

April 19, 2009

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✠ ✠ ✠ **Service Schedule** ✠ ✠ ✠

Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> **HOLY PASCHA - THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.**

**[Beginning of the Pentecostarion.]** Ven. John of the Ancient Caves in Palestine (8<sup>th</sup> c.). Martyrs Christopher, Theonas, and Anthony, at Rome (303). Hieromartyr Paphnutius of Jerusalem. St. George the Confessor, Bishop of Antioch in Pisidia (9<sup>th</sup> c.). St. Tryphon, Patriarch of Constantinople (933). Ven. Nicephorus, Abbot of Catabad. Monk Martyr Agathangelos of Esphigmenou (Mt. Athos – 1819). Ven. Simeon of Philotheou (Mt. Athos - 16<sup>th</sup> c.).

Matins of Holy Pascha, 12 midnight.

Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, 1:00 am.

*Epistle: Acts 1:1-8; Gospel: John 1:1-17*

Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup> **Bright Monday.**

Paschal Hours, 8:45 am.

Paschal Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, 9:00 am.

*Epistle: Acts 1: 12-17, 21-26; Gospel: John 1:18-28*

Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> **Bright Wednesday**

Daily Vespers, 5:30 pm. **No meal and Study Group.**

Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> **Bright Saturday**

Great Vespers of the Resurrection, 5:00 pm.

Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> **ANTIPASCHA. 2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY OF PASCHA – Tone 1. St. Thomas Sunday.** Hieromartyr Basil,

Bishop of Amasea (ca. 322). St. Stephen, Bishop of Perm (1396). Righteous Virgin Glaphyra (322).

St. Joannicius of Devich in Serbia (13<sup>th</sup> c.).

*3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Hours: 9:10 am.*

Divine Liturgy, 9:30 am.

*Epistle: Acts 5: 12-20; Gospel: John 20:19-31*

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**Bright Monday Breakfast:** After Divine Liturgy on Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, those who can are gathering for breakfast together at the Northfield Village Pizza. Please come if you can.

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**Post Paschal Gatherings:** After the intensity of the Lenten journey and the Paschal services, some may feel a sense of loss. Now is a good time to gather together, like those in the early Church did, for shared meals and fellowship.

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**HOLY PASCHA**  
**The Resurrection of Our Lord**  
(condensed from oca.org)

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 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 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)....

**THE PROCESSION:** The divine services of the night of Pascha commence near midnight on 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 come 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 the 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). (Continued on insert)

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 specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturg, 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 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.

*Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!*