover, and let rise in a warm place, free from draft, until doubled in bulk. Brush top of each with reserved beaten egg, and sprinkle lightly with breadcrumbs.
7. Arrange cans on cookie sheet. Bake in a moderately hot oven (400°F.) for 15 minutes.
8. Reduce heat to moderate (350°F.) and bake 35 to 40 minutes longer.
9. Remove bread from cans and cool on wire racks.

10. Decorate while still warm with confectioner's sugar icing or the orange cream sauce that follows.

Recipe makes 4 loaves.

### Orange Cream Sauce

#### Ingredients:

- One pint soft cream cheese
- 1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1 Tablespoon sugar
- zest of one lemon
- food coloring if desired

#### Directions:

1. One pint soft cream cheese brought to room temperature. Turn out into a mixing bowl .
2. Add to the cream cheese 1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate into which you have dissolved 1 Tablespoon sugar.
3. Add the zest of one lemon
4. Beat with electric mixer till very smooth - add more orange juice and sugar if desired, making sure to have no granules of sugar noticeable in the mixture.
5. (optional) Add several drops of food coloring if desired.
6. Ice the top of your Kulich and decorate with nuts or candies,

The Pascha Breads are best with sweet (unsalted butter) or spread with the Pashka sweet cheese. It may be served toasted for breakfast as well as eaten with the Pashka as a dessert for the festal meal.

### Russian Pashka Cheese.

This is a more traditional and a slightly more complicated sweet Pashka Cheese than we presented last year [see Pascha 2006 edition of the Voice on the parish website [www.theforerunner.org](http://www.theforerunner.org)]. This traditional Russian Pashka Cheese is wonderfully rich and well worth the extra effort if you have the time to make it. I hope you will enjoy making and serving it this Pascha.

This picture is an example of a molded Pascha Cheese mold being served, note the three bar cross.



#### Ingredients:

- 2 lb cottage cheese, dry curd
- 3/4 c butter, sweet
- 1 1/2 c confectioners sugar
- 4 egg yolk
- 1 egg, hardboiled & sieved
- 3/4 c whipping cream
- 1/2 tsp salt

- 1 ts vanilla
- 1/2 c raisins, finely chopped
- Mold - one 6" clay or plastic flower pot with a hole in the bottom.

Procedure:

1. Line the pot with a dampened cheesecloth of double thickness.
2. Press cheese through sieve, or mix it in a blender until smooth.
3. Cream butter and sugar until light.
4. Beat in egg yolks, one at a time.
5. Press yolk-cream mixture through sieve.
6. Combine with cheese. Pour mixture into prepared mold.
7. Cover with cheesecloth and place a saucer top, with a weight on it, so the juice can drain out.
8. Chill in refrigerator at least 24 hours.
9. Unmold on plate and garnish with fresh strawberries, pineapple or grapes before serving.  
Replace mold on top to store in refrigerator. Some people decorate the cheese with fresh spring flowers.

Note: You may use a clay flower pot or purchase a special Pascha Cheese Mold for this recipe, either way the cheese is delicious.)

Some people decorate the cheese with edible flowers or fresh spring flowers.

## Have You Updated the Expiration Date On Your Credit/Debit Cards in eScrip?

Many of us have been helping St. John's parish financially by participating for several years now in our eScrip rebate program. Without any cost to us, St. John has been receiving monthly rebates from all our credit and debit card purchases at 22,000+ merchant partners. Your eScrip participation provides funds on an automatic monthly basis for our parish programs and is deeply appreciated.

When is the last time you checked your "my eScrip" account on the eScrip web site-- [www.escrrip.com](http://www.escrrip.com) ? Whether you signed up when we began this program about 3.5 years ago or more recently, have any of your credit or debit cards been renewed with a new expiration date after you registered them in our eScrip program? Did you update your "my eScrip" account with the new card expiration date? If you did not, we are no longer getting a rebate from your card purchases even though your card numbers are unchanged. Are you using any credit or debit cards which have not been registered in our eScrip program? These two actions will quickly and significantly adversely impact our rebate volume.

Please take a moment now to update your account. It's easy and quick.

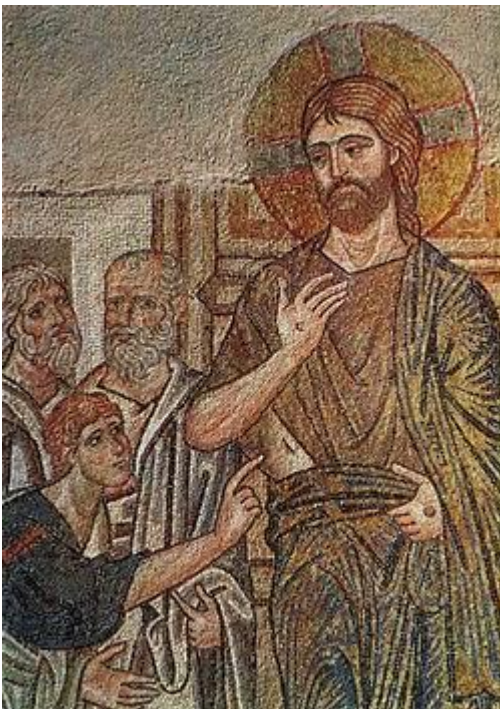
Here's how. Go to the eScrip web site. Bookmark it if you have not already done so. Click on "my eScrip". Type in your Supporter ID# or Username and your password (passwords are case sensitive). Here you can do many things with your account--view your monthly eScrip purchase reports, customize your password, update your phone number, street and email addresses, register or update your credit and debit cards, etc.

Click on "Register credit and debit cards". This will list all the cards you have already registered. You can add new cards or update the expiration date of those already registered.

Any questions? It has a very good Help menu and information. Just click on "Help" and look at all the FAQ's.

Updating your credit and debit card info is a must each time you receive a new card. If a new expiration date is not entered in the eScrip program, St. John will no longer receive rebates on any of your purchases with our 22,000+ merchant partners even though your card number did not change.

Please do not let that happen! Go to your "my eScrip" account and make sure all your cards are entered with their current expiration dates. Thank for financially helping our parish missions and programs! Any questions about our eScrip program, or how to sign up for it and get your friends, relatives and neighbors to do so, may be directed to Keith MEPHODIE Sterzing.



## Thomas Sunday

Every day during the week of Easter, called Bright Week by the Church, the paschal services are celebrated in all their splendor. The Easter baptismal procession is repeated daily. The royal gates of the sanctuary remain open. The joy of the Resurrection and the gift of the Kingdom of eternal life continue to abound. Then, at the end of the week, on Saturday evening, the second Sunday after Easter is celebrated in remembrance of the appearance of Christ to the Apostle Thomas "after eight days" (Jn 20:26). (Fr. Thomas (Hopko))

After His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to His Disciples: He miraculously entered a locked room, and showed them His wounds. Then He ate and drank with them, proving that He was not a ghost or a phantom, but that He was really Jesus the Christ, in the flesh. St. Thomas was not with the rest of the Disciples in the room. When he returned, the others excitedly told him that Jesus had visited them. Thomas doubted their story - the bodily resurrection of Christ. So the Lord appeared again, and invited Thomas to put his fingers in His side and touch the wounds made by the nails. Thomas did, and after seeing (and feeling) for himself, he finally believed. He cried out: "My Lord and my God!" and

fell at Christ's feet.

Christ told Thomas that He was glad that Thomas no longer doubted, but also lamented: "**Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, yet believed!**" Christ uses Thomas' doubt to teach both the Disciples and us that we don't need to physically touch Him to have faith.

It is customary for families to travel to the cemetery on this day to pray, light candles, and to sing "Christ is Risen!" to deceased family members. When you visit the cemetery, say a prayer for the dead listed in most prayer books, and sing "Christ is Risen!" Be sure to take and light candles at each grave you visit, leave a red dyed egg if you wish..

# ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY NEWS

See Holy Week Calendar on the front of the Newsletter.

### ***PARISH ACTIVITIES:***

**April 1 - Palm Sunday** A festal Potluck will be held immediately after the Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy. Remember that Fish, Olive Oil, and Wine are all permitted on this feast day. Bring your favorite dish to share with others in the parish.

**April 8 - Glorious Pascha of our Lord and Savior.** Remember that Pascha baskets should be kept in your car until after the Pascha Liturgy. Father Aidan will bless the Paschal Foods after the Liturgy. Remember when you bring your basket or potluck items to bring enough to share with some of the single members of our Parish.

**April 8 - Agape Vespers and Picnic.** A parish tradition is the Agape Picnic following the Agape Vespers of Pascha held at 2pm. Bring your favorite feasting foods to enjoy. The picnic is held on the parish grounds.

**April 20-21- St Raphael Project and the Outreach Program** Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors. The dates for this year are **April 20-21**. The schedule is:

<u>Friday, April 20</u>	7pm	The History of the Church
(Light Refreshments will be served on Friday night)		
<u>Saturday, April 21</u>	9am	Holy Tradition
	10:15	Worship
	Noon	Lunch
	1pm	The Theology of Salvation

### ***PARISH PRAYER LIST:***

**Pray for the Catechumenate:** Carol Lockett, Yvonne Hyma, Katrina Barnard, William Barnard, Gregory Parsons, Kevin Shaw, David Jenks, Mary Anne Harding, the Easley family [Gregg, Gayla, Evan, Kate, and Grace], Rigel Thurson, and Gregory Goecker.

**Let us prepare to welcome the Newly Illumined members of the Church who enter by Baptism and Chrismation during Holy Pascha. Pray for our Catechumenate.**

**Pray for the Health of Body and Soul** of those who have requested your prayers Nun SERAPHIMA, Landon Lockett, Teresa ANNA Sisko, PATRICIA Ann Wilson, Reader JACOB (IAKOVOS) Wilson, and those who serve in the Armed Forces

**ETERNAL MEMORY!** The Handmaiden of the Lord, Nadja Onjanow, fell asleep in the Lord, Saturday March 3rd. Her funeral service was held at St. John on Wednesday March 7th. Her family has asked that in lieu of flowers that donations be made in her name to the St John the Forerunner Church Building Fund. Mrs. Onjanow was one of the founders of the Temple at Cedar Park and known for her kindness and support of others in the Parish. Please continue to pray Handmaiden of the Lord, Nadja Onjanow for the forty days after her repose. May God grant her rest where she just repose, and may her memory be eternal!

## **ORTHODOX KIDS PAGE**

## Alexis learns about the Pascha Basket Tradition

Alexis' mother called Alexis and his sisters, Tatiana and Anastasia, to come to the dining room. Alexis and his sisters looked at each other wondering what they were going to do there, after all it was Holy Saturday and they would not eat until after the Pascha Liturgy.

Alexis' mothers said, "As you know, every year after the midnight Paschal Liturgy, we all gather together to bless the Pascha baskets. Today we are going to put our basket together so we will be ready tonight."

As she took a beautiful braided bread out of the oven she told the children "in the basket we will be putting in foods that you have done so well in fasting from during Great Lent. We will put this bread, some wine, cheese, butter, a red egg, and other treats to celebrate Pascha."

Little Tatiana asked her Mother, "What is Pascha?"

Giving Tatiana a smile and hug her mother answered, "Pascha is the Feasts of feasts celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead. Let me tell you about the foods we put in the basket and how they each symbolize something about the Feast."

Showing the braided bread, Mother continued, "We always have a sweet bread, leavened with yeast. This is a symbol of the New Covenant; the Jews made unleavened bread, and we, the Children of the New Covenant, make leavened bread. Kulich is the traditional Russian bread, but we use Tsourekei, a traditional Greek braided bread. The braided form of this bread represents the Trinity. See how the three ropes and braided together to make one loaf. It is a display of the Holy Trinity. Each rope represents one of the Holy Trinity--- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who are braided or united as one loaf symbolizing the one true God."

She then took a bottle of horseradish with a clove of garlic and placed it into the basket, "this represents the bitter herb to remind us of the first Passover and of the bitter sufferings which Christ endured for our sake. I like to color my horseradish red with beets juice to symbolize the Blood of Christ. The bitter herb is also to bring to mind the Jews' forty years of wandering in the wilderness."

Then she took a bottle of sweet wine, a mold of butter in the shape of a lamb, and a bowl of delicious Pashka Cheese decorated with dried fruit and almonds. (Alexis thought of how good the Pashka Cheese would taste spread on the sweet Pascha bread in the morning.) His mother then told the children, "The wine, cheese, and butter are show us some of the good things of life, and remind us of the earthly gifts that come from God."

Carefully wrapping up slices of fresh baked ham, Mother told the children, "we place meat like ham or lamb in the basket in remembrance of the sacrifice of the Old Testament Passover, which has been replaced by Christ, the New Passover and Lamb of God. "

Next she put in a small Salt shaker, "the Salt" she said, "serves as a reminder to us that we are "the salt of the earth."

Finally she lifted the Red eggs that they had dyed on Thursday night. Holding a red egg up for all three to see she told them, "The red egg is like the tomb that Jesus rose from on the first Pascha Sunday morning. This is because of the miracle of new life which comes



from the egg, just as Christ miraculously came out of the tomb."

She then covered it with a white cloth and placed a beeswax candle in the basket standing against the handle and tied the candle in place with a white ribbon, "This candle represents Christ as the Light of the World."

Alexis, Anastasia, and Tatiana could hardly wait for the Pascha Liturgy so they could hold their own candles and sing "Christ is Risen!" and then share the food from their Pascha basket with their friends and family at church.

#### **Family Activities: Make your own Pascha Basket Cover.**

A Pascha basket cover traditionally will have images or themes of the resurrection like the cross, pussy willows, spring flowers or Paschal Eggs, it will normally have the words "Christ is Risen" and often have an addition wording of "Indeed He is Risen!" on the cloth. [Remember that before the food is blessed the cloth is pulled back to allow the Holy Water to touch as much food as possible.] Most Pascha Covers are embroidered, however this is one that can be made by you and your children using fabric crayons. Here are a sampling of traditional Pascha Basket Covers, adapt what you can but make your design special and solely for your family:



To make your Pascha Cover you will need: Crayola Fabric Crayons, several large sheets of white drawing paper, one large White Polyester Napkin, and an iron.

Directions:

1. Sketch your Pascha Cover design idea on a plain sheet of paper. When you are happy with your design, draw the design on a sheet of paper using Crayola Fabric Crayons. [Remember that if lettering that your letters when transferred to the Cloth will be reversed.] Brush away any loose crayon specks.
2. To make an ironing pad, place white paper over an iron-safe surface. Place the napkin on the ironing pad. Lay your design face down on the fabric. Top the design with white paper.
3. Ironing should be done by an adult in a well ventilated area. Set the iron on synthetic. Press design with slow steady pressure for 1 -2 minutes. Lift iron to move it. Hold papers to prevent blurring. Remove paper carefully. Cool.
4. For more intense colors, draw directly in the fabric. Cover your design with white paper before ironing as described in step 3.
5. If you wish your design to have sparkle you may use Glitter Glue to highlight lettering or other areas of your design.
6. Fabrics decorated with fabric crayon may be machine washed, using cold or warm water and a gentle cycle. Do not place in Dryer. Blessed Pascha!

#### Safety Guidelines

1. Safety guidelines recommend this art project as suitable for children ages 4 years and older. Close adult supervision is required to ensure children's safety.
2. Close adult supervision is required to ensure children's safety.
3. Ironing should be done by an adult in a well-ventilated area. Overheating or scorching wax crayons may release irritating fumes.

*The Staff of the Voice in the Wilderness wishes you a Holy and Blessed Pascha.  
Christ is Risen!  
Indeed He is Risen!*

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