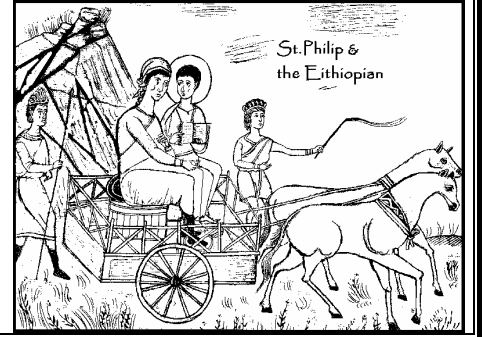


# NEWS & NOTES FOR THE ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR

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Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh



**Church School Directors: Please distribute copies of this Newsletter *this weekend* to your teachers. They need this information for Palm Sunday & Holy Week. Do not delay.**

- + Message from Dr. Tony Vrame, Archdiocese DRE
- + Review & Outline of the Revised *Holy Friday Retreat Handbook*
- + Teacher Recruiting article
- + The 11 Matins Gospels & an Activity about Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances

## **A Holy Week Message from the Archdiocese Director of Religious Education**

Dear Fellow Religious Educators,

March 17, 2010

With Holy Week just ten days away, you might want to include some of the following brief points about Holy Week in your upcoming lessons.

### **Saturday of Lazarus and the Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)**

- The second is one of the Twelve Great Feasts of the Church
- They are both joyous in nature and serve as an interlude between Great Lent (which ends the evening before Saturday of Lazarus) and Holy Week (which begins with the Orthros of Holy Monday, usually celebrated on the evening of Palm Sunday).
- **Saturday of Lazarus** recalls the miracle of Jesus raising his friend Lazarus from the dead after 4 days in the tomb (John 11:1-44).
- **The Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem** brings Christ into the city for Passover, where he will also begin his final days.

With **Palm Sunday evening**, we begin the transposition of the usual order of services, celebrating morning services the evening before and evening services in the morning.

### **Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday - The Focus is on the Bridegroom – the *Nymfios*.**

- Christ is the Bridegroom who offers His entire being for His bride, the Church, the people of God.
- The image is one of tremendous love, care, and intimacy.
- The Bridegroom image is from the *Parable of the Ten Virgins* (Matthew 25:1-13), who wait for the arrival of the Bridegroom for the wedding feast.
- This image also became an image of the Parousia of Christ – God's intervention in history.
- During this part of Holy Week, we will hear about
  1. *Joseph the Patriarch* (Genesis)
  2. *Cursing of the Fig Tree* (Matthew 21:18-22)
  3. *Ten Virgins* (Matthew 25:1-13)
  4. *Parable of the Talents* (Matthew 25:14-30)
  5. *Sinful Woman who anoints the feet of Christ* (Matthew 26:6-13) – [Plus the Hymn about the unknown Sinful Woman by Kassiane the Hymnographer. pmo]
  6. Judas Iscariot, the Betrayer of the Lord.

## Holy Wednesday

- In Greek Orthodox practice, the **Sacrament of Holy Unction** will be celebrated on Holy Wednesday. The sacrament can be celebrated at any time during the year, of course, but on Holy Wednesday, the sacrament is especially connected to the relationship between penitence and illness.

## Holy Thursday

- The focus is on the *Upper Room, the Last Supper*, and the events at the *Garden of Gethsemane*, that is, Christ's prayer and his arrest.
- In addition, in a few parishes the service of the *Washing of the Feet* is being celebrated (connected to events in the Upper Room in the Gospel of John).
- Beginning in the Orthros of Friday (Thursday evening), we hear the *Passion of the Lord* -His arrest, trials, beatings, crucifixion, death and burial.

## Holy Friday

- On Friday afternoon, in the Vespers Service, much of this is repeated when we hear and see the *Removal of Christ from the Cross*, and the Procession of the Icon of the *Epitaphios Threnos* (which means the Lamentation at the Tomb) and its placement in the sepulcher (the *kouvouklion*) which has been decorated with flowers. [The two Greek words are sometimes misused. The Kouvouklion is the tomb or sepulcher and the Epitaphios is the cloth icon depicting Christ laid in the tomb FYI: The kuvouklion is a relatively modern addition to Holy Friday about 800 years ago. pmo]
- On Friday evening, in the Orthros of Saturday, we participate in the *Lamentations*, (the *Encomia*).
  1. While we call them lamentations, the hymns are in fact *hymns of praise - encomia*).
  2. These verses date from the early 1500's.
  3. They retell the story of the burial of Christ, depict the disposition of the Theotokos and others involved with the burial of Christ (notice the dialogue between Christ and His Mother in the third stanza), and reflect theologically on the meaning of Christ's death for the people of God.

## Holy Saturday

The Paschal Vigil has begun.

- On Saturday morning, we celebrate the *Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil*, which is Paschal and quite joyous in nature. In this Liturgy, many themes relating to Baptism are repeated, because it was at the Paschal Vigil when the catechumens were baptized in the early Church. [The priest tosses bay/laurel leaves throughout the church signifying Christ's victory over death. Liken this to the olive wreaths given to winners of the Olympic Games. Pmo]
- On Saturday evening, the Orthros of Sunday is celebrated. It begins with the *Service of the Light*, moves into Orthros and finally the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The theme is the *Resurrection of Christ*.

## On Sunday

- The Vespers, the *Agape Vespers*, remind us that the Good News – the Resurrection of Christ – is a universal message and is to be proclaimed to all people.

For more details about Holy Week, see

- Calivas, *Great Week and Pascha in the Greek Orthodox Church* (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1992).
- *Journey through Holy Week* (Student Text and Teacher's Guide) for your classes.  
In addition, many parishes have placed copies of *Journey through Holy Week* in pews and at the candle stand for visitors. Some parishes have even mailed a copy to everyone in the parish.
- The Department also has available copies of the *Holy Week Service Book* (Papadeas).

Wishing you and your loved ones a most joyous Pascha!      *Anton C. Vrame, Ph.D.*

**“A Holy Friday Retreat:  
A Parish Handbook for Planning & Conducting a Lenten Retreat.”**  
Newly-revised edition published by the National Forum of GO Church Musicians

- ★ As in the first edition, the handbook provides ready-to-use information, materials, icons, and music for putting on such a retreat.
- ★ The 2010 edition includes variations and alternative ideas to the theme, plus more music, which is useful when parishes conduct their Retreat in repeated years.
- ★ It is a valuable resource for helping young people learn through Orthodox theology, hymnology, and iconography
- ★ Cost of the book is \$15 plus shipping and handling.
- ★ To order, simply email **Vicki Pappas** <http://churchmusic.goarch.org> (National Chairman / National Forum of Greek Orthodox Church Musicians)
- ★ You will receive the copies, an invoice and information about where to send the check.
- ★ The National Forum states on the flyer, “We hope you enjoy this new publication and that it proves useful in your parish. We would be most interested to hear about your programs and their results!”



**Additional Information by Phyllis Meshel Onest**

I read the entire Handbook at one sitting and think it is great! There are so many wonderful ideas and the text is included, too. *The Handbook* includes Helpful Tips for Planning the Retreat, Ideas for Registration, Prayer services, an Announcement Flyer, Registration Form and Letter to schools asking for an excused absent. Includes introducing the singing the Lamentations to the youth.

The few mistakes may only confuse the speakers. More important are missing words that would enrich the stories. Let me share a few:

- The “Soldier at the Cross” is a saint of the church – St. Longinos.
- Joseph of Arimathea introduces himself as one of Christ’s followers, but omits that he was a “secret follower.” By asking for Jesus’ body, this was no longer a secret and puts his standing among the Pharisees in question.
- When talking about the altar server’s vestments, the name “orarion” is not used. Rather, we read “long band of material. Our deacons also wear oraria.
- A priest must wear his Epitrachelion at all services. It is a sign of his priesthood.
- On page 21, it reads, “The Choir helps the priest...” and omits the role of other members of the congregation. I believe the role of the choir is to lead the congregation in singing the responses and hymns and to sing the special hymns for feast days and during the Great Fast. It appears to me that the more we are involved in singing the responses and hymns, the more we participate in worship, and the liturgical experience is more satisfying.

Option 1- 8 Stations: Christ on Cross; Paschal Candle; Resurrection Icon/Banner; Holy Gospel; Psalterion /Chanters stand; Icon of Virgin Mary on Iconostasion; the Temple; Censor

Option 2 – 7 Stations: Clergy Vestments

Option 3 – The Choir Loft and the Hymns they sing

Option 4 – 9 Stations: Events leading us to Pascha: Services of Holy Week

Option 5 – 5 Stations: Pascha through the Senses and Colors

Option 6 – 8 Stations: Investigating the Events of Holy Week: Meet People in the Story & Places  
(Text given) includes Pontius Pilate, Soldier at the Cross, Joseph of Arimathea, Angel at the Tomb

Option 7 – 6 Stations: Icons of Holy Week

Spiritual Lesson: The Kouvouklion (Tomb) and Epitaphios

*Other Theme Variations (no additional information)*

1. Places of Holy Week - listed
2. The People of Holy Friday – people listed
3. The Icons of Holy Week –icons listed
4. Beatitudes
5. Sacraments
6. Symbols of Holy Week - listed
7. Eight services from Friday (Taking down from the cross) through Pentecost - listed

**Resources to use with the presentations as background or enrichment of Holy Week:**

1. *Come Bless the Lord!* Icon Packet
2. *Teaching Pics* from the OCEC
3. *Icon Coloring Book* by Fr. Matusiak
4. Icon coloring books by Annunciation Press
5. Online at [www.phyllisonest.com](http://www.phyllisonest.com) – Go to *Lent & Pascha Resources* unless otherwise noted

**BOOKS, LEAFLETS, ETC.**

- a. *Getting Ready for Holy Week & Pascha* - Book
- b. *A Young Person's Guide to the Lenten & Holy Week Services* - Leaflet Spring '07/'08

**GAMES**

- a. *Our Journey to Pascha* – [1] Spring '00 Questions, [2] Game Board
- b. *"PASCHA EGGS: The Resurrection Story for Orthodox Christian Children"* - Directions for Assembly & Booklet – 2007 Edition
- c. *Pascha Symbols* – Spring 2009 Newsletter (scroll down)
- d. *Symbols of the Season* (explains *Pascha Symbols*)–Spring 2009 Newsletter(scroll down)

**LESSON PLANS**

- a. *Healing Saints Remembered In the Unction Service*–Spring 2009 Newsletter(scroll down)
- b. *Holy Week & Pascha Recall* - Spring '06
- c. *Icons & Hymns of Holy Week* - Spring '07
- d. *Pascha Egg Hunt with a Message* - Classroom Activity - Spring '04
- e. *Pascha Lesson Cookie Recipe* - Spring '00
- f. *Preparing Our Children for Holy Week Services & Pascha* - Spring '07/'08
- g. *Quotes to Remember: A Holy Week Bible Study* - Spring'05

**RESOURCES FOR HOLY WEEK** are included with the *Holy Friday Parish Handbook* information. The *Spring 2009* issue of the Newsletter contains three pages of online resources for *Lent and Holy Week* from the Departments of Outreach & Evangelism (now part of Stewardship), Youth & Youth Ministry, & [www.qoarch.org](http://www.qoarch.org) & [www.phyllisonest.com](http://www.phyllisonest.com)



**SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHERS LISTS**

If your parish has not submitted the list of Church School Teachers and the requested information, please do so by the end of the month. An excel template was recently sent to the parishes with outstanding Teachers Lists. If there is a problem, please contact Phyllis at [pmonest@neo.rr.com](mailto:pmonest@neo.rr.com).

The general information about the number of teachers in each Metropolis will be included in Dr. Vrame's Religious Education Report to the Archdiocese Clergy-Laity in July. Dr. Vrame's goal is to be able to contact Teachers directly. I also want to do this.

# Teachers Are the Key - So Recruit!

By Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div.

## Who is teaching is of greater importance than what is being taught.

**The late spring and summer months are the time to find and prepare teachers for the upcoming school year.** We are looking for a particular type of person. Someone who participates in the liturgical life of the church on a regular basis, who interacts well with the youth, who is willing to learn more about the Orthodox faith and teaching, who may be a professional teacher.

**Our Church Schools need teachers who are sensitive** to both the meaning of the Orthodox faith and the message as expressed in their lives. They want to share the faith and in a way that their students can best learn.

**This is not an easy task** and we sometimes try to talk an individual into teaching a class. We may say that it is time for their “tour of duty,” and in a way that is one way to think about helping in the church school program, but not a reason to push someone into the classroom. It is my personal belief it is better to combine classes rather than have someone teach who is not committed or has been coerced. To settle for someone we need to “talk into” teaching can do more harm than good to our parish programs. Our youth are too important to us and to the Orthodox Church in America to settle for the uncommitted.

**Look for faithful people and offer them the necessary training they need to do the job.** This requires the Priest and the Church School Director to commit to providing the needed training and assistance to these faithful people so they may participate in the Church’s Teaching Ministry.

In addition to new teachers, all **volunteer teachers must be offered training** in the skills they need to perform their duties. The parish priest is responsible to oversee the education within his parish at all levels. This added demand is twofold. [1] To teach the basics of the faith himself or by a learned member of the parish. [2] To ensure the Church School Director arranges for teaching training. Either way, **all teachers need to continue learning the Orthodox faith.**

### **What are some options for teacher training?**

1. Teaching the faith by the priest or learned layperson.
2. Professional teachers in the parish – regardless if they commit to teach a class – can offer teacher training sessions on: [a] lesson plans, [b] crafts, [c] bulletin boards, [e] cooperative learning.
3. Retreats led by the parish priest, clergy from the Metropolis or a monastic can enhance the spiritual life of the teachers & increase their knowledge about the Orthodox faith.
4. From the Archdiocese Department of Religious Education - *Teacher Training Smart Pages*
5. Invite the Director of the Metropolis Office of Religious Education.

### **To increase the pool of potential teachers,**

- ★ **Pray and then**
- ★ **Invite people, especially, parents of the students,** to help with special projects, serve as classroom aides, help in the church school office with attendance or other areas, work on bulletin boards, and pass out snacks or any other task that does not require a long-term commitment.
- ★ Give yourself and others the opportunity to observe how they work with teachers and the youth.
- ★ Invite them to teacher training sessions or retreats.
- ★ Reach out to a future teacher to co-teach a class or serve as a substitute teacher.
- ★ Throughout this observation period, ask God’s guidance in leading you toward the person(s) He wants in your Church School program.

Finally, pray to recognize the people He sends you. Happy recruiting!



# The 11 Gospel Readings for Matins/Orthros

Themes: Jesus Appearances After His Resurrection & the Empty Tomb.

*Thomas doubts He is Jesus*

<b>Matins Resurrection Gospel Readings</b>		
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Matt 28:16-20</b>	Great Commission [Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-49] [a]
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Mark 16:1-8</b>	Sunday of the Myrrhbearers, the Empty Tomb [Matt 28:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20: 1-10]
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>Mark 16:9-20</b>	Mary Magdalene is the first to see the risen Christ: [Matt 28: 9, 10; Luke 24:13-43; John 20:11-21:25] [b]
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Luke 24: 1-12</b>	Empty Tomb [Matt 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; John 20:1-10]
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Luke 24:13-35</b>	Road to Emmaus [Mark 16:12, 13] [c]
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Luke 24:36-53</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> appearance to the 10 Disciples in the Upper Room [Mark 16:14-18; John 20:19-23] [d]
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>John 20:1-9</b>	Empty Tomb [Matt 28:1-8; Mark 17:1-8; Luke 24:1-12]
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>John 20:11-18</b>	Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene [e]
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>John 20:19-31</b>	Upper Room with 11 Disciples, St Thomas Sunday [f]
<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>John 21:1-14</b>	Sea of Tiberius, 3 <sup>rd</sup> appearance to Disciples, beckoned 7 in the boat to let down their nets; they caught a multitude of fish. [g]
<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>John 21:15-25</b>	Sea of Tiberius, Peter, will you feed my sheep" dialogue [h]

For more information on Jesus' appearances after the Resurrection, go to this following site:  
[http://www.orthodox.net/questions/appearances\\_1.html](http://www.orthodox.net/questions/appearances_1.html)

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## DIRECTIONS FOR THE ACTIVITY -- JESUS APPEARS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION

**Answers to the Question:** on a mountain top, in the Garden of Gethsemane (twice), on the road to Emmaus, in the Upper Room (twice), along the Sea of Tiberius (twice).

Use the following activity during one session after Pascha or as a special activity over a three-week period.

- ❖ This is a perfect lesson for students to work in groups, since there is information to glean from the reading, plus comparisons to make.
- ❖ The group size (2-3-4) depends on the size of the class.
- ❖ Make sure to sit a weak reader with a strong reader who can kindly help the former student as s/he reads.
- ❖ Suggestion: Speak with the strong readers before class to inform them of their special part in the groups.
  - Since they are better readers, you are inviting them to share their talent from God.
  - Explain: Some students take more time to develop their reading skills, so commenting on what someone cannot do will hurt their feelings.
  - They must understand there is no reason to talk about this with the other students.
  - If they can accept the conditions, they can assist. If they cannot accept the conditions, then they will be just one of the group members.
  - Thank them for understanding.

# Jesus Appears After His Resurrection



**QUESTION:** To whom did Jesus appear after He rose from the dead?

**ANSWER:** The 11 Matins Gospel Readings includes 8 different appearances by Jesus. Let us examine three of them.

**NEEDED MATERIALS:** The Chart & pencil with eraser for each student; Bible for 1 or 2 students

| THREE APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER HIS RESURRECTION  |               |                                 |              |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Bible References</b>                            | Luke 24:13-35 | Luke 24:36-43                   | John 21:1-14 |
| <b>Where Jesus appeared</b>                        |               |                                 |              |
| <b>To whom He appeared</b>                         |               |                                 |              |
| <b>When He appeared</b>                            |               |                                 |              |
| <b>How He was recognized</b>                       |               |                                 |              |
| <b>Other accounts of the same event</b>            | Mark 16:12-13 | Mark 16:14-18<br>John 20: 19-23 | None         |
| <b>Differences<br/>Similarities<br/>Uniqueness</b> |               |                                 |              |

NAME \_\_\_\_\_