

Getting Ready for Holy Week and Pascha

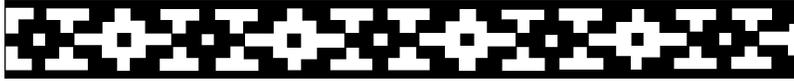


A Guide for Families

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A Note to Parents/Readers



This booklet covers the services of Holy Week, beginning with Lazarus Saturday. Its intent is twofold: (1) to enhance parents' understanding of the Holy Week experiences so that (2) they may, in turn, help make the experiences come alive for their children.

Each time we enter Holy Week we bring to it a different set of experiences and feelings than we had the previous year. In a sense, we are a different person each year, so that even if the services are the same, we will hear and experience something new. The same is especially true of our children. They are one year older, one year more mature. They bring with them one more year of liturgical and Church School experience and knowledge.

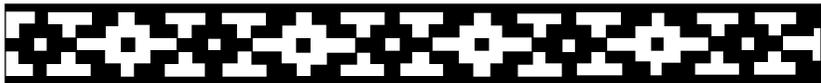
To help us in our task, each day contains the following sections; ABOUT THE ICON of the day and its description; SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES; FESTAL OR SPECIAL HYMNS of the day; FOR PARENTS, which provides background information; FAMILY ACTIVITIES, which offers ways to make that day special in the home and life of your family.

The "Palm Sunday" and "Pascha" sections were compiled by Fr. Stephen Belonick and are part of the TRACT MASTERS SERIES V, published by the Orthodox Christian Publication Center.

The remainder of the sections are ones that I have compiled.

I hope that you find this booklet to be a useful tool in living out the Orthodox faith in your home. Have a blessed Holy Week and Pascha!

Phyllis Meshel Onest, M.Div.
Director of Religious Education,
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THE MYRRHBEARERS



Christ Is Risen!
Truly He Is Risen!

which shines eternally with the glorious light of Christ, overcoming the perpetual night of evil and destroying the darkness of this mortal and sinful world. [See above — Hymn to the Theotokos]

From *The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II: Worship*, by Fr. Thomas Hopko.

Family Activities

- ◆ The best way to prepare for Pascha is to participate in the services of Holy Week: Bridegroom; Presanctified; Holy Unction; Holy Thursday's Liturgy & 12 Gospels; Holy Friday's Royal Hours, Taking Down from the Cross & Lamentations; Holy Saturday's Vespertal Liturgy. Depending on the ages of your children, attend as many as possible, especially Holy Wednesday and Holy Friday.
- ◆ Pascha is a very special time for children. It is a night like no other night, and they should experience this. You can help them by scheduling their time so that they might be as awake as they can be on Pascha. One way is to awake them about 5:00 am on Holy Saturday morning, then put them to bed about 5:00 pm. Reawake them at 10:00 or 10:30 pm to get ready for Church.
- ◆ Include the children in your Paschal preparations: the preparation of the Paschal foods; readying the Paschal Basket, if this is your custom; selecting their clothes, etc.
- ◆ Have them bring an icon from home for the Paschal procession, if this is the custom of the parish.
- ◆ Receive the Eucharist as a family.
- ◆ Attend the Paschal Vespers on Sunday morning as a family. This service is short and joyful, and especially suited for the youngest children who may not be able to attend the midnight service.
- ◆ During the 40-day "afterfeast" use the Troparion and Kontakion hymns as prayers before and/or after meals and as part of evening prayers.



About the Icon: The Raising of Lazarus

St. Lazarus — the figure on the extreme right; he is depicted at the entrance of his tomb, wrapped in his white burial shroud.

Christ — the third figure from the left; He is depicted commanding Lazarus to come forth from the tomb.

St. Peter the Disciple — the figure on the extreme left; usually all twelve are depicted in the icon, but in the present icon, Saint Peter, the chief disciple, is depicted to represent all twelve.

St. Mary the Sister of Lazarus — second figure from the left; usually both Saint Mary and Saint Martha, the two sisters of Lazarus, are depicted in the icon, but in the present icon Saint Mary is depicted to represent them both.

Jerusalem — in the background of the icon is the walled city of Jerusalem, which Christ would enter in triumph the day following His raising of Lazarus.

Taken from *The Icon Book*, by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak.

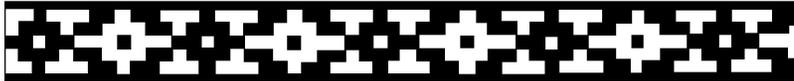
The Raising of Lazarus

Celebrated the day before Palm Sunday

Scriptural References

Epistle: Hebrews 12:28-13:8

Gospel: John 11:1-45



Festal Hymns

Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before your passion, You confirmed the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of death. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

Kontakion (Tone 2)

Christ — the Joy, the Truth, and the Light of all, the Life of the world and the Resurrection — has appeared in His goodness to those on earth. He has become the image of our resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all.

From Vespers

O Lord, wishing to see the tomb of Lazarus — for You were soon to dwell by Your own choice within a tomb — You asked, "Where have you laid him?" And learning that which was already known to You, You called to him whom You loved, "Lazarus, come forth." And he who was without breath obeyed the One who gave him breath, the Savior of our souls.

O Lord, wishing to give Your disciples an assurance of Your Resurrection from the dead. You came to the tomb of Lazarus and called to him by name. Then was hell despoiled, and it released the one that had been dead four days, as he called upon You, "O blessed Lord, glory to You."

For Parents

Lazarus Saturday is a paschal celebration. It is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrection service of Sunday is celebrated on an



Festal Salutation

**Christ Is Risen!
Indeed He Is Risen!**

For Parents

The celebration of Pascha/Easter in the Orthodox Church is once again not merely an historical reenactment of the event of Christ's Resurrection as narrated in the gospels. It is not a dramatic representation of the "first Pascha morning." There is no "sunrise service" since the Pascha Matins and the Divine Liturgy are celebrated together in the first dark hours of the first day of the week in order to give men the experience of the "new creation" of the world, and to allow them to enter mystically into the **New Jerusalem**

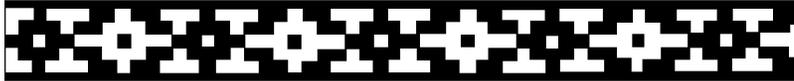
The Resurrection

*Celebrated on the first Sunday
after the Spring Equinox after Passover*

Scriptural References

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8

Gospel: John 1:1-17



Festal Hymns

Paschal Troparion

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

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, all you 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!

From the Theology of the Church

The Church teaches that while the body of Christ rested in the tomb on the Sabbath (the day after the Crucifixion), His soul descended into Hades. Prior to the Incarnation the gates of paradise were closed to mankind. Therefore, Hades, not to be confused with Hell, was the place where the souls of all went upon death. It was neither a place of reward nor a place of punishment. It had been likened to Death's "prison" where the souls of both the just and the sinners were confined. Since Christ actually died upon the Cross, Death claimed His soul for Hades. However, Hades received more than it expected ... it received the Giver of Life, who destroyed the power of Hades. This icon portrays this concept.

*Taken from **The Icon Book** by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak.*

other day. At the liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the Church glorifies Christ as "**the Resurrection and the Life**" who by raising Lazarus, has confirmed the universal resurrection of mankind even before his own suffering and death.

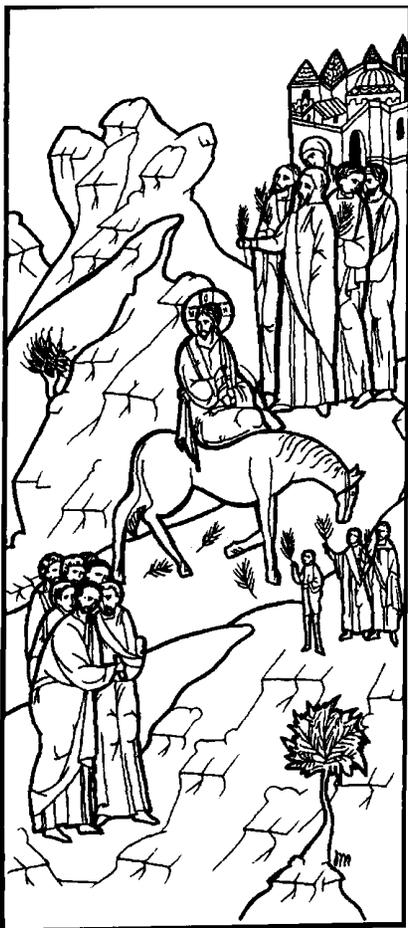
At the Divine Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday the baptismal verse from Galatians: As **many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ** (**Galatians 32:27**) replaces the Thrice-Holy Hymn thus indicating the resurrectional character of the celebration, and the fact that Lazarus Saturday was once among the few great baptismal days [of adult catechumens] in the Orthodox Church Year.

Because of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, Christ was hailed by the masses as the long-expected Messiah-King of Israel. Thus, in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, he entered Jerusalem, the City of the King, riding on the colt of an ass. (Zechariah 9:9; John 12:12) The crowds greeted him with branches in their hands and called out to him with shouts of praise: **Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! The Son of David! The King of Israel!** Because of this glorification by the people, the priests and scribes were finally driven "**to destroy him, to put him to death.**" (**Luke 19:47; John 11:53, 12:10**)

*From **The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II: Worship**, by Fr. Thomas Hopko.*

Family Activities

- ◆ Make a point of being in Church for Liturgy on this day to worship as a family. Receive the Eucharist as a family. This day begins the events of the Passion Week.
- ◆ If the youth of your parish fold the palms into the form of a cross, or trim the pussywillow branches in preparation for Palm Sunday, make it a point for your children to be involved.
- ◆ In some Orthodox parishes, it is the custom on Lazarus Saturday for the children of the parish to make a procession around the church. They sing, carry banners and even play musical instruments, recreating the children of the Gospels who heralded the entry of Our Lord into Jerusalem by waving palm branched and crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord." If your parish does this, make a point of having your children participate. If not, ask your priest and Church School Director about starting a new custom!
- ◆ Use the Troparion and Kontakion as prayers at mealtime today.
- ◆ Use the ABOUT THE ICON section to review the different individuals and elements of the icon.



About the Icon: Palm Sunday

Christ — central figure depicted seated upon a donkey.

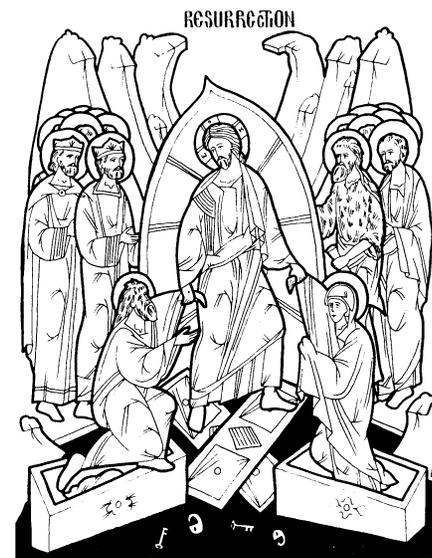
The Disciples — the group of figures on the extreme left.

The Jews — the group of figures on the extreme right

The Children — the miniature people in front of the donkey, carrying palm boughs.

The City of Jerusalem — walled buildings on the right; the temple is symbolized by the dome.

Taken from *The Icon Book*, by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak.



About the Icon

Christ — the central figure; He is robed in white to denote His Divinity; the aureole [elongated halo] encompasses Him and also symbolizes this brilliant Light; at His feet are the brass gates of Hades which He demolished; the keys and broken locks to these gates are also at His feet.

Adam our Forefather — being pulled from his tomb by the right hand of Christ is Adam; he is portrayed as an old man with white hair and beard; the hymns of the Church speak of Adam being "recalled" to his primordial innocence by the Incarnation.

Eve our Forbearer — being pulled from her tomb by the left hand of Christ is Eve; she is portrayed as an old woman; the hymns of our Church speak of Eve being "set free" from her sin in Eden by the Incarnation.

The Righteous of the Old Testament — the group of figures on the extreme left represents those righteous individuals who lived and died before the Incarnation; the two figures in the front of the group are the Holy Kings, Saint David the Psalmist and his son, Saint Solomon the Wise.

The Righteous of the New Testament — the group of figures on the extreme right represents those righteous individuals who died after the Incarnation but before Christ's death and resurrection; the two figures in the front of the group are Saint John the forerunner (with the animal skin shirt) and St. Joseph the Guardian of Christ.

Taken from *The Icon Book*, by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak.

For Parents

Before the Vespers of Good Friday, which is usually celebrated in the mid-afternoon to commemorate the burial of Jesus, a "tomb" is erected in the middle of the church building and is decorated with flowers. Also a special icon which is painted [or embroidered] on cloth (in Greek, **epitaphios**; in Slavonic, **plaschanitsa**) depicting the dead Savior is placed on the altar table. In English this icon is often called the **winding-sheet**.

During Vespers, while the people sing the troparion of the day [see above "The noble Joseph..."], the priest circles the altar table with the winding-sheet carried above his head and places it into the tomb for veneration by the faithful.

The Matins of Holy Saturday is usually celebrated on Friday night. In place of the regular psalm reading the entire **Psalm 119** is read with a verse praising the dead Savior chanted between each of its lines. This particular psalm is the verbal icon of Jesus, the righteous man whose life is in the hands of God and who, therefore, cannot remain dead.

As the service progresses, while the congregation with lighted candles continually repeats the song of the Thrice-Holy, the faithful — led by their pastor carrying the Gospel Book with the winding-sheet of Christ held over his head — go in procession around the outside of the church building. This procession bears witness to the total victory of Christ over the powers of darkness and death. The whole universe is cleansed, redeemed and restored by the entrance of the Life of the World into death.

From *The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II: Worship*, by Fr. Thomas Hopko.

Family Activities

- ◆ Be sure to attend both services today. In most cases school-age children are home or can be taken out of school early for the afternoon service.
- ◆ Younger children need to have quiet activities [religious storybooks, soft toys, pencils & paper] at their disposal during the evening service. Although it is a longer service, the twelve scripture passages review the entire last week of our Lord's life.
- ◆ Use the ABOUT THE ICON section to identify the individuals and other elements in the icon.



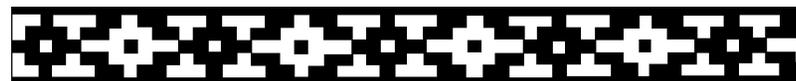
The Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem [Palm Sunday]

Celebrated on the Sunday before Pascha

Scriptural References

Epistle: Philippians 4:4-9

Gospel: John 12:1-18



Festal Hymns

Troparion (Tone 1)

By raising Lazarus from the dead before your passion. You did confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to You, O Vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

Kontakion (Tone 6)

Sitting on Your throne in heaven, carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God! Accept the praise of angels and songs of children who sing: Blessed is He that comes to recall Adam!

Troparion (Tone 4)

When we were buried with You in baptism, O Christ God, we were made worthy of eternal life by Your resurrection! Now we praise You and sing: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!

From Vespers

The Grace of the Holy Spirit today has assembled us. Taking up Your cross we sing: Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!

By Your command, O loving Lord, You have raised Lazarus Your friend from death! His flesh had been given over to corruption! He was in the power of death four days! By this You have foretold Your Holy Resurrection for us! Today, You mount an untamed colt as Your chariot, foretelling the conversion of the gentiles. Your beloved Israel offers You a hymn of praise from the mouths of innocent children, as they see You enter the holy city, O Christ, six days before the feast of Passover.

Prayer at the Blessing of Palms

O Lord our God, Who sits upon the Cherubim, You have reaffirmed Your power by sending Your Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to save the world through His cross, burial and resurrection. When He came into Jerusalem to suffer His voluntary passion, the people that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death took boughs of trees and branches of palms as signs of victory, thus foretelling His resurrection. Do You, Yourself, O Master, keep and preserve us who, in imitation of them, carry palms and branches in our hands. As we join the crowds and the children who sang Hosanna to you, may we, with hymns and spiritual songs, attain the life-giving resurrection of the third day.

For Parents

From the first day of Holy Week, we must "receive" Jesus Christ, and accept that His will is sovereign over us. The meaning of PALM SUNDAY lies in this welcome given to the Christ who comes to us.

The crowd, which acclaimed Jesus, carried palms and branches. These branches were probably olive branches — the most common tree around Jerusalem. Palms and olives both have their symbolic meaning. The palm stands for victory and the olive for peace and anointing. So let us go before Jesus and pay homage to His power and to His tenderness, in offering our victories [which are in fact His victories] both over ourselves and over sin, and our inner peace [which is His peace].

The crowd shouted: "Hosanna! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!" If I can say these words with complete sincerity and submission, if they mean that the impulse of my whole being goes toward the King, whom from henceforth I acknowledge, then in that instant I have turned away from my sins and have received Jesus Christ. May He be welcomed and blessed, He who comes to me.

Family Activities

- ◆ Read the Scripture references. Discuss the setting of the Feast and the significance of the people holding the palms.
- ◆ If it is the practice in your parish, attend the Vigil Service on Saturday evening and receive the palms and/or pussywillows. Bring them to Church on Sunday for the Divine Liturgy.
- ◆ Sing or read the Troparion at your meals on Palm Sunday.
- ◆ Bring an extra palm/pussywillow to a shut-in or relative who was unable to attend the services.
- ◆ Arrange the palm/pussywillow behind an icon or cross in your home.

The Crucifixion of Our Lord

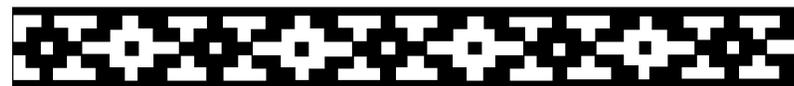
Commemorated on Holy Friday

Scriptural References

Old Testament: Exodus 33:11-23; Job 42:12-17; Isaiah 52:13-54:1

Epistle: Corinthians 1:18-2:2

Gospel: Matthew 27:1-38; Luke 23:39-43; Matthew 27:39-54;
John 19:31-37; Matthew 27:55-61



Stichera from Vespers (Tone 6)

Today the Master of creation stands before Pilate. Today the Maker of all things is given up to the cross, and of His own will He is led as a lamb to the slaughter.

He who sent manna in the wilderness is transfixed with nails. His side is pierced, and a sponge with vinegar touches His lips.

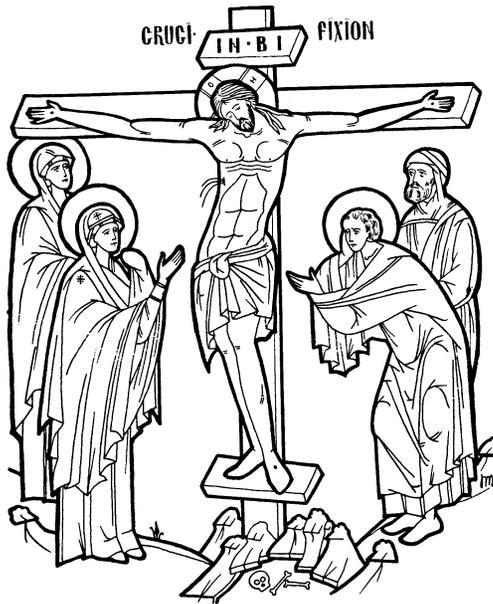
The Deliverer of the world is struck on the face, and the Creator of all is mocked by His own servants.

How great is the Master's love for mankind! For those who crucified Him, He prayed to His Father, saying: "Forgive them this sin, for in their wickedness they know not what they do."

Down from the Tree Joseph of Arimathea took You dead, who are the Life of all, and he wrapped You, O Christ, in a linen cloth with spices. Moved in his heart by love, he kissed Your most pure body with his lips; yet, drawing back in fear, he cried to You rejoicing: "Glory to Your condescension, O You who loves mankind."

The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Your most pure Body from the tree, wrapped it in fine linens, and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb.

The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said: "Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption."



About the Icon: The Crucifixion of Our Lord

Christ — nailed to the Cross; His right side is pierced and the wound flows with blood and water

The Theotokos — second figure from the left.

Saint Mary Magdalene — figure on the extreme left.

Saint John the Beloved Disciple — second figure from the right.

Saint Longinus the Centurion — the figure on the extreme right; he is the Roman centurion mentioned in Saint Mark's Gospel account of the Crucifixion (Mark 15:39).

The Inscription — on the top bar of the Cross is the inscription I.N.B.I, the initials of the Greek words meaning "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

The Inscription — on the top bar of the Cross is the inscription I.N.B.I, the initials of the Greek words meaning "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

The Skull — at the foot of the Cross; Golgotha, the Mount of the Crucifixion, means "the place of the skull." Tradition relates that the Cross of Christ stood directly above the grave of our Forefather Adam.

Taken from *The Icon Book*, by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak.

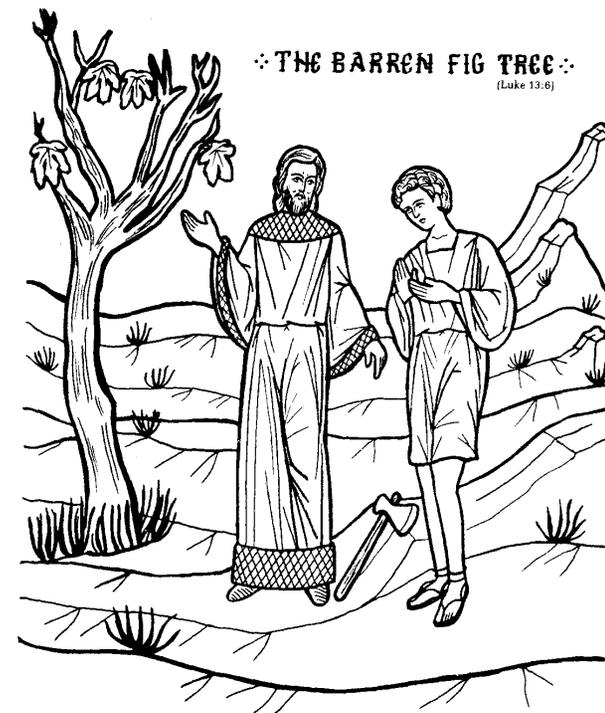
About the Icon: Holy Monday

Jesus stands in the center pointing to the fig tree that has no fruit on it. An axe lies at His feet.

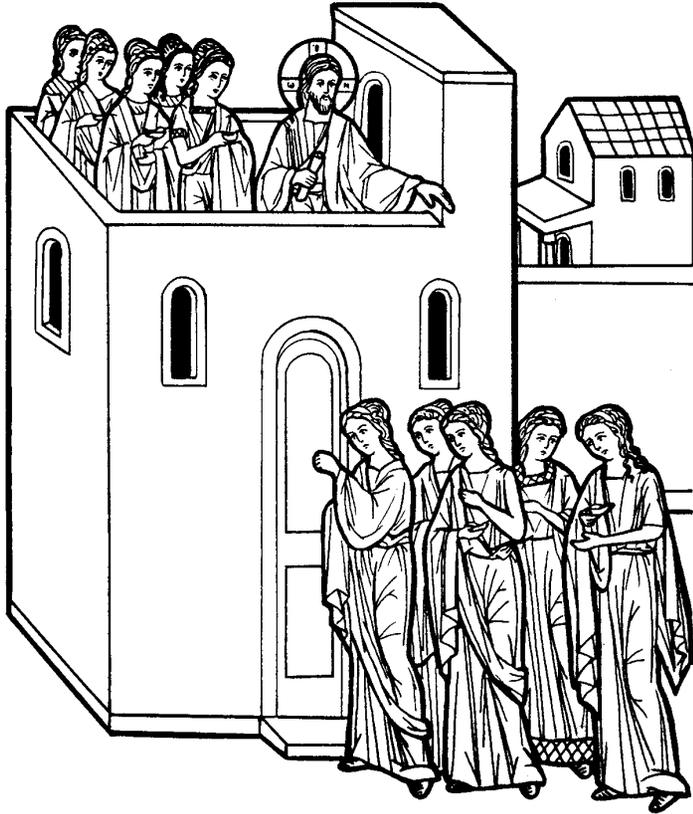
The Young Man on the right represents the Apostles to whom Jesus is speaking.

Barren Fig Tree — People plant fig trees for figs and shade. If a fig tree is sick, the owner pays special attention to it so that it will once again yield figs and shade. If the fig tree remains sick, the owner cuts it down and replaces it with a healthy fig tree. God has planted all of us in the orchard of his Kingdom. We give our Owner shade and figs by our works of kindness and love for Him. When we are sick in sin, we stop growing in kindness and love. God in His loving-kindness tries to help us, save us and have mercy on us. If we refuse to regain our health, we are cut out of the orchard of the Kingdom.

The following icon is taken from *The Parables of Christ*, Byzantine Seminary Press, 1985, p. 14.



THE TEN VIRGINS (Matthew 25:1)



About the Icon: Holy Tuesday

Jesus and the Five Wise Virgins stand on the roof of the house that they have entered for the wedding party. These five women had extra oil to keep their lamps burning until the Bridegroom, Christ, arrived.

The Five Foolish Virgins standing outside the house had no extra oil and their lamps went out, just as the groom was arriving. They missed the party.

The extra oil is actually the good things that we do and the valuable company that we keep; this is the oil that makes sure that our lamp, our faith, is always lit, as we wait for our Bridegroom.

This icon is taken from *The Parables of Christ*, Byzantine Seminary Press, 1985, p. 17.

main theme of the day is the meal itself at which Christ commanded that the Passover of the New Covenant is to be eaten in remembrance of himself, of his body broken and his blood shed for the remission of sins. In addition, the betrayal of Judas and Christ's washing of the disciples' feet are also central to the liturgical commemoration of the day. In cathedral churches it is the custom for the bishop to re-enact the footwashing in a special ceremony following the Divine Liturgy.

The liturgical celebration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday is not merely the annual remembrance of the "institution" of the sacrament of Holy Communion. Indeed the very event of the Passover meal itself was not merely the last-minute action by the Lord to "institute" the central sacrament of the Christian Faith before his passion and death. On the contrary, the entire mission of Christ, and indeed the very purpose for the creation of the world in the first place, is so that God's beloved creature, made in his own divine image and likeness, could be in the most intimate communion with him for eternity, sitting at the table with him, eating and drinking in his unending kingdom.

In a real sense, therefore, it is true to say that the **body broken** and the **blood spilled** spoken of by Christ at his last supper with the disciples was not merely an anticipation and preview of what was yet to come; but that what was yet to come — the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day, the ascension into heaven — came to pass precisely so that men could be blessed by God to be in **holy communion** with him forever, eating and drinking at the mystical table of his kingdom of which there will be no end.

From The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II: Worship, by Fr. Thomas Hopko.

Family Activities

- ◆ Since this Liturgy is usually celebrated Thursday morning, many are at work or at school. Those who are able need to be there to represent those who cannot, whether they are other family members or parishioners in general.
- ◆ Use the hymns of the day for mealtime prayers, and as a focal point for reviewing the significance of this day.
- ◆ Use the ABOUT THE ICON section to help your children identify the individuals in the icon.

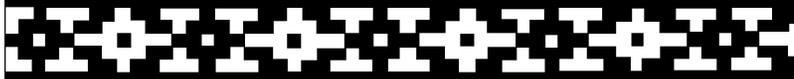
The Last Supper

Commemorated on Holy Thursday

Scriptural References

Epistle: I Corinthians 11:23-32

Gospel: Luke 22:1-39



Festal Hymns

Troparion (Tone 8) When the glorious disciples were enlightened at the washing of their feet before the supper, the impious Judas was darkened by the disease of avarice, and to the lawless judges he betrayed You, the Righteous Judge. Behold, this man because of avarice hanged himself. Flee from the insatiable desire, which dared such things against the Master! O Lord Who deals righteously with all, glory to You!

Instead of "It is truly meet" Come, O faithful! Let us enjoy the Master's hospitality: the Banquet of Immortality! In the upper chamber with uplifted minds, let us receive the exalted words of the Word, whom we magnify!

From Matins Filling Your cup of salvation with joy, O loving Lord, You made Your disciples drink from it. For You offered Yourself in sacrifice, crying: "Drink My Blood, and you shall be firmly established in the faith."

Let us all draw near in fear to the mystical table, and with pure souls let us receive the Bread; let us remain at the Master's side, that we may see how He washes the feet of the disciples and wipes them with a towel; and let us do as we have seen, subjecting ourselves to each other and washing one another's feet. For such is the commandment that Christ Himself gave to His disciples; but Judas slave and deceiver, paid no heed.

For Parents

The vigil on the eve of **Holy Thursday** is dedicated exclusively to the **Passover Supper**, which Christ celebrated with his twelve apostles. The

About the Icon: Holy Wednesday

Woman on the right represents the woman with many sins who repented of her sins and anointed Jesus' feet with expensive sweet-smelling oils. She represents all people who seek God's forgiveness.

Jesus is depicted with His arms uplifted.

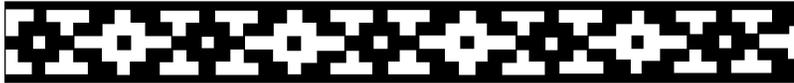


Bridegroom Service

*Celebrated on Palm Sunday,
Holy Monday & Holy Tuesday Evenings*

Gospel Readings

Monday: Matthew 21: 18-43
Tuesday: Matthew 22: 15-46; 23: 1-39
Wednesday: John 12:17-50



Hymns from Matins

Troparion

Behold, the bridegroom comes in the middle of the night and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, and unworthy the servant whom He shall find heedless. Take care then, O my soul, and be not weighed down by sleep that you will not be given over unto death and be excluded from the Kingdom. But rise up and call out: Holy, Holy, Holy are You O God, by the Theotokos have mercy on us.

Exaposteilarion

I see Thy Bridal Chamber adorned, O my Saviour, and I have no wedding garment so that I may enter; O giver of Light, make radiant the vesture of my soul and save me.

Hymn of Kassiani the Hymnographer (Wednesday)

The woman had fallen into many sins, O Lord, when she perceived Your divinity, she joined the ranks of the myrrh-bearing women. In tears she brought You myrrh before Your burial. She cried, "Woe is Me! For I live in the night of licentiousness, shrouded in the dark and moonless love of sin. But accept the fountain of my tears, O You who gathered the waters of the sea into clouds. Bow down Your ear to the sighing of my heart, O You who bowed the heavens in Your ineffable condescension. Once Eve heard Your footstep in paradise in the cool of the day, and in fear she ran and hid herself. But now I will tenderly embrace those pure feet and wipe them with the hair of my head. Who can measure the multitude of my sins, or the depth of Your judgements, O Savior of my soul? Do not despise Your servant in Your immeasurable mercy."



About the Icon: The Last Supper

Christ — the central figure.

Saint John the Beloved [Evangelist, Theologian] — figure seated at Christ's right; as the youngest of the disciples he is depicted as beardless.

Judas Iscariot the Betrayer — third figure from Christ's left; he is depicted dipping into the dish (Matthew 26:20-25).

The Bread and Wine — Saint John the Beloved receives in his left hand a piece of the Body of Christ; another morsel is on the table before Christ; the chalice containing the Precious Blood of Christ is in His Left hand.

*Taken from **The Icon Book**, by Boojamra, Essey, McLuckie & Matusiak.*

4. Epistle and Gospel Lessons and Prayer

There are seven sets of Epistle and Gospel readings and prayers.

I.	James 5:10-16	Luke: 10:25-37
II.	Romans 15:1-7	Luke 19:1-10
III.	I Corinthians 12:27-31;13:1-8	Matthew 10:1,5-8
IV.	II Corinthians 6:16-18,7:1	Matthew 8:14-23
V.	II Corinthians 1:8-11	Matthew 25:1-13
VI.	Galatians 5:22-6:2	Matthew 15:21-28
VII.	I Thessalonians 5:14-23	Matthew 9:9-13

In some parishes the open Gospel book, which contains the accounts of Jesus' many miracles, is laid with the printed pages down upon the heads of those who are ill. By doing so it is hoped that they will also receive physical and spiritual healing and that the faith in the written word of our Lord will be strengthened in the minds of those present. Just as Christ laid His hand upon the sick when He performed His many miracles, the priest lays his hand upon the Gospel, which rests on the heads of the faithful.

Each of the seven prayers asks for the remission of our sins, for the healing of our souls and bodies and for life everlasting.

Family Activities

- ◆ It is comforting to know that God works in various ways to protect and to heal our children and us. Plan to participate in the healing Sacrament of Unction as a family.
- ◆ Use this section to explain to your children what will happen during the service and why. Ask them to listen carefully for the names of the saints that are included.

Bibliography

Lives of the Saints and Major Feast Days, by Fr. George Poulos.

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The Orthodox Faith: Vol. II Worship, by Fr. Thomas Hopko

For Parents

Each day of Holy Week has its own particular theme. The theme of Monday [celebrated in anticipation on Palm Sunday evening] is that of the sterile fig tree [Matthew 21: 18-20] which yields no fruit and is condemned. Tuesday [celebrated Monday evening] the accent is on the vigilance of the wise virgins [Matthew 25: 1-13] who, unlike their foolish sisters, were ready when the Lord came to them. Wednesday [celebrated Tuesday evening] the focus is on the fallen woman [Matthew 26: 6-13] who repents. Great emphasis is made in the liturgical services to compare the woman, a sinful harlot who is saved, to Judas, a chosen apostle who is lost. The one gives her wealth to Christ and kisses his feet; the other betrays Christ for money with a kiss.

The Gospel is read at the Matins services, which are traditionally called the "**Bridegroom**" services because the general theme of each of these days is the **end of the world and the judgment of Christ**. It is the common practice to serve the **Bridegroom** services at night.

From *The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II: Worship* by Fr. Thomas Hopko.

Family Activities

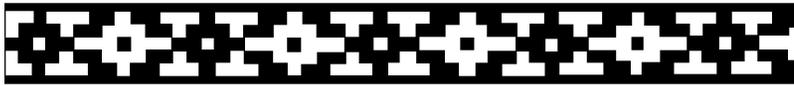
- ◆ In some parishes the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is offered rather than the Bridegroom on Monday and Tuesday evenings. Regardless, make a point to attend services with your children.
- ◆ Make the time to read the "theme" gospel listed in the FOR PARENTS section before coming to services, since they are not part of the Gospel reading, but only referred to during the service.
- ◆ Talk with your children about Christ's second coming, i.e. that "He will come again" as we recite in the Nicene Creed. Jesus reminds us during the first three days of Holy Week, as was done on many occasions during Lent, that we must be watchful and repent while there is still time.





Holy Unction

Offered on Holy Wednesday and at other times upon request



For Parents

The **Sacrament of Holy Unction** is offered for healing of soul and body and for forgiveness of sins. When offered during Holy Week it is part of our preparation for receiving the Eucharist at the Liturgy celebrated on Holy Thursday.

James 5:14-15 is the basis for the Sacrament: *"If any is sick among you, let him call the presbyters of the Church; and let them pray over him; anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."*

The rite itself calls for seven priests, seven readings from the epistles and gospels, seven prayers and seven anointings with oil specifically blessed for the service. [The seven anointings are done when the service is conducted for an individual.] Although it is not always possible to perform

the sacrament in this way, the normal procedure is to gather as many priests and people as possible.

Seven candles — representing the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit — are lit around the vessel containing the wine and oil. The oil, which is the visible sign of God's healing Grace, symbolizes God's mercy; the wine, the blood of Christ shed upon the cross for our salvation. Also present is wheat, which symbolizes new life in the resurrection.

At the end of the service the priest anoints the faithful as he makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead and top and palms of the hands saying, "For the healing of soul and body."

Order of the Service

1. **Introductory Prayers and Psalms 143 & 51** In these Psalms we confess our sinfulness before God and ask Him to cleanse us and make a "new and right spirit within us." [Psalm 50/51:10].
2. **Canon** In this series of verses that are read or sung, we ask God to show mercy upon us and cleanse our souls, to drive away all evil powers, to grant salvation to those who are sick or suffering, and to grant us the healing of our souls and bodies. At the end of several sets of verses, we ask God to renew our lives so that we may bless, thank and glorify Him forever.
3. **Short Prayers or Troparia to the Saints** We pray to the Saints — especially those who have helped the sick and suffering, and to those who have been martyred for the glory of God — and to the Mother of God to intercede for us for the salvation of our souls.
 - ◆ The **Great Martyr Demetrios** (AD 306, Thessalonica), whose bones still exude chrism, is famous throughout the East as a healer of the sick. Demetrios, who was in prison at the time, predicted that through his prayers Nestor would conquer the Emperor's favorite gladiator Lyaeus. The Emperor was so angered that Nestor won that he had both Demetrios and Nestor killed.
 - ◆ **St. Pantelimon** of Nicomedia was a Christian physician martyred for his faith in 304 AD He performed many miraculous cures in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - ◆ "**Unmercenaries**", the title given to those physicians who refused payment for their services, goes to two of the most famous miracleworkers in the Early Church — **Cosmas and Damian**.