



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

714 Westmoreland Avenue

PO Box 3

Slickville, PA 15684-0003

[724] 468-5581

www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org

Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Theodosius, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Khoruia Joanne Abdalah, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 6-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 2-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jimmy Fennel [7th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Amari Clark, Robert McKivitz, Cliff Dow, Marjorie Pershing, Robert Paouncic, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD:** Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

THANK YOU! During Great Lent our parish donated a total of \$150 to the Westmoreland Food Bank in a special collection in February—also, the collection for

the Lenten Ecumenical Service at Holy Ghost totaled \$150. This \$300 is a huge help to those less fortunate than we are—THANK YOU and may God reward you a thousand-fold for your kindness and generosity!

Please remember David Weaver in Mosul, James John Logue assigned to Iraq, and ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex’s Fifth Grade and Matt’s Third Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! ALEX AND MATT

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Saturday, April 26	Anticipation Obednitza	10:30 AM
	Paschal Nocturnes & Matins	6:30 PM
Sunday, April 27	PASCHAL DIVINE LITURGY	10:30 AM
	SAINT MARTIN THE CONFESSOR-POPE OF ROME, MARTYR ARDAION THE ACTOR, MARTYR AZAT THE EUNUCH & 1000 MARTYRS IN PERSIA, MARTYRS ANTHONY, JOHN, & EUSTATHIUS OF VILNA IN LITHUANIA, SAINT CHRISTOPHER THE SABBATE	
	BLESSING OF PASCHAL BASKETS	
	<i>Paschal Tone</i>	
	Acts 1:1-8	
	John 1:1-17	
Sunday, May 4	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	ANTI-PASCHA, SAINT THOMAS SUNDAY	
	HIEROMARYTR JANUARIUS-BISHOP OF BENEVENTO & COMPANIONS FESTUS, PROCULUS, & SOSIUS-DEACONS, DESIDERIUS-READER, & EUTYCHIUS & ACUTIUS-LAYMEN-AT POZZUOLI, HIEROMARTYR THEODORE OF PERGE IN PAMPHYLIA & MOTHER PILIPPA, MARTYRS DIOSCURUS, SOCRATES, & DIONYSIUS, MARTYRS ISAACIUS, APOLLO, & CODRATUS OF NICOMEDIA, SAINT MAXIMIAN-PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, SAINT NIPHONT-BISHOP OF NOVHOROD-PERCHEVSKY LAVRA	
	<i>Tone 1</i>	
	Acts 5:12-20	
	John 20:19-31	
	<i>Litany in Blessed Memory of Charles Cherepko, Anna Metrick, Bogdan Mural, Walter Golofski, Jr., & Anna Vangrin—Fr. Bob</i>	
	<i>Parastas in Blessed Memory of John Batch—Harry Batch & Family</i>	
Sunday, May 11	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
	SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN	

MARY MAGDALENE, MARY-WIFE OF CLEOPAS, SALOME, JOANNA, MARTHA & MARY, SUSANNA, AND THE OTHERS, NICODEMUS AND JOSEPH OF ARAMATHEA, APOSTLES JASON & SOSIPATER OF THE 70 AND THEIR COMPANIONS, SAINT CYRIL-BISHOP OF TUROV, SAINT AUXIBIUS-BISHOP OF SOLI IN CYPRUS

Tone 2

Acts 6:1-7

Mark 15:43-16:8

*Litany in Blessed Memory of All Deceased Mothers, Grandmothers, etc.—Fr. Bob
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Martha Batch—Harry Batch & Family*

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 27 APRIL 2008 PASCHA



THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

SAINT MARTIN THE CONFESSOR-POPE OF ROME, MARTYR
ARDAION THE ACTOR, MARTYR AZAT THE EUNUCH & 1000
MARTYRS IN PERSIA, MARTYRS ANTHONY, JOHN, &
EUSTATHIUS OF VILNA IN LITHUANIA, SAINT CHRISTOPHER
THE SABBAITE

+BLESSING OF PASCHAL BASKETS—AFTER DIVINE LITURGY+

~~~~~NO COFFEE HOUR TODAY!~~~~~

\*\*\*\*\*PAGE 179 IN THE BLACK DIVINE LITURGY BOOKS\*\*\*\*\*

**Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**  
**Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес!**  
**Χριστός ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη!**

**(Khristós Anésti! Alithós Anésti!)  
Hristos a înviat! Adevărat a înviat!**

**ماق ا ق ح ! ماق ح ي س م ل ا !**

**(al-Masīḥ qām! Ḥaqqan qām!)**

**Kristo Amefufukka! Kweli Amefufukka**

### **Easter Eggs**

Various explanations exist as to why Greek Easter eggs are always colored red: some people say that the red is a symbol of the blood shed in the Holy Land on Good Friday, others say that it reflects joy at Christ's resurrection. Then again, some people claim that long ago a skeptical women scoffed that she would not believe in the Resurrection until the eggs she was holding in her hands turned red in front of her eyes – which did indeed happen. In other words, their red color should be seen as an admonishment to have faith.



You need a light touch for the traditional egg bashing ritual, as well as a good bit of luck – not to mention eggs from well fed hens. Only someone with an egg whose shell remains intact is in line for any good luck. This custom, which is said to stem from the 13th century, has been preserved as a bit of Easter fun. Hence, you will find that everyone in church on Easter Saturday evening will have a red egg in his pocket. The eggs may not be eaten during Lent. They are only brought out, therefore, after the priest has ceremoniously opened the Easter celebrations with the words “Christ is risen” whereupon everyone wishes each other a happy Easter and starts banging their eggs together.

**Excerpts from: ["Culinaria Greece"](#) by Marianthi Minola**

### **Orthodox Easter (Paskha)**

Services during Holy Week have led up to this moment. Indeed, it has been a long and laborious journey leading up to this. Ten weeks, if the pre-Lenten period is taken into account, of fasting, and of lengthened services and expanded vigils. The fast is now

complete. Bells will ring. Visitors from Las Vegas and elsewhere will join a procession around the exterior of the church three times (to symbolize the doctrine of the Holy Trinity) and back inside to joyfully affirm that "Christ is Risen!" This occasion is Pascha for Orthodox Christians, also known as Paskha or Orthodox Easter.

The preceding days leading up to Pascha, Holy Friday and Saturday, have placed our attention to the trial, crucifixion, death and burial of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are confronted with the extreme humility of our suffering God. Then comes Pascha: the feast of universal redemption.

Pascha often comes later than that of western Easter as it is calculated by the Julian calendar. The forerunner of Pascha is the Jewish Passover (pesach – pascha - passover), the festival of the deliverance of the Jewish people from bondage in Egypt. Our Lord was crucified and buried on the day before the Passover and rose again the day after it in the year which we have traditionally come to number 33 A.D. On that year the Passover was on a Saturday. And according to the Gospel accounts, the crucifixion occurred on a Friday and the resurrection early on Sunday morning.

The great Easter sermon first delivered by St John Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, is now proclaimed during Matins in every Orthodox church on Pascha morning (shortly after midnight), while all the faithful stand in attendance: "If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at

the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived therefore. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fattened; let no one go hungry away.



Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen."

Then the priest proclaims 'Christ is risen!' And the people respond 'Indeed, He is risen!' Also sung throughout the service is The Paschal Troparion, also known as the great hymn of the Resurrection of Christ. The words to this are: "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, He granted (or Bestowing) life!" This great hymn of Pascha will be sung repeatedly in the weeks to come.

After services, the people typically gather for a meal, and the priest blesses food baskets. Meats and dairy products can now be eaten once again. Traditional Pascha/Easter delicacies served on this day include richly colored eggs, a sweet, high-domed (Russian) Easter bread and a sweet cheese spread called paskha.

**Source:** [Fr Constantine Alecse Biserica.org](http://FrConstantinAlecseBiserica.org)

### **To our parish family, friends, and visitors:**

We greet you this morning with the joyous message that **Christ IS Risen! Indeed He IS Risen!** In the Orthodox Tradition, we acknowledge that the Resurrection of Christ is an active and real event and celebrate it in the PRESENT TENSE, transcending the millennia and as true now as it was as in Jerusalem. We greet each other with the joy that death has been conquered by Christ and the gates of Hades opened, while He has gone to the Kingdom of Heaven and opened those gates to mankind. This Good News has brought us through the Great Fast and Holy Week to this Pascha—the

Passover from Death to Eternal Life. May God fill your hearts with His Love, His Joy, and His Grace, and may the Holy Spirit continue to fan the flames for the rest of your lives.

**CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

*Fr. Bob, Pani Gina, Alexander, Matthew, the Parish Board,  
and the Holy Ghost Parish Family*

### **Judas Iscariot: Hero or Betrayer?**

Written by the Very Rev. John Breck

*The so-called Gospel of Judas burst on the popular scene over a year ago. Although scholars had long known of its existence, its presentation by the National Geographic Society 1. created a predictable stir, largely because of its apparent challenge to the image of Jesus' disciple Judas furnished by the canonical Gospels of the New Testament. Those who have studied the document, written in the ancient Coptic language, have classified it as belonging to a large group of "Gnostic" writings produced during the second and third centuries A.D. These are works the Church rejected as heretical, in that they represent serious distortions of basic elements of Christian faith handed down "from the beginning" (1 Jn 1:1ff; 1 Cor 15:3ff; Jude 3; etc).*

Fascination with the Gospel of Judas has been due largely to its apparent depiction of the man not as a betrayer, but as a hero. According to most readings, Judas emerges here as one chosen by Jesus Himself to set in motion the events that would lead to His passion and death. That is, Jesus actually wanted Judas to betray him to the Jewish authorities, so that by His death He would be liberated from His material body, in order to return to His place of origin in the realm of spirit. Recently an important paper has appeared (not yet for publication), authored by a respected scholar and student of Coptic texts, which demonstrates convincingly that this reading of the Gospel of Judas is based on erroneous translations and is essentially wrong.

However that may be, the entire issue raises a crucial question that has occupied theologians ever since Christ died. Why, in fact, was Judas' betrayal a necessary element in the divine economy, God's work of salvation? Why did Jesus' sacrificial death have to include not only physical suffering, but also the heartache of knowing that one of His own closest followers delivered Him into the hands of His enemies? Perhaps we can give a partial answer to the question this way.

The Fathers of the Church made various formulations of a fundamental truth: "God became man, so that man might become 'god' by grace." This 'deification'

(theôsis in Greek) is made possible by our incorporation into Christ through baptism; we become “members of His Body” and thereby we share in His personal existence, including His glorification through resurrection from the dead. This extraordinary transformation “from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18), however, is possible only because Christ, the eternal Son of God, “took flesh” (Jn 1:14) and “became what we are” (Phil 2:7). Only thereby could He make us “what He is,” that is, participants in His glorified life.

He became what we are. That is, He assumed or took upon Himself our fallen human nature, everything that makes us distinctively human, and thereby He restored that nature to its original perfection. There was nothing abstract about that action. By becoming one of us, by assuming our fallenness in everything but sin itself (sin being a tragic lack rather than a positive attribute), He submitted Himself not only to human existence, but also to the greatest evil and tragedy a person can know. He had to become what we are in every way; otherwise He could not save us in all that we are, in our wretchedness and vulnerability, as well as in our strength and dignity as bearers of the divine Image.

In other words, for the Son of God to save us out of the depths of our fallenness, He had to experience the fullness of human tragedy, including betrayal and abandonment on the part of those closest to Him. (“What is not assumed is not saved,” St Gregory Nazianzus would declare.) To become truly “what we are” required that Jesus experience not only physical pain and suffering, but the anguish of treachery as well.

Betrayal is, in effect, a symbol for the basest act we can perform in relation to another person. (This is why adultery has always been seen as the worst of sins in a marriage: it betrays trust and therefore undermines the relationship as nothing else can). In order to assume the fullness of human life and suffering, Jesus had to assume betrayal as well. He had to become the victim of the ultimate act of betrayal, one which would lead to his terrible suffering and humiliating death. This is the only way his voluntary self-abasement or self-emptying (Phil 2:7) could be complete, by enduring the pain and anguish not only of physical torment, but of betrayal by one of his own disciples, one he called “friend” (Mt 26:50).

Despite recent attempts to rehabilitate Judas, in popular literature and through a (perhaps) spurious interpretation of the Gospel of Judas, he remains as he is depicted in the canonical Gospels. He is a thoroughly tragic figure, a victim of his own treachery, which culminated in suicide. His freely assumed act of betrayal stands in the starkest contrast to another expression of free choice: that of the Virgin Mother, whose fiat made possible the



incarnation of the Son of God. Judas was as much responsible for his act as Mary was for hers, the one cursed and the other blessed. Both had their place in the mystery of the divine activity that created conditions essential for the world's salvation.

If God's motive in this tragic yet necessary drama was to heal and bring new life to all of creation, Judas' motive, according to Gospel tradition, was simple greed. Speaking of the blood money the Iscariot had received from the religious authorities, and of the crushing regret and grief he subsequently experienced, the evangelist Matthew recounts: "Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, Judas departed. And he went and hanged himself" (27:5). This raises another question formulated many years ago in a few lines of verse:

Does he perceive, as death chokes off despair,  
that He whom greed betrayed will yet atone  
for every sin but one? Is he aware  
that treachery betrays itself alone?

This question, too, belongs to what the great early Church theologian Origen of Alexandria (+254) called "the mystery of betrayal." A mystery of tragic proportions, yet one for which we can only feel the most profound gratitude.

1. The Gospel of Judas. Edited by Rodolphe Kasser, Marvin Meyer, and Gregor Wurst with Additional Commentary by Bart D. Ehrman. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2006.

**[Source: OCA's web site](#)**

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, after he had just finished a rough first day on the job: a flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient one-ton truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation.. His face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.

Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

'Oh, that's my trouble tree,' he replied 'I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children..

So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again.'

'Funny thing is,' he smiled,' when I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.'

God Bless, Life may not be the party we hoped for, but while we are here we might as well dance. We all Need a Tree

luyafriends,

Don and Bernice Burtner

### **SOME SPECIAL PASCHAL NOTES:**

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN! We greet each other with this great news from the Matins of Pascha through the Divine Liturgy on Ascension Thursday. Although Saint John Maximovitch greeted everyone every day with this salutation, in modern practice, this is limited to the Paschal Festival season.

Bright week, the week after Pascha, is a fast-free week. Other than pre-Communion fasting, fasting is FORBIDDEN by the Orthodox Church during this entire week. We feast the entire week to honor Christ's Resurrection. In some traditions, the Paschal Feast lasts until Ascension Thursday, but this is not normal Slavic practice.

If we had an iconostasis, the Royal Doors [Holy Doors, Royal Gates] would be open all week and not closed until Vespers of Bright Saturday. In some traditions, the Royal Doors are left open until Ascension, but again this is not normal Slavic practice. This represents the good news that the Gates of the Kingdom of Heaven have been opened by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ!

The furniture [Holy Altar, Tetrapod, Lectern, Analoys, etc.] in the church is clothed in bright white, to remind us of the brilliant garment that the resurrected savior wore when seen by the apostles. Clergy also wear white vestments during the period from Pascha to Ascension.

Pascha itself ends the day with Agape Vespers, usually served in the early afternoon, with the reading of the Holy Gospel in at least as many languages as the congregation speaks.

**KNEELING:** There is NO KNEELING in the Orthodox Church from Pascha until the Vespers of Pentecost, where the “Kneeling Prayers” are read by the clergy and people.

## GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

Web: <http://www.goarch.org>

Email: [communications@goarch.org](mailto:communications@goarch.org)

Protocol 35/08

April 27, 2008

Holy Pascha  
The Feast of Feasts

*For since death came through a human being,  
The resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being;  
For as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.*  
(I Corinthians 15:21-22)

To the Most Reverend Hierarchs, the Reverend Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, the Presidents and Members of the Parish Councils of the Greek Orthodox Communities, the Distinguished Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Day, Afternoon, and Church Schools, the Philoptochos Sisterhoods, the Youth, the Hellenic Organizations, and the entire Greek Orthodox Family in America

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen!

It is with love, joy, and gratitude to God that we greet one another in these days.

With the triumphant hymn, “Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling death by death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life” (Troparion of the Feast of Pascha), we declare the definitive victory over sin and death. As Orthodox Christians, we celebrate the Feast of Pascha each year with the belief and the knowledge that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ remains the most important event that has ever taken place in human history. Appropriately, our Orthodox Church refers to this event as the “Feast of Feasts.”

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ presents us with an awesome and wondrous

demonstration of the great power and eternal love of God for humankind. It is simultaneously an historic event that unfolded once in a specific time and location, yet its ramifications exceed the boundaries of time and continue to hold far-reaching, indeed cosmic levels of significance. By His death on the Cross for our salvation, His descent into Hades, and His resurrection, Jesus Christ has freed all of humanity from the bonds of sin and death, providing us all with a foretaste of eternal life in Him.

In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, Saint Paul, having detected some wrong ideas about the resurrection among the Corinthians, wrote specifically to underscore the centrality of the resurrection of Christ to the Christian faith. Saint Paul observed that some in the community of Corinth who were calling themselves Christians did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. He told them that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ too did not rise from the dead. Then, he reminded them in a strong use of language that *"if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain...if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins"* (I Corinthians 15:14-17).

In many ways, our contemporary society resembles the society in which the Corinthians lived. It offers a wide array of religious teachings, theories, and alternative understandings to the question of life after death. Because God has given to the people the freedom of conscience, we do not cast judgment on the teachings of other religions nor upon those people who hold them. We do insist, however, that on this day of Holy Pascha we are invited to come to a closer understanding of the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the Christian faith and its fundamental meaning for our lives as Orthodox Christians.

My beloved faithful,

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a miraculous event of the triumph of love, and it stands at the very center of our faith. It is at once an unrepeatable event and a constant reality that assures us of the victory of Jesus Christ over death, and of life with Him in His Heavenly Kingdom.

Christ is Risen! Truly the Lord is Risen! It is my fervent prayer that throughout this Paschal period the joy and eternal peace of the Risen Christ may abide with all of you in your hearts and homes, and that our joyous celebration of His resurrection may always reinforce within us the assurance that we will be made alive in Him forever.

With my warmest Paschal wishes  
And love in the Risen Christ,

.....Now why does God allow this unpleasant sort of solution? You will say, "Isn't God capable of finding an easier method?" This is a great temptation for many Christians: "Why isn't God able to intervene?" However, if He intervenes, my brother, you will tell Him that He is controlling you! He is binding your freedom! Why does God choose this seemingly worse solution? It is because God loves and He wants to show His love. He offers His Son to be crucified! He could have used another method to save the world but He wants to save the world with love; and salvation moved by love is a deep mystery. It constitutes a mere fold of the love of God. St. Isaac the Syrian reveals this for us. When I first read it, I was not all that impressed. I am afraid you may feel this way initially as well. Now, I am totally satisfied with it. Let's look at his 81st homily, *"In the final analysis of all these things, Our God and Lord, due to His strong love for His creation,"* ...and this is the key: strong, great love, burning love. The Greek word is *pathos*. *"He gave His Son to a death on the cross." For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to suffer death for it.* (John 3:16) This was not because God could not save us in a different way, but because this was the way that God found to show and teach us His immense love. Our mind cannot grasp this! He touched us; He drew near to us through the death of His Son to show us how much He loves us! He loves us exceedingly and if He had something even more precious than this He would have given it to us. All this was accomplished so our human race could find its way back to Him, to draw near Him. And because of His great love, He did not wish to bind our freedom. Even though He could do this, He chooses to let us come to Him in the spirit of love. All these things my friends express the mystery behind those things that "must" take place. With this solution the love of God is made obvious. At the same time, the freedom of the individual is preserved! God is truly Wonderful!

Fr. Athanasios Mitilinaios

Homilies on the book of the Revelation—*Translated by Constantine Zalalas*

*Wondrous are the works of humility that lead a person to divine and glorious heights of honor and grace. There was a monk of St. Anne's (on Mt. Athos), a vessel of grace, who was the first chanter at the Patriarchate. This monk went to the spiritual father of St. Anne's to make his confession and to ask his advice.*

"What kind of work did you do?" asked the spiritual father.

"I was the leading chanter at the Patriarchate, holy Father."

"If you want to be saved," the confessor said, "you will not tell anyone that you are a chanter, because here on the Holy Mountain there are many celebrations and you



will be asked to go and sing, and so you will have no real chance to be a monk. I will put you under the obedience of a good father. You will only read well; you will never sing well. You will be out of tune and you will pretend that you are unable to read music."

"Let it be blessed, holy Father," said the novice who was then sent to a pious elder.

A considerable time went by before the spiritual confessor asked the elder, "How is everything going with the novice?"

"Good," he replied. "He is obedient. The only thing is that he cannot sing. But he does read very well."

The years went by. The spiritual father, who was clairvoyant, foresaw that the chanter who was in hiding was near his end. One St. Anne's feast day the central church was celebrating. The spiritual father had been appointed typikaris of the skete. He ordered the chanter in hiding to prepare himself to sing the Cherubic Hymn for the Divine Liturgy. The monk was sad, for he did not want to be revealed. It was such a grace for him not to be known, "to exist in secrecy." He pretended that he had forgotten the music with the passing of time. Even so, he obeyed his spiritual father and agreed to it.

When it was time for the Cherubic Hymn, the typikaris pulled the monk to where the chanters were. The others were sad, thinking that the typikaris had made a mistake. After they had heard the singing however, and the evident musical knowledge of this unknown nobleman and chanter, they said to each other, "And he, the blessed one, was listening to us all this time and he said nothing!"

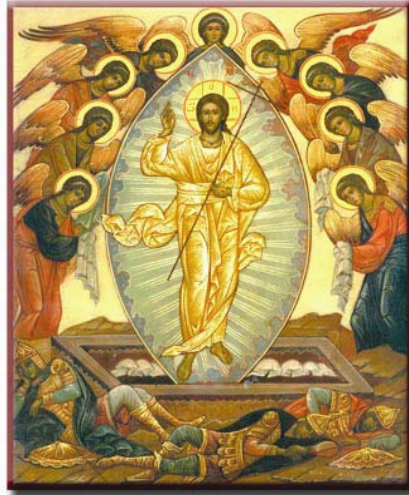
After the Liturgy ended, the father confessor took the monk with him to his hut. Two days later he fell ill and reposed in the Lord. No one would have known the victorious struggle of humility had the spiritual father not revealed it.

from An Athonite Gerontikon

Abba John, who had been exiled by the Emperor Maurice (450-457), said, "We went to Syria one day to see Abba Poemen and we wanted to ask him about purity of heart. But the old man did not know Greek and no interpreter could be found. So, seeing our embarrassment, the old man began to speak Greek, saying, "The nature of water is soft, that of stone is hard; but if a bottle is hung directly above the stone, allowing the water to fall drop by drop, it wears away the stone. So it is with the word of God; it is soft and our heart is hard, but the man who hears the word of God often, opens his heart to the fear of God."

archived as a blog at: <http://wordfromthedesert.squarespace.com/>

## PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX BISHOPS BEYOND THE BORDERS OF UKRAINE



### ***PASCHA – THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD – 2008***

*To the venerable clergy of all ranks and the devout laity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church beyond the borders of and within Ukraine. May the Peace of the Risen Lord be with you all!*

***Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!***

During the past months we have all undertaken two forty day spiritual pilgrimages. The first led us to a shelter for animals – a cave – from which emanated the Love of God in the Newborn Christ Child, a Love, which continues to fill and guide each of our lives. The second pilgrimage brought us to another cave – this time an empty tomb – from which emanates the Light of our Risen Lord. “Unto you a child is born...” carried us to a spiritual Bethlehem. “Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death...” opens for us the gates to God’s Heavenly Kingdom.

In the last conversations recorded in Luke's Gospel, our Lord talks to the disciples about His Crucifixion and His Resurrection. He opens up for them a deep understanding of these events. He tells them that as a result of His Crucifixion and Resurrection, they will be clothed with power from on high. They will be empowered to go out into the world and change the world. They will be empowered to be His witnesses in Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. In the Gospel of John, as we heard on Holy Thursday evening during the Passion Gospels, our Lord promises us that where He goes now, we will follow later and that we will be one with God and one with each other. “Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in Me and I in you.” (John 14:19-20)

The Resurrection – PASCHA – of the Son of God has made it possible for us to enter into the union with God that our Lord Jesus Christ spent His whole earthly ministry explaining and modeling for us. PASCHA makes it possible for us to know that God loves us and that, in our response to God's Love, we are clothed with power. The same power that carried Him through the Crucifixion and through the Resurrection is available to us now. Most of us already are caught up in the quest for power. We want economic power; the power to possess things; the power to succeed – as success is measured in our human terms; the power to look good in the

eyes of others; the power to satisfy our every desire – without regard to the positive or negative morality of those desires; the power to say, “I’ve got it made.” The quest for this kind of power has emerged as the number one priority in our society and almost every society throughout the world. Deep within us, however, we know that there is something wrong about this; that we are deluding ourselves.

God is calling us to life. God is offering us the power to live as complete persons. But He cannot get through to us and we cannot be one with Him if we clog up the channels of Grace with immoral desires and false deities. All we achieve, all we possess, all the things of this world we seek to attain are lifeless and of no value and of no importance -- if we are unwilling to place them under God's Rule. It is a matter of priorities: “seek first the Kingdom of God”, Who is calling us into the Light of the Resurrection. God is offering us the Power to share the Light, to be His witnesses here at home and to the ends of the earth. May it never be said to us, that which our Lord says to these Pharisees who were so turned in on themselves: “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written – ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me; in vain do they worship Me’” (Mark. 7:6-7).

There is a real necessity for us on this PASCHA 2008 to return to our Ukrainian Orthodox Christian roots, to living that which we vocalize in prayer, to examine our lives in the Light of the Gospel of Life and to evangelize ourselves first before we can ever hope to evangelize others. To be Ukrainian Orthodox is to be obedient to Christ, to be disciplined and responsible members of the community – not members of a secular religion or obedient to our personal desires. To be Ukrainian Orthodox is to put Christ first in our lives and actions, to live our baptismal reality to the fullest as did millions of our forefathers in the Faith. If we fail to live what we pray, we most certainly do not glorify God, nor honor ourselves or our heritage, which is a profound heritage that literally preserved Holy Orthodoxy at the most critical moments of its history.

May the risen Christ, Who imparts to us His peace, open all our hearts to His Good News and those of our brethren in Ukraine, who partake with us of “one Bread and one Cup” finding unity in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit May our risen Lord be praised and glorified by our words and deeds.

*Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!*

In the abiding Love of our Risen Lord,

- + **Constantine, Metropolitan** – Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and in Diaspora
- + **John, Metropolitan** – Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
- + **Antony, Archbishop** – Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
- + **Ioan, Archbishop** – Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Diaspora, Eparchy of Australia/New Zealand
- + **Yurij, Archbishop** – Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
- + **Jeremiah, Bishop** – Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Eparchy in South America (UOC of USA)
- + **Andriy, Bishop** – Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Diaspora, Eparchy of Western Europe

PATRIARCHAL PROCLAMATION ON THE HOLY PASCHA

Protocol Number 477

**+ B A R T H O L O M E W**  
**BY THE MERCY OF GOD**  
**ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE - NEW ROME**  
**AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH**  
**TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH**  
**GRACE, PEACE AND MERCY**  
**FROM OUR GLORIOUSLY RISEN SAVIOR CHRIST**

Dearly beloved Brethren and Children in the Lord,

*"Behold, the winter has passed!"1[1] "Arise is the spring" of salvation; "flowers appear across the land, the sound of the turtle-dove is heard, ... the vines are in bloom and give forth their fragrance".2[2] A sacred Pascha – great and holy – has arisen; and it warms, lights and makes radiant the world. "Now all things are filled with light, both heaven and earth and the nethermost regions of the earth."3[3]*

**CHRIST IS RISEN!**

Our God, Who is beyond all suffering and is Immortal, Who is the comely Bridegroom of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our Firstborn Brother and Dearest Friend – *"He is risen from the dead, having trampled down death by death" – three days after He cried out from the crest of the Cross: "It is consummated!"4[4] "Hades was embittered when it encountered"5[5] Him, because Christ destroyed his lordship. As God, He rightly emptied out his chambers of darkness, freely bestowing life on those He found in the tombs. But not only this; to all those who believe in Him from then until the consummation of the age – indeed to all those who live in Him and hold fast their faith and confession in Him until the end, the Lord grants everlasting life and a sure resurrection. Christ, "Who has girded His loins with righteousness and clothed his sides with truth,"6[6] is Risen from the Tomb. "As the One Who loves mankind, He has raised up Adam, the father of us all."7[7]*

Behold then, dearly beloved brethren and children, the crown of our Great Feast and the atmosphere of springtime; in the midst of its first bloom the Church announces the Good News to the Universe. The heavy winter of death has passed away! The icy tyranny of the devil and his domination have been overcome. The frightful reign of darkness and perdition has been undone. *"The Lord is King, He has girded Himself with majesty!"8[8]*

We behold Jesus Who, of His own free will, out of His unconditional love, suffered on the Cross, died and was buried for our sake and for our salvation. We have just now worshipped Him Risen from the dead, and together with the Apostles and the Myrrh-Bearers we have heard

---

1[1] Song of Songs 2:11

2[2] Song of Songs 2:12-13

3[3] Canon of Pascha

4[4] St. John 19:30

5[5] Isaiah 14:9

6[6] Isaiah 11:5

7[7] Service of the Resurrection

8[8] Psalm 92:1

from his holy mouth the words: "*Peace be unto you!*"<sup>9[9]</sup> and "*Rejoice!*"<sup>10[10]</sup> – and our hearts are filled with joy. Indeed, "*no one will take our joy from us,*"<sup>11[11]</sup> because more than even our own, the personal death of every single human being has been mightily abolished. This is why we, who have crucified the carnal mindset of the old person "*together with the passions and lusts,*"<sup>12[12]</sup> and "*who have died with Christ: this is the reason we believe that we [shall] live with Him.*"<sup>13[13]</sup> For as "*we have been buried*" with Christ "*through Baptism,*"<sup>14[14]</sup> we have become "*planted with Him,*" that is, we have become partakers of His Resurrection.<sup>15[15]</sup>

St. Gregory the Theologian trumpets this truth with the highest rhetorical skill when he says: "*Yesterday I was crucified with You, O Christ; today I abound with glory. Yesterday I died with You; today I am filled with life. Yesterday I was buried with You; today I arise with You.*"<sup>16[16]</sup> That which has plagued us from ages past has once and for all been resolved by the Risen Lord. Our agony is over. "*Christ is Risen, and life can truly be lived!*"<sup>17[17]</sup> From now on, Life and our Resurrection are not things to be sought for – not dreams, neither a utopia. From here on, Life is, and the Resurrection is: concrete, tangible reality. A reality that has a specific face and name: "*a name above every name*" – **Jesus Christ** – before Whom "*every knee shall bow – whether in Heaven or on earth or under the earth,*"<sup>18[18]</sup> and every tongue shall confess that He alone is Life-Giver and Lord. He is the One Who lives and reigns forever. He is the One Who by His ever-favorable will distributes His Kingdom, His glory and His inheritance from His Father, to all who share in His Cross, His death and His Resurrection, as "*He is the Firstborn to many brethren.*"<sup>19[19]</sup>

Him do we beseech, from our Martyric Patriarchal and Ecumenical See, that He grace the world with peace; that He illumine the souls of men with truth and righteousness; that He bestow patience and encouragement on those who face adversity; and that He grant the taste of salvation and life eternal to all believers.

Unto Him, Who is the Conqueror of Death and the Prince of Life, be the glory, dominion, honor and worship, together with Father and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages. Amen.

Holy Pascha 2008  
BARTHOLOMEW of Constantinople  
Your fervent intercessor  
before the Risen Christ

---

9[9] St. John 20:20

10[10] St. Matthew 28:9

11[11] Cf. St. John 16:22

12[12] Galatians 5:24

13[13] Romans 6:8

14[14] Romans 6:4

15[15] Romans 6:5

16[16] Homily on Holy Pascha

17[17] Catechetical Homily of St. John Chrysostom

18[18] Philippians 2:9

19[19] Romans 8:29



Abba Poemen said: It is written, "As the deer longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for Thee, O God." For truly deer in the desert devour many reptiles and when their venom burns them, they try to come to the springs, to drink so as to assuage the venom's burning. It is the same for the monks: sitting in the desert they are burned by the venom of evil demons, and they long for Saturday and Sunday to come, to be able to go to the springs of water, that is to say, the Body and Blood of the Lord, so as to be purified from the bitterness of the evil one.