

SAINTE PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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CHRIST IS RISEN! ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС! ХΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ!
CHRIST EST RESSUCITÉ! KRISTUS ON ÜLES TÕUSNUD!
CHRYSSTUS ZMARTWYCHSTANAŁ! CRISTO RESURRETO!
HRISTOS A INVIAT! اقام لمسيح! KRISTUS ĀR UPSTĀNDEN!

May 4, 2013	PASCHA EVE	Midnight service	11:30 pm
May 5	HOLY PASCHA	Matins, Divine Liturgy, Blessing Baskets	midnight
May 5	HOLY PASCHA	Vespers	1:00 pm
May 8	BRIGHT MONDAY	Divine Liturgy [Procession]	9:30 am
May 11	BRIGHT SATURDAY		<u>no vespers</u>
May 12	Thomas Sunday	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

This week's Bulletin is offered for the health of Aaron, Nicholas and Ashley by Sonia Buttino.

Orthodox Church in America, Diocese of New York and New Jersey
 Archpastoral Letter on The Feast of the Glorious Resurrection Holy PASCHA, May 5, 2013
Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Dearly Beloved in our Resurrected Lord:

"We celebrate the death of death and the overthrow of hell, the beginning of another life which is eternal, and in exultation we sing the praises of its source. He alone is blessed and most glorious – the God of our fathers." Saint John of Damascus 7th Ode of the Canon of Resurrection Matins

As all of you know, forty years ago I suffered the greatest tragedy of my life. My wife of only 29 days was killed in an automobile accident at the age of 21. Every one of you who has ever lost someone you love to death has experienced how horrible it is. Even after forty years, there is still pain and suffering and loneliness. Everyone who suffers such a loss realizes that you never ever really get over it.

My only consolation, my only strength through that whole ordeal, my only hope enabling me to continue on, is our Paschal Faith; our firm belief in the Resurrection of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. It is when I hear the voices of the faithful and join in the singing of the greatest hymn of victory of all time ~ ***"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life!"*** ~ that I am truly able to be at peace and experience joy.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is God's great, unspeakable gift to us out of His great love for mankind. But, the world rejected its Savior, tried to nail that Gift of Love to the Cross, and tried to bury Him in a tomb. But, the love of God is greater than the evil of the world – mightier than the power of Satan that is behind that evil.

Christ in fact did die the humiliating death of crucifixion, reserved only for the worst of criminals, even though He had never committed a crime, never even committed a sin. He experienced, in every sense of the word, the pain and suffering that every human being knows as the onset of death takes its toll, even though He is the Son of the Living God. And, when His soul separated itself from His body at 3:00 that first Great and Holy Friday afternoon, He joined every sinner who had ever been drawn by death into Hades, that world of dark shadows under the control of Satan, even though He was the Light that had come down from Heaven. All of this – He did for us!

On Great and Holy Friday, it seemed quite clear to anyone who had been near the Cross of Jesus that Our Lord had been defeated by His enemies. He was unjustly convicted by them, humiliated and spit upon by them, scourged and beaten by them, nailed to the Cross and left to die by them. The story of Jesus of Nazareth was seemingly ended, once and for all. But, the Love of God had yet to be heard from.

When Jesus' soul went down to Hades, even the devil himself was convinced Our Lord was the loser and he was the victor. But, Christ broke asunder the gates of brass to the entrance of Hades, shackled Satan himself, and freed those who had been imprisoned in that underworld of darkness – generation upon generation, from Adam and Eve onward. He led those who would follow Him out of Hades and opened for them, and for all who would later die, including my wife and your loved ones, the gates of Heaven and eternal life!

On the first Pascha, even before the sun rose that glorious Sunday morning, the pious women came to Jesus' tomb to anoint Him – only to find it was empty! Peter and John ran to check out their story – and they saw the same! Finally Christ Himself appeared, alive and well – He even showed the doubting Thomas the nail prints in His hands and the spear mark in His side – "proof positive" that He was the Victor. That is the end of the story: He defeated death and sin and the devil, and reclaimed for us the life, the love, and the joy that were meant to be ours from the moment Adam took his first breath in the Garden of Paradise.

Saint Paul, who met the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus, assures us: *"In fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep"* (I Corinthians 15:20). 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?"*

Our celebration of Pascha, then, is not just a family gathering of loved ones, the sharing of sumptuous foods, or baskets filled with candy and bunnies that light up children's eyes. What we really celebrate is "the death of death, and the overthrow of hell, and the beginning of another life which is eternal," for Matushka Deborah and all our loved ones who have died – and, yes, for you and for me as well!

On this glorious Feast of Feasts, we can assuredly say with Saint Paul the beautiful words of faith that he wrote to the Romans:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... No! In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us! For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

This is so ... because He who loves us more than we love ourselves is risen! Truly, He is risen! May this Pascha be for you a reaffirmation of your faith in our Resurrected Savior and bring you an exhilarating joy, knowing that we share in "the death of death, and the overthrow of hell, and the beginning of another life which is eternal" through Christ's glorious victory!

With my prayers, my blessings and my love,

+ M I C H A E L

Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Saints of the Day: Great-martyr Irene of Thessalonica (1st-2nd c.). New Hieromartyr Priest Nicholas (1919). Uncovering of the relics of Venerable James, Abbot of Zhelezny Bor (1613). Martyrs Neophytus, Gaius, and Gaianus. Venerable Adrian, Abbot of Monza Monastery (1619). Saints Martin and Heraclius, of Illyria (4th c.). New Monk-martyr Ephraim of Nea Makri (1426). Venerable Euthymius, the Wonderworker, Bishop of Maditos in Thrace (11th c.) Saint Eulogius the Confessor, Bishop of Edessa (386). Saint Hilary of Arles (449). Venerable Barlaam of Serpukhov (1377). Saint Hydrock of Lanhydroc, Cornwall (5th c.). Translation of the relics of Saint Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne. Saint Diuma, Bishop of Peterborough (7th c.) Priest-monk Echa of Crayk, Hermit (767). Saint Gibrian Hermit in Ireland.

Please remember in your prayers: Archbishop John, Archbishop Paul. Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Sergius, Jacobus, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Philip. Mother Raphaela, Sister Deborah. Olga, Stephanie, Helen, Linda, Michael, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Helen, Connie, Michael, Ed, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, and the starving children around the world.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Helen (Dora's grandmother), Olga Prawlocki, Helen Ciko, Stephanie Litwen and Linda Gimbert and the abducted Archbishops John and Paul, were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

A letter from JOHN X, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East.

You can read more at: <http://www.antiochian.org/>

The appeal to President Obama and his government is for the release of two Orthodox Christian Archbishops, namely Archbishop Paul Yazigi and Archbishop Youhanna [*John*] Ibrahim who were abducted by armed rebels on April 23, 2013 in the suburbs of Aleppo, Syria. The driver of the Archbishops was murdered and the Archbishops were forced by the rebels to go to an unknown location either in Syria or in Turkey. We appeal to you beloved in Christ and peace loving people to sign this petition urgently asking the American administration to use all its influence for the release of these two Archbishops and to bring a peaceful settlement to this bloodletting Syrian conflict through a negotiated settlement.

May you have a blessed Holy Week and glorious Pascha.

Thank You to all helpers during Great Lent: singers, readers, choir singers, church cleaners, floor polishers, rug shampooers, candle lighters and outers, flower decorators, bakers, cooks, bake sale helpers, lawn mowers, furniture movers, faithful choir and our Saint Anna Sisterhood and everyone who helped to make Pascha great and beautiful! *God grant all of you Many Years!*

INFORMATION FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

Children in Greece are literally starving, picking over garbage and fainting in school, as a result of the terrible economic situation there. Perhaps you could make a contribution to I.O.C.C. either individually or in the name of our parish, **earmarked** for the starving children of Greece. See the article in the New York Times (copy into your internet browser):

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/18/world/europe/more-children-in-greece-start-to-gohungry.html?pagewanted=all>

April 26, Sunday, after Liturgy: **post-Paschal dinner** sponsored by St Anna Sisterhood. Come one, come all!

How beautiful is the church during the Paschal season! It's partly due to the natural beauty of the flowers and greens we bring in to decorate the church. Why not keep this beauty all throughout the year? Do you have flowers growing in your yard? Why not bring in a couple of fistfuls to put in vases on the center table? If you don't grow your own, we have florists who favor our parish – why not contact them? To avoid duplication of efforts, there will be a sign-up list at the candle desk. Add your name to the list!