

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church

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HolyApostlesLansing.org

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MAY 8, 2016

ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 1. Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian (98-117). St. Thomas Sunday. Ven. Arsenius the Great (449-450). Ven. Arseny the Lover-of-Labor (14th c.) and Pimen the Ascetic, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—12th c.).

Christ Is Risen!

Indeed, He Is Risen!

EPISTLE: ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 5.12-20: The Apostles preach the Gospel, but are imprisoned. An angel releases them, and they continue to preach.

1 John 1:1-7: God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

GOSPEL: JOHN 19:25-27; 21:24-25: Christ asks the disciple whom he loves to take his Mother into his home.

JOHN 20.19-31: Christ comes in peace, and St Thomas, now believing, recognizes Christ as “My Lord and my God!”

MANY YEARS: We congratulate His Eminence, Abp Michael of New York on the 6th Anniversary of his consecration to the episcopacy. May God grant our archpastor many blessed years for his salvation and his guidance for our Diocese. **CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

CONGRATULATIONS AND MANY YEARS! Congratulations are offered to Elliott, the newly-illuminated servant of God, who was received into the Church at the culmination of Holy Week. May God grant him and his sponsors many, many years! **CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! Христóсь воскрéсе!**

VOCATIONS: Come and meet with other Orthodox teens and young adults who are interested in serving the Church. Men and women, 20-somethings and teens are invited to Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in NYC next Saturday for a day of discovering what opportunities are available in the Church. For more info, see <http://exploringministry.org/>. **CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

WELCOME VISITORS! We warmly welcome all of our visitors! It’s good to have you with us! Please know that we are glad that you are here praying with us and invite you to join us after the service for a meal and to meet everyone in our community. **CHRISTOS ANESTI! Χριστός άνέστη!**

KNOW YOUR FAITH: The next Know Your Faith Class will be held on Tuesday, May 10th at Unwind Café in the Ithaca Mall. We will be discussing the St Gregory Palamas. The readings can be found on pages 70-71 of the handouts, available at holypostleslansing.org/knowyourfaith.html **CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

SURVEY: The parish office is updating its files by completing its record of addresses, contact info and celebratory days. Please visit bit.ly/1RCRRJe to fill out the survey. Those who have not filled in the survey will be queried in the next few days. **AL MASEEH QAM! المسيح قام! حقا قام!**

GRAVE BLESSINGS: As we continue to proclaim the Gospel of the Resurrection, it is custom to bless the graves of those who have gone on in the hope of the resurrection before us. To schedule a grave blessing, please see Fr James. **CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

RECEIVING COMMUNION: The Orthodox Church believes that, to partake of the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ, one has to hold the beliefs of the Church regarding it. In the Church’s teaching, this means being a full member of the Orthodox Church. One may not receive Communion in an Orthodox Church unless he or she is an Orthodox Christian and has prepared through recent confession, prayer and fasting. All are welcome to join the Orthodox Church, should they choose. **Ortanne Laivino! Anwa ortanne Laivino! ὁ ἰησοῦς ἔσθῃεν! ἡμῶν ὁ ἰησοῦς ἔσθῃεν!**

PRAYER SCROLL

LIVING:	John & Carmine	Samuel	BIRTHDAYS: None.	Lynda
Apr Timothy H	Nathan	Lisa	ANNIVS: None.	Florence
Apr Herman S	Leah	Lyudmila	NAMESDAYS: None.	James
Apr Sergius K	Helen	Nickolay	REPOSED:	James R.
Apr Thomas E	Lindsey	Anetta	Apr John U	Vasily
Apr Stephen M	Elizabeth	Zachary	Priest Matthew	Modecai
Apr Jonathan	Mary	Iconographer Helena	Priest John	Alexandr
Abbess Silouana	Joe A	Natasha, Lena, Vera, &	Apr Alexander	Ron
Mother Raphaela	Daniel	Sergei	Dn Mark	John
Mother Christophora	Andrew & family	Caleb	Rdr Gregory	NEWLY REPOSED: Dwight,
Mat Joanna B	Harold	Cleopatra	Daniel	Sergei, Eleanor, Anna S,
Mat Katya	Wilhemina	Brian & Ally	Ada	Augustin.
Mat Mary G	Elizabeth	Thompson Family	Lillian	ANNIVERSARIES: None.
Joshua	David	Danielle	Joseph	
Brittany & Isaac	Shirley	Dorothea	Marie	
Gretchen	Larry	Larry, Mark & Katie	Joseph	
Peter	Christina	Catechumens: Elliott.	Laura	
Marriane	Jim & Kim	Children: Christopher E,	Martha	
Terrence	Rachel	Anthony, Mia and Isabel	Stanley & Helen,	
Helen	Constantine & Maria	Seminarians: Rdr Robert	Taissia	
Judy	Gaetan	and Ivan	Steluta	
Mary & Susan	Christine		Theophan	

SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

CONFESSIONS ARE HEARD BEFORE AND AFTER VESPERS AND AT ANY OTHER CONVENIENT TIME.

THOMAS SUNDAY, MAY 8: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

TUESDAY, MAY 10: 8:30 Morning Prayers

7 PM Know Your Faith at Unwind Café in the Ithaca Mall: St Gregory Palamas

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11: Daily Matins

7 PM Cornell OCF

THURSDAY, MAY 12: 8 PM Ithaca OCF

FRIDAY, MAY 13: No Morning Prayers

SATURDAY, MAY 14: 6 PM Great Vespers

MYRRHBEARERS SUNDAY, MAY 15: 8:40 Hours, 9 AM Divine Liturgy

ANTIPASCHA: ST THOMAS SUNDAY

Some icons depicting this event are inscribed "The Doubting Thomas." This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, "The Touching of Thomas." The Slavonic inscription is, "The Belief of Thomas." When St Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

This day is also known as "Antipascha." This does not mean "opposed to Pascha," but "in place of Pascha." Beginning with this first Sunday after Pascha, the Church dedicates every Sunday of the year to the Lord's Resurrection. Sunday is called "Resurrection" in Russian, and "the Lord's Day" in Greek.

PRAYER FOR CHURCH GROWTH

Again, we pray to Thee, O Lord our God, that you would renew us and this parish by the Power of the Holy Spirit. Fill us with love and longing for Thee. Grant that we would seek not our own will but to do Thy will in all things and to be willing to lay down our lives out of love for Thee and for our neighbor. Draw thirsty souls to this place and remove their spiritual blindness, granting them through Thy grace to see the beauty of Thy Holy Glory in this place. Fill this community with new life, spiritual vigor and an insatiable desire to live godly and holy lives. Forgive us all of our sins as we fall down before Thee. Bring us all to a greater repentance and to an amendment of our lives as we look to Thee, the only Merciful and loving Lord Who calls all to salvation. We beg Thee, our merciful Lord, hear us, grant all of these petitions and all of our requests unto salvation: We pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church

Lansing, New York



SUNDAY, MAY 8TH, 2016

ST THOMAS SUNDAY/ANTIPASCHA

“POST-PASCHA SWOON” OR “REVIVED BY JOY”?

By Fr. Steven Kostoff

I began this morning with a question on my mind: Is there life after Pascha? This, in turn, led to a series of further related questions: Is there meaningful ecclesial/Church life following the Paschal celebration of only little more than a few days ago? Is it possible to retain any of the vibrancy and joy of commemorating, participating, and experiencing the Resurrection of Christ? Can we continue to maintain our ecclesial lives beyond the level of perfunctory attendance once we have passed through Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha?

Humanly speaking, these may be unrealistic expectations for the following reasons:

- Most everyone is still overcoming a certain level of exhaustion, that is not merely physical. I think at times that Bright Week may have to be downgraded to Recovery Week!
- Clearly everyone is back to normal time and routines – work, school, etc. – that may have been temporarily interrupted during Holy Week and Pascha. “Life goes on,” according to a limp cliché, and we may still be catching up with some unfinished business.
- Does our surrounding culture influence us by treating Pascha as a “one and done” affair—meaning that when we wake up on Bright Monday, are we already “moving on?”

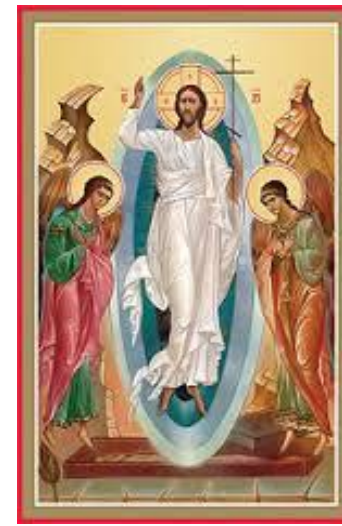
However, that does not mean that our parishes have to empty out and become tomb-like immediately after Pascha, apart from Sunday’s Liturgy. The inevitable “summer slowdown” need not begin before we have even completed Bright Week. The Resurrection of Christ is meant to be enlivening, not deadening! The “swoon theory” is a hopelessly absurd idea meant to explain away the Resurrection of Christ. Yet, how many of the faithful experience a “post-Paschal swoon” from which they need to awaken before the entire Season comes to a close. If such is the case, then what does this say of the over-all impact of the Paschal Season?

Perhaps we need to probe just what each and every one of us means by the term “Pascha.” It is the Greek form of the Hebrew word for Passover. Pascha, therefore, is

- the Christian Passover/passage from death to life in and through the Death and Resurrection of Christ.
- the commemoration and actualization of these saving events, realized through the Church’s liturgical services, and succinctly expressed as “Christ is Risen!”
- the transformation of suffering into joy, revealing the true meaning of the Cross as salvific.
- the supreme gift of the renewal of life and the restoration of communion with God.
- the “death of death.”
- the foretaste of our own resurrection from the dead into the eternal light of God’s Kingdom.
- the event that established the Church in the world until the end of time.
- the “Feast of Feasts” and focal point of our community’s shared life together.

The exuberance of our Paschal celebration during the “night brighter than the day” is the festal expression of the Church’s deepest truth. The light, color, music and movement are all manifestations of the Paschal joy that sweeps through the Church as we proclaim that Christ is Risen! Hopefully, it is also the expression of our own faith in the Risen Lord.

However, for some Pascha may be reduced to something other than what it truly is, or it takes on a life of its own, detached and independent from what was outlined above. This is probably true for once-a-year visitors to the church – “Easter” Orthodox Christians – but this can also tempt us. Such reductions may include



- approaching Pascha primarily in ethnic, cultural or social terms.
- over-emphasis on the externals—dress, Pascha basket, roasted lamb, family traditions, etc.
- nostalgic or sentimental evocation of one’s past.
- a “fun experience”—I have actually heard this before—thus using a term better suited to a trip to the amusement park than for the “Feast of Feasts.”

Perhaps we could say that the above is more a description of Pascha popularly understood, rather than Pascha as revealed in the Church. Again, when these approaches are detached from the deeper meaning of Pascha, then the inevitable occurs quite naturally—Pascha is reduced to a once-a-year special event that is over and done with the moment one’s exhausted head hits the pillow some time early in the morning. It is forgotten before all of the Easter eggs – real and chocolate – are consumed. And then the search for the next potentially exciting event begins.

The Risen Christ appeared to His disciples for forty days following His Resurrection. He did not depart from them into Heaven immediately. We can assume that the disciples remained “excited” (to use an inadequate word) for that entire period – and beyond. We have a forty-day Paschal Season in the Church for this reason. As the disciples rejoiced in the Lord’s presence, the same possibility is before us as we too rejoice in the Lord’s presence, since it is the Lord who promised to be with us “until the end of the world.” The Risen Lord is as present among us today as He was when He appeared to the eleven disciples behind “closed doors” for the first time and, then again, eight days later, as recounted by Saint John in his Gospel [20:19-29]. Everyone, beginning with the clergy, probably suffers from the “post-Paschal blues” to some extent. We must rely on our faith and trust that our Lord Jesus Christ has been bodily raised from the dead, the “first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” [1 Corinthians 15:20], in order to revive us to the joy of this unique season in which we continuously affirm that “If Christ has not been raised, [our] faith is futile and [we] are still in [our] sins. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” [1 Corinthians 15:17,20].

WEEKLY HYMNS FOR SUNDAY, MARCH 8TH, 2016

Troparion Tone 7 (from the Pentecostarion)

From the sealed tomb, You shone forth, O Life!
Through closed doors You came to Your Disciples, O Christ God.
Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit,//
by the greatness of Your mercy, O Resurrection of all!

Troparion Tone 2 (from the Menaion, for St John)

Beloved Apostle of Christ our God,
hasten to deliver a defenseless people!
He who allowed you to recline on His breast,
receives you as you bow before Him.
Implore Him, John the Theologian,
to dispense the persistent threat from the heathens,//
entreating for us peace and great mercy!

Kontakion Tone 2 (from the Menaion, for St John)

Who shall declare your greatness,
O virgin disciple,
for you pour forth wonders and are a source of healings,//
and pray for our souls as theologian and friend of Christ.

Kontakion Tone 8 from the Pentecostarion)

Thomas touched Your life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God,
when You came to Your Apostles through closed doors.
He cried out with all: “You are my Lord and my God!”

Prokeimenon Tone 3

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power! His understanding is beyond measure! (Ps 146/147:5)
v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps 146/147:1)
Tone 8: Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe! (Ps 18/19:4)

Alleluia Verses Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (Ps 94/95:1)
v: For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth. (Ps 94/95:3).
Tone 1: The heavens are telling the Glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. (Ps 18/19:2)

Hymn to the Theotokos

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:
“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: ‘Rejoice,
your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!
With Himself He has raised all the dead.’”
Rejoice, O ye people!
Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!
The glory of the Lord has shone on you!
Exult now, and be glad, O Zion!
Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,
in the Resurrection of your Son!

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!
Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe! (Ps 18/19:4)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF DEATH

-FR ALEXANDER SCHMEMANN

“He suffered and was buried. And He rose again...” After the Cross, after the descent into death there is the Resurrection from the dead — that principal, fundamental and decisive confirmation of the Symbol of Faith, a confirmation from the very heart of Christianity. Indeed “if Christ is not risen, then your faith is in vain.” These are the words of the Apostle Paul, and they remain fundamental for Christianity to this day. Christianity is a belief, first of all and above all, in the fact that Christ did not remain in the grave, that life shone forth from death, and that in Christ’s Resurrection from the dead, the absolute, all-encompassing law of dying and death, which tolerated no exceptions, was somehow blown apart and overcome from within.

The Resurrection of Christ comprises the very heart of the Christian faith and Christian Good News. And yet, however strange it may sound, in the everyday life of Christianity and Christians in our time there is little room for this faith. It is as though obscured, and the contemporary Christian, without being cognizant of it, does not reject it, but somehow skirts about it. If he attends church, he of course hears in the Christian service the ever resounding joyous confirmations: “trampling down death by death,” “death is swallowed up by victory,” “life reigns,” and “not one dead remains in the grave.” But ask him what he really thinks about death, and often you will hear some sort of rambling affirmation of the immortality of the soul and its life in some sort of world beyond the grave, a belief that existed even before Christianity. And that would be in the best of circumstances. In the worst, one would be met simply by perplexity and ignorance...

“The last enemy to be destroyed is death...” And that destruction, that extermination of death began when the Son of God Himself in His immortal love for us voluntarily descended into death and its darkness, filling its despair and horror with His light and love. And this is why we sing on Pascha not only “Christ is risen from the dead,” but also “trampling down death by death...” He alone arose from the dead, but He has destroyed our death, destroying its dominion, its despair, its finality. Christ does not promise us Nirvana or some sort of misty life beyond the grave, but the resurrection of life, a new heaven and a new earth, the joy of the universal resurrection. “The dead shall arise, and those in the tombs will sing for joy...” Christ is risen, and life abides, life lives...