

ICHC NTKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
305 Main Road, Herkimer, New York, 13350 • 315-866-3272
Archpriest John Udics, Rector • e-mail: john.udics@gmail.com
Parish Web Page: www.cnyorthodoxchurch.org

CHRIST IS RISEN! ХИСХТОС ВОСКРЕСЕ! ХΡΙΣΤΟС ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!
CHRISTUS IS OPGESTAAN! ハリストス復活! KRISTUS ZMRTVYCHVSTAL!
ΤΗΑ CΡΙΟCΔ ΑΙΡ ÈΙΡΙΔΗ! SI CRISTO AY NABUHAY! ¡CRISTO HA RESUCITADO!
ХРИСТУСАЌ АГГЛАГІКУЌ! FOLTAMADT KRISZTUS! UKRISTU UVUKILE!

April 23, 2011	HOLY PASCHA	Midnight Service	11:30 pm
April 24	HOLY PASCHA	Matins, Divine Liturgy, Blessing Baskets	12:00 am
April 24	HOLY PASCHA	Vespers	4:00 pm
April 25	BRIGHT MONDAY	Liturgy, Procession	9:30 am
April 30	Bright Saturday	Because of the Parish Council Conference there will be <u>no Vespers</u>	
May 1	Saint Thomas Sunday	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Orthodox Church in America - Diocese of New York and New Jersey Archpastoral Letter of His Grace, MICHAEL, Bishop of New York For the Feast of the Glorious Resurrection, 2011, Holy PASCHA Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Dearly Beloved in our Resurrected Lord,

The day of Pascha is at the very center of the life of our Orthodox Church, since its very inception twenty centuries ago. The Resurrection of Jesus dominated the preaching and thinking of the early Christians. The message of the resurrection is the heart of our Creed because it is the very heart of our Christian Faith. Saint Paul states this in no uncertain terms when he writes:

“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we who are in Christ have only hope in this life, we are of all men most to be pitied.

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, so by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:17-22).

If Christ has not been raised, says Saint Paul, our faith is futile. If Christ has not been raised, we are still in our sins. If Christ has not been raised, our loved ones who have fallen asleep have perished. If Christ has not been raised, we have no hope: we are of all men most to be pitied. If Christ has not been raised, love ceases with death, and God’s love cannot reach beyond the grave. If Christ has not been raised, there is no justice; the books will never be balanced. Truth, goodness, and virtue will remain forever crucified.

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep,” says Saint Paul. When a tomato plant produces the very first tiny green tomato, it is the promise of more to come. So the Resurrection of Jesus, says the Apostle, was the “first fruit.” He is the promise that those who live with Him will also rise. As the Fathers of the Church tell us, “Could the Head (Christ) rise and leave the members dead?”

Because Christ has been raised from the dead, our faith is not futile; our sins are forgiven; our loved ones who have fallen asleep in Christ have not perished; we do have hope; God’s love, backed by His boundless power, reaches beyond the grave; yes, there is justice. Even in the face of injustice in the world, we can believe in the justice of God because we know that on “the third day He arose again according to the Scriptures.”

Is it any wonder that the resurrection dominated the preaching of the early Apostles? The Book of Acts has been called the Gospel of the Resurrection. There is not a single sermon in it which does not proclaim the Resurrection of Jesus as the heart and soul of the Christian message (Acts 24:15; 17-18).

This Resurrection of Jesus is a fact of history; it is not a myth or a legend. This is why the early Church emphasized the fact that there were witnesses to the Resurrection. Judas was to be replaced by Matthias, another apostle who “must become with us a witness to the resurrection” (Acts 2:32). Saint Paul speaks of the more than five hundred brethren who saw the Risen Christ, “most of whom are still alive,” he says. He seems to be saying that if anyone wants any evidence for the fact that Jesus rose from the dead, he may go and cross-examine those living witnesses.

The Risen Lord appeared to the ten apostles in the absence of Thomas (John 20:19-23). He appeared to the eleven in the presence of Thomas and invited the doubter to actually come and touch Him so as to convince himself of the reality of His Body and His wounds. Saint Matthew says that the women returning from the empty tomb met the Risen Christ “and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him” (Matthew 28: 4). They actually took hold of His feet; they not only saw Him, but they also touched! They were true witnesses of the Resurrected Christ.

The appearances of the Risen Savior were such as to demand worship. For example, the myrrh-bearing women who were returning from the empty tomb worshipped Him after taking hold of His feet. The final cry of Saint Thomas was the greatest of all statements of faith: “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). And when the

disciples met Jesus in Galilee, “they worshipped Him” (Matthew 28:17). Indeed, the Resurrection of Christ was surrounded by an atmosphere of glory.

The Resurrection also produced a profound change in the disciples. Following the crucifixion, the disciples were a company of hopeless, frightened, disappointed men terrified that they too would be crucified and wanting nothing more than to get back to their old jobs and forget everything. Seven weeks later we see an astonishing change in these men. They are filled with a blazing hope and confidence, with a courage that enables them to defy all opposition in their efforts to preach the Living Christ.

We need only remember how Peter denied His Master three times to save his own skin. Two months later this same Peter stands before the Sanhedrin and preaches Christ fearlessly, defying them to do their worst. Why the change? The cause of Peter’s change was the conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead. He had actually seen Him and conversed with Him. He was a witness. For this he was willing to lay down his very life.

My prayer for you this Pascha is that you truly know and believe and appreciate the full meaning of the Resurrection of Christ. May it confirm your faith in the Risen Lord and our own resurrection from the dead in Him one day. May this firm conviction fill you with great joy in the Resurrected Christ, the joy that Jesus Himself spoke about, “the joy that no one will ever be able to take away from you.” And may you too, like the first disciples, become a witness to the Risen Lord ... a witness for the Faith, so that you may with the bold courage of the apostles share our Orthodox Faith with those who have yet to believe!

The faith and conviction and joy of the first witnesses of the Resurrection enabled them to preach Christ to the very ends of their world and eventually bring the pagan Roman Empire to its knees, believing in and worshipping the Risen Christ. May we be those witnesses anew here in our end of the world, and bring America to its knees, believing in and worshipping the Resurrected Lord in His Holy Orthodox Church! And may the Savior of all, risen from the dead, bless you richly for all your labors in serving Him – on this glorious feast, throughout the coming year, and all the days of your life!

With my prayers and love,

+ **MICHAEL**, Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Saints of the Day: Martyr Sabbas Stratelates ("the General") of Rome, and 70 soldiers with him (272). Saint Alexis Toth, Priest, Confessor of Wilkes Barre (1909). Martyr Sergius (1938). Hieromartyr Branko of Veljusa, Serbia (1941). Venerable Sabbas (13 c) and Alexis the Hermit of the Kiev Caves. Martyrs Pasicrates, Valentine and Julius in Moesia (228). Martyrs Eusebius, Neon, Leontius, Longinus, and others at Nicomedia (303). Venerable Thomas the Fool of Syria (550). Venerable Elizabeth the Wonderworker of Constantinople (540). Saint Luke, Tailor of Mytilene (1564). New Martyr Nicholas of Magnesia (1795). Martyr Alexander of Lyons (177). Saint Elias (Iorest) (1678) and Saint Sava (Brancovici) (1683), Metropolitans of Ardeal, Confessors against the Calvinists. Saint Joseph the Confessor, Bishop of Maramures (1711). New Martyr Doukas of Mytilene (1564). Saint Innocent, Presbyter on the Mount of Olives (4 c.). Saint Xenophon, Founder of the Monastery of Saint George (Xenophontos) on Mount Athos (1018). New Martyr George in Anatolia (1796). Saint Wilfrid, Archbishop of York (709). Saint Ivo of Huntingdonshire, Hermit Bishop. Saint Mellitus of Canterbury, Bishop (624). Saint Dyfnan of Anglesey (5 c). Saint Egbert, Monk of Rathemigisi and Iona (729).

Please remember in your prayers: Priest Sergius, Archpriest Jason, Daniel, Don, Chresoula, Rea, Aaron, Ada, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Helen, Anna, Thomas, Archpriest Vincent, Mother Raphaela, John, Catherine, Ron, Albert, Michael, Gregory, Gregory, Emma, Cathy, John, Mykola, Wayne, Nina, Isaiah, Robert, Robert, Kevin, Andrew, David, Warren, Michael, Archimandrites Athanasys, Isidore, Nectarios and Pachomy.

God Grant Many Years. Prayers for the health of Katherine as well as Madeleine, Nika and Sanjiv Paulus were offered at Liturgy April 20, at the request of Bishop MICHAEL.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of the victims of the recent Minsk Subway bombings were offered at Liturgy and Litiya on Palm Sunday at the request of Bishop MICHAEL.

A word from Saint Ambrose of Milan “On the Patriarchs” 6.31: Accordingly, to call the nations to the grace of his resurrection - which is the rich and fertile land that bears everlasting fruits, fruits a hundred-fold and sixty-fold - he bowed his shoulder to labor, bowed himself to the cross, to carry our sins. For that reason the prophet (Isaiah) says, "whose government is on his shoulder." This means, above the passion of his body is the power of his divinity, or it refers to the cross that towers above his body. Therefore he bowed his shoulder, applying himself to the plow - patient in the endurance of all insults, and so subject to affliction that he was wounded on account of our iniquities and weakened on account of our sins.

REMINDERS FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

• **May 1: Sunday:** Saint Ann Sisterhood meeting after Liturgy to plan for May 15 dinner.

All Parish Council Officers and interested parishioners are duty-bound to attend one of the three Parish Council Conferences. There is no charge. Father John has room for three/four riders to Watervliet on April 30.

• April 30: Diocese of NYNJ: Parish Council Conference – Saint Basil’s Church, Watervliet. 10 am – 3 pm

• May 7: Diocese of NYNJ: Parish Council Conference – Saint John the Baptists Church, Rochester – 10 am

• May 14: Diocese of NYNJ: Parish Council Conference – Saints Peter and Paul’s Church, Endicott – 10 am

• May 14: Saturday: HOLY MYRRHBEARERS MONASTERY 34th Patronal Pilgrimage: 10:00 am

• May 14: Saturday: Set up for Paschal dinner, 9 am

• **May 15: Sunday:** Archpastoral Visitation of Bishop MICHAEL. Paschal Dinner, Egg Hunt

• June 12: Pentecost: Potluck Lunch after Liturgy, and before going to the Cemetery

• July 4: Monday: Saints Peter and Paul will host the Deanery Clergy: burgers, dogs, sausages, potato salad, pasta salad, fruit, veggies, chips, dips, adult and children drinks, all good things! 10 children, 30 adults + us.