The Ark

St. Sophia
Orthodox Church

Youth Quarterly

St. Sophia

Orthodox Church

195 Joseph Street,
Victoria, BC
Canada
V8S 3H6

saintsophia@shaw.ca

www.saintsophia.ca

The Rainbow Song

Red, orange, yellow, blue, green, purple, pink!

Red, orange, yellow, blue, green, purple, pink!

It's a rainbow, it's a rainbow,

God's beautiful rainbow in the sky!

It's a rainbow, it's a rainbow,

God's beautiful Promise in the sky!

–Anon

Jesus Christ, Our Salvation through Holy Baptism

When we arise out of the baptismal waters, we are completely reborn in spirit. God also gives us a guardian angel to stay with us our whole life!

During our earthly life, we will sail through many calm and stormy oceans within the **Ark of the Church.** Many Orthodox churches are built in the shape of an ark.

God spared Noah, his family, and the world's countless pairs of creatures (miraculously sent to him by God) from the great flood, which covered the whole earth.

The rainbow is a covenant which means a promise, or reminder. It is a promise God will never destroy the earth by flood again. God gave a sign of that love, in the rainbow.

After the flood waters disappeared, Noah stepped onto dry land, built an altar, and immediately made a thanksgiving offering to God.

Like Noah and his family, let us remember to give thanks for salvation, in **The Ark** of the Church.

Let us also, live our lives as a gift from God!

How We Use Our Body to Praise God

The Divine Liturgy is said for the whole world. We ask God to help and save us, His creation. We pray for good weather, our food, crops, protection from danger, and for help to live a God-pleasing life.

We also pray for the *peace of the whole world*.

With our bodies…

- We *hear* the word of God in the Gospel and Epistles readings
- We *chant* the praises of the angels
- We *make* the sign of the Cross
- We *smell* the offering of incense like a prayer rising to heaven
- We *bow* our heads, *stand*, *bend* to the ground, and *kneel* to worship God
- We *see* the light of Christ in every candle send our prayers through the windows of heaven, the holy icons
- We *taste* the very Body and Blood of Christ through Holy Communion

In monasteries everywhere, monks and nuns have the Divine Liturgy performed every day. It is a constant prayer to God for the whole world.

The Annunciation of the Theotokos

(March 25th/April 7th)

Ever since the creation and fall, God had been preparing us for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ. God always knew we would fall into sin, and that He Himself would need to come down to earth to save man.

God also knew beforehand just when people would be ready to receive the Saviour and follow Him. He also knew when there would be a maiden so pure and so obedient to Him that she could become the mother of the Saviour.

The Holy Virgin Mary was just such a pure and perfect servant of God. She had been born in answer to her parent's prayers. At the age of three, she had been taken to the temple and dedicated to God. From that time on, she lived in God's house and did nothing but serve Him, praying constantly.

When Mary was twelve years old and could no longer remain in the temple, because that was the law, she wanted to continue to serve God. What could she do? Mary wanted to remain a virgin all her life, in order to dedicate her whole self and her whole life to God and serve Him. But there were not yet any convents and so she could not become a nun. The young maiden went to the priest and told him what her soul desired. The old priest was very pleased to hear of Mary's love for God. He prayed to God and God revealed to him what to do.

Mary had a close relative, who was an older man named Joseph. Joseph's wife had died, leaving him to raise his younger son alone. (James the "brother" of the Lord)

The priest talked to Joseph and it was arranged: Mary would become Joseph's betrothed by law, and he would protect her. This way, she could live her whole life as a virgin, serving God.

So Mary became betrothed (engaged) to Joseph and was by law allowed to live in his house.

At the time which God had chosen, the Holy Virgin Mary was in her room praying to God and working on her sewing. Suddenly, a great light filled the room and Mary saw a radiant angel standing before her. She became frightened and, dropping her yarn, she raised her right hand as if to shield herself from the bright light.

The radiant angel spoke to her gently and with love, and reverence in his voice: "Rejoice thou, full of Grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you above all women."

Hearing this, Mary became confused and frightened. She thought, “But I am a lowly sinner. How can this angel call me ‘full of Grace’?”

Then the angel told Mary that she was the one chosen to give birth to the Saviour. “But how can I give a birth,” Mary answered. “I am a virgin.”

The angel comforted Mary. “The Holy Spirit will come to you and the power of the Most High will shine over you.” He told Mary that the Child which she would bear would be the Son of God, and that she would remain a virgin even after her Child was born.

As the Angel Gabriel said this, Mary prostrated herself on the floor and began to pray to God with tears.

The Child who then appeared in her womb was truly God Who was becoming a man in order to save all people who would truly accept Him and follow Him. This is why we call the virgin Mary *Theotokos*. *Theotokos* means, “The one who bore (gave birth) God”.

The angel told Mary of another miraculous birth: “Your relative is Elizabeth, an old woman who has never had any children, is now pregnant. God has healed her so that she and her husband can have a child.” This child was to be St. John the Baptist.

In complete faith and humility, Mary very simply accepted God’s will. “I am God’s servant,” she said. “Let it be as you say.”

At that, the angel Gabriel departed. Later, he appeared to Joseph also and told him about the special Child which Mary was to bear.

Mary was filled with joy. She began to pray and fast even more now.

As soon as possible she went to the town where Elizabeth lived in the province of Judea.

The Lord’s angel had already told Elizabeth about Mary’s special Baby – how God Himself was going to become as a little child in order to save us. As Mary entered her house, Elizabeth rushed to meet her. Mary greeted her relative. At that moment, the babe, John, who was in Elizabeth’s womb, her Mary’s voice, and leapt for joy. Elizabeth said, “How is it that the Mother of my Lord has come to visit me?”

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then returned to Nazareth.

Joseph cared for the Holy Virgin with great respect and awe.

The Magnificat

This is a beautiful hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God by the Virgin Mary. We sing this at the evening Vigil Service. From St. Luke 1:46-55

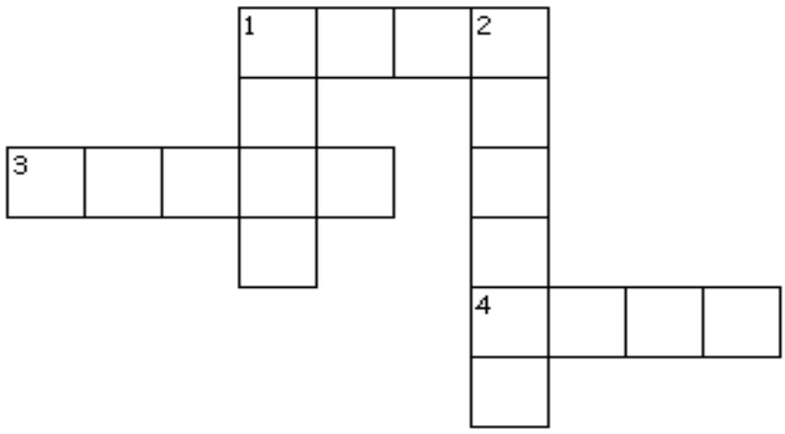
And Mary said:
My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.
He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

This icon is called *Umilenie*, which means *Tender Mercy*. It is very unusual, because we don't *see* Jesus Christ with the Virgin Mary like we usually do in other icons. But He *is* there!

This icon is of the exact moment Jesus begins to grow as a baby *inside* her.

Notice how the Virgin Mary humbly bows her head and her arms are crossed in reverence and awe, just as we do, when preparing to take God inside of us, as we approach the Chalice at Holy Communion!

Traditions at Pascha Puzzle

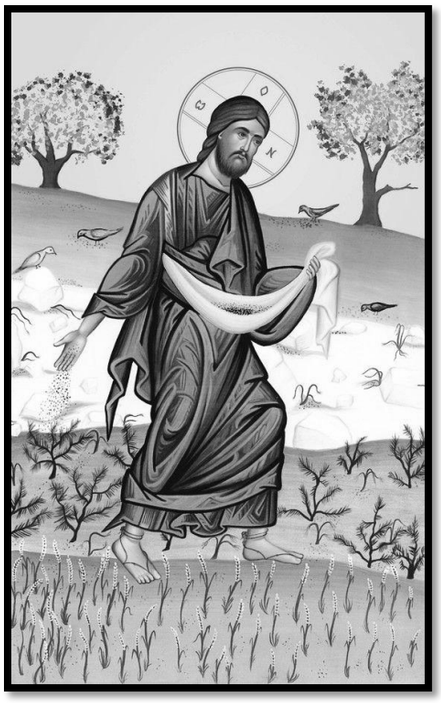


Across

1. The name of a baby sheep.
3. We share these special pancakes on Forgiveness Sunday.
4. Fun to dye, paint and decorate.

Down

1. The 40 day Fast before the Great Feast.
2. Filled with Kulich, Cheese, Eggs and Sweets for Father to Bless.



A Parable of the Sower and the Seed

St. Matthew 13: 1-23, St. Mark 4: 1-20: St. Luke 8: 4-15

A parable is a simple story used to illustrate a spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels.

And he spake many things to them in parables, saying:

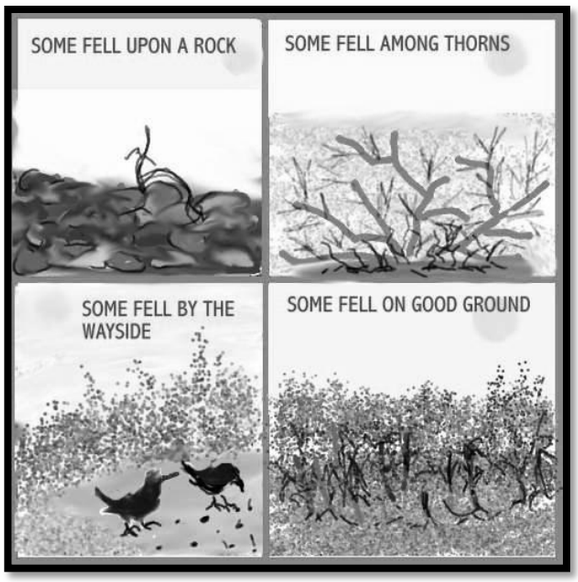
'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and ate them up. Some fell on stony places where they had not much earth. And when the sun rose they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away.

And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

But others fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.'

And when he had said these things, he cried, ‘He that has ears to hear, let him hear’. Then his disciples asked him, saying, ‘What does this parable mean?’ And he said:

‘To you is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to the others I speak in parables, that seeing they still may not see, and hearing they still may not understand. Now the meaning of the parable is this:



‘The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are they who hear.

Then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

‘Those on the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, and having no roots, they believe for a while, but in time of temptation fall away.

‘Those among thorns are they who, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, so that their faith never ripens.

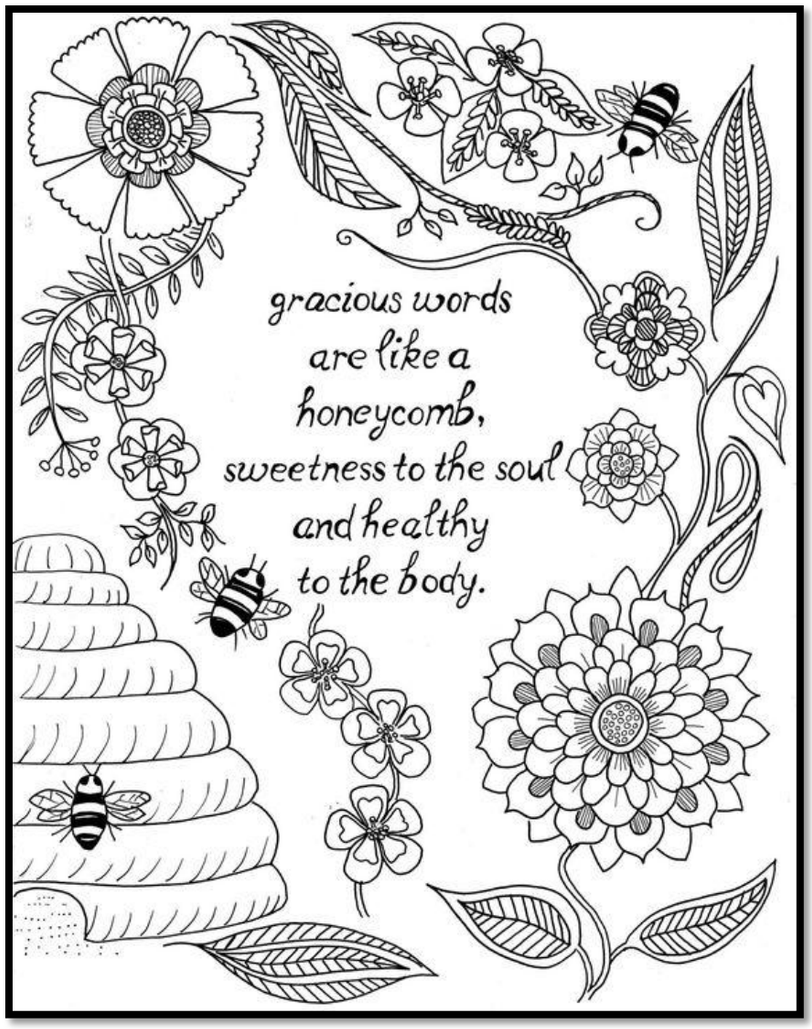
‘But those on the good ground are they who, with honest and good hearts, having heard the word, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience.’
-Excerpts from Children’s Bible Stories

The Bible says a great many people, a multitude, were following Him. When Jesus gave this parable He first separated Himself from them, going out into the water in a ship, or boat. He spoke to them from the water, using the seashore as a sort of natural Amphitheatre. This was an audience about to hear something very important and they were being prepared for it.

In the “*Law of God*”, Chapter 23 on Parables, these words are interpreted further; **Thorns** signify people for whom every day cares, wealth and various habits stifle the Word of God in their heart.

Good rich soil signifies people with good hearts. Attentive to the Word of God, they treasure it in their hearts, and patiently try to fulfill everything that it teaches. Their **fruit** is good deeds, for which they are awarded the Kingdom of Heaven.

May your Guardian Angel help you prepare the garden of your heart and live a life worthy of a bountiful harvest!



Great Lent

Pascha (Easter) is the most important holiday! We begin to prepare for the Feast of Christ's Resurrection (Pascha/Easter) during Great Lent. Great Lent is a special time. It's a time when we try to become better by improving our prayers with God and how we act with each other. We improve through prayer, confession, almsgiving, fasting, and attending Lenten Services. This way we have many chances to partake of Holy Communion.

This Lenten time of cleansing our body and spirit helps us be ready for Christ's Resurrection. When we prepare ourselves, we are worthy of God's forgiveness. This period lasts for forty days and ends with Holy Week followed by the Resurrection.

Fasting means not eating certain things, or doing certain things. Fasting has always been done, and even Jesus fasted! It is one of the ways we can clean our body and soul. The Bible tells us that fasting is rewarding. If you are of a certain age and healthy, then, we fast together for a little while by not eating meat, cheese, eggs, oil, fish, and milk. But, on the Feast Days of the Annunciation of the Mother of God, and on Palm Sunday, we can eat fish as a treat. Also, fasting can mean doing with no television or movies, not arguing or fighting with each other.

The old Christian practice of almsgiving is a great thing. Almsgiving is when we give and are helpful to people who are in need.

Throughout His life, Jesus showed us how to behave with other people by helping them.

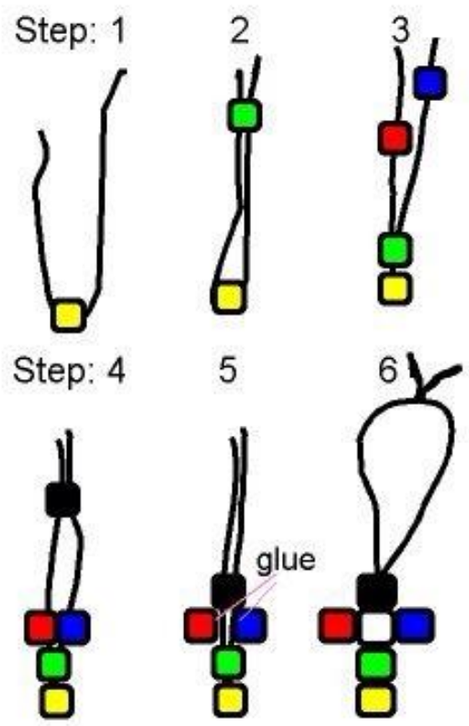
On Sundays of Great Lent, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. Here is something Saint Basil said:

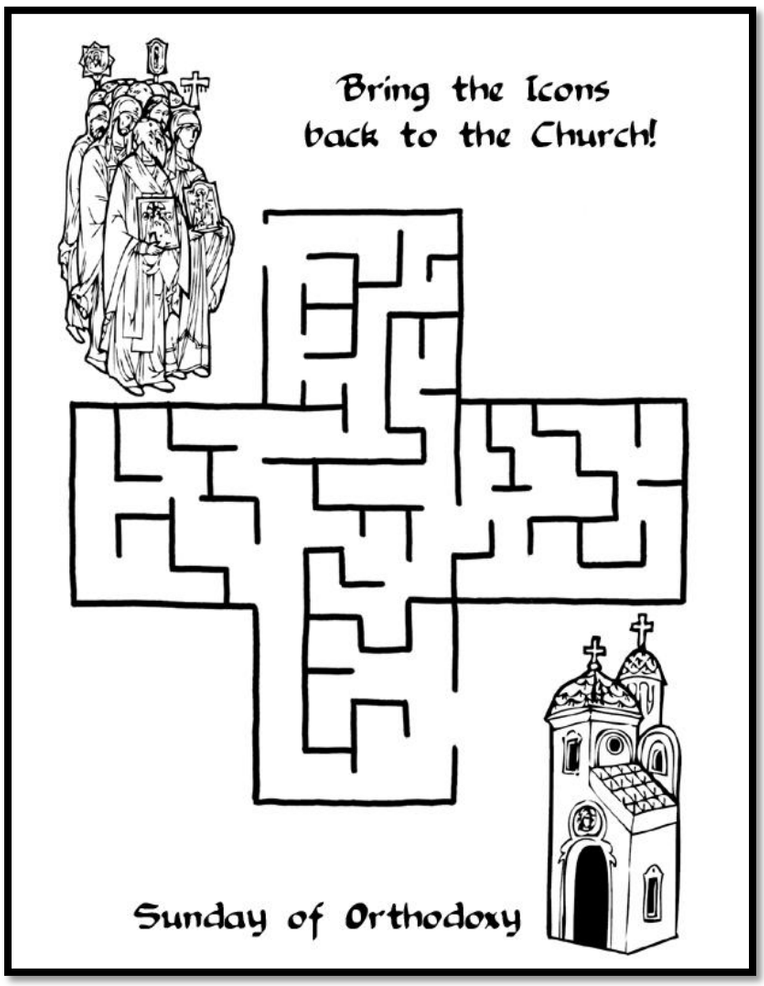
The bread you do not use belongs to the hungry; the garment hanging in your closet and not worn is the clothing of the naked; the shoes you do not wear are the shoes of someone who is barefoot; the money you keep locked away is the money of the poor.

Some Evening Lenten Thoughts

- What "cross" did *you* carry today?
- Did you put someone else first over yourself today? How?
- Consider your sins from today and how they happened
- The Lord's Nativity (birth) and Theophany (baptism) are directly connected to His dying and rising again. He was born in order to die…and He was baptized in order to be raised to Life again!

Holy Week Beaded Cross Craft





Great Lent and Holy Week Services

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
This service is partly like the service on Saturday evenings and partly like usual Liturgy. The Holy Communion is already consecrated from a previous usual Divine Liturgy.

Canon of St. Andrew of Crete
This service helps us begin our Lenten journey by preparing us how to become serious about asking God for His forgiveness of our sins. The canon gets it title from St. Andrew, a Jerusalem monk who lived during the seventh and eighth centuries, and became archbishop of Crete. The service is a poem he wrote that tells the story of the Old and New Testaments, and becomes our "spiritual cry" that our sins have separated us from God.

Bridegroom Service
"Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night, and blessed is the servant Whom He shall find watching... this hymn is sung on Palm Sunday evening, and on Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday. Christ is the Bridegroom and we are the servants. In this hymn we are reminded to be ready for Christ's coming by preparing our souls.

Holy Thursday Vesperal Liturgy
This service is when we remember the first Holy Communion which took place at the Last Supper at the Passover feast. Jesus Christ blessed and gave bread and wine to His Apostles and told them to "do this in remembrance of me."

Holy Thursday evening Reading of the Passion Gospels
We hear the entire account of Christ's Passion. The reading is taken from all four gospels and is divided into twelve parts. We read about The Last Supper and Judas' betrayal. Our candles are lit before each reading. It is a tradition to bring your lantern to church and take home the flame from the last lit candle during the Gospel readings. Many people try to keep this flame going as long as possible. In the old days, pilgrims to the Holy Land would walk all the way back home (sometimes to other countries) and keep the flame lit. The parish church would then try to keep the same flame going all year.

Great and Holy Friday
This is the saddest day of Holy Week and the WHOLE year! Today we express our sorrow over Christ's death on the cross. We see a "tomb" where a large flat icon (the "winding sheet") of Christ lays. We prostrate before it. The service contains hymns of sadness for both Christ's death and our own sins.

Matins and Paschal Liturgy
When we come to Church late Saturday evening, the Church is very quiet and dark. The only light comes from the flickering lampadas. We leave the Church and walk around it three times (the procession) singing a beautiful hymn. Each person carries a small, lighted candle. If we concentrate on a special prayer very hard, we are very close to heaven this night. We meet in front of the Church door and when we return inside, the Church is full of light! Candles are glowing everywhere. The tomb of Jesus is gone. We sing many times with great joy "Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life." This is the happiest and most important service of the year and we are glad to be part of it! *-http://www.theologic.com/oflweb*

Martha, Mary and Lazarus: Friends of Jesus

Many people followed Jesus and listened closely to the wonderful things He said. They believed that He was God's Son. They wanted to come closer to God and become part of His Heavenly Kingdom. Jesus chose 12 of these men to be His disciples. A disciple is someone who follows a teacher and learns from Him. They were also His close friends and helpers. They stayed with Him and followed Him everywhere.

A faithful group of women also followed Jesus and His disciples. Some, like Mary Magdalene, had been made well by Jesus. After they had been healed, they continued to travel with Jesus and listen to His teaching. Others, like Susanna, had money and helped Jesus and the disciples by providing food, clothing and others things they needed. Joanna was one of these; her husband, Chuza, was the manager of King Herod's household. *(There is an icon of these myrrh-bearing women in our church. Can you find it?)* These women also listened carefully to what Jesus was teaching.

Jesus also had some very close friends who lived in the town of Bethany. *(about 3.5 km east of Jerusalem)* They were two sisters, Mary and Martha, and their brother Lazarus. Jesus was their friend and He visited their home often. On one visit, Mary sat at Jesus' feet as other people did to hear His teachings. Martha was busy, worrying about getting things ready to serve the meal and arrange the table.

Martha complained to Jesus, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me." Jesus answered, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled by many things. Only one thing is important. Mary has chosen to listen to God's word and it will always be with her."

Who is in this icon?

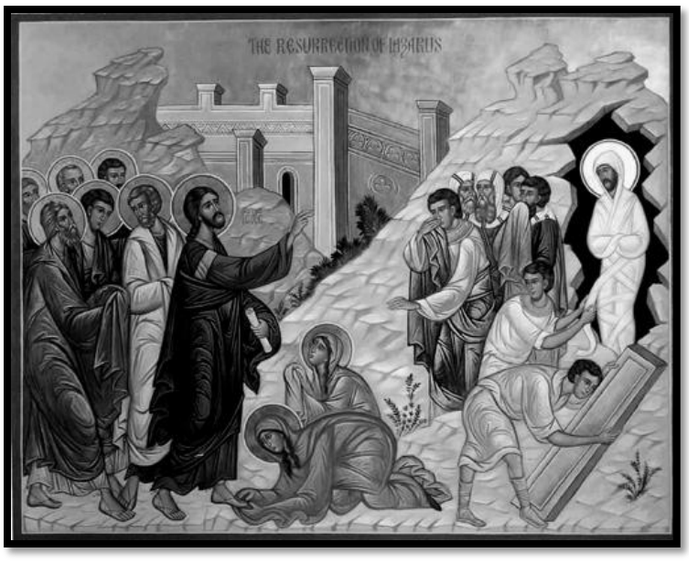
The Raising of Lazarus

One day, Jesus' friend Lazarus became very sick. His sisters, Martha and Mary, sent a messenger to tell Jesus and ask Him to come quickly. Jesus knew Lazarus was very sick and would die, but He waited two more days and then went to Bethany. Jesus knew Lazarus was already dead, but He said to His disciples, "For your sake, I am glad I was not there, so that now you may believe."

The disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying. Martha ran to meet Jesus and said to Him: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Jesus told them: "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered: "I know he will rise from the dead when everyone will be made alive again, when the resurrection comes on the last day."

Then Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life for all who believe in me. Do you believe this?" Martha answered: 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah (Saviour), the Son of God."



Jesus went to the tomb where Lazarus was buried. He wept for his friend and told the men to move the stone that covered the cave. Martha said: "Lord, there will be a terrible smell, for Lazarus has been dead for four days!" (This can happen in hot countries)

But Jesus called: "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man arose and walked out of his tomb, covered with the bands of cloth that had been his burial clothes. Jesus said: "Unwrap him and let him go." *Lazarus was alive and healthy again!* Many people saw this and were excited about what had happened! They ran to tell their friends about the miracle they had seen with their own eyes!

Palm Sunday

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

The great Jewish holiday, called Passover, was drawing near. The city of Jerusalem was full of people who had come from all parts of the country for the holiday. The streets were crowded with people hurrying to the temple. It was spring and the trees had fresh, green leaves.

Jesus Christ and His disciples were also going to Jerusalem for the holiday. Jesus knew that the time was coming when He would have to suffer and die. He also knew that all this must happen in Jerusalem.

As they were approaching the city, Jesus said to two of His disciples: "Go into the town ahead and, as you enter it, you shall see a donkey and a colt tied to a door. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone asks you why you untie them, tell them it is because the Lord needs them." The disciples obeyed, and as they came to a road crossing they saw the donkey and the young colt tied to a door. They did as Jesus told them and brought them to Jesus Christ. Then Jesus humbly rode the colt to Jerusalem.

Very soon among the holiday crowds in the streets of Jerusalem the rumor spread: "The Lord is approaching Jerusalem. He is the promised Saviour. He will be our King." The people hurried to the city gates, *expecting an earthly king,* not a Heavenly King.

More and more people joined the crowd. And a very great multitude spread their garments on the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strew them on the road for Jesus to ride over.

People and children were joyfully singing "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" *Hosanna in the Hebrew language means let us praise and thank God.*

Some important Jewish people came up to Jesus and said: "Master, tell Your disciples to stop this noise." But Jesus answered them: "I tell you, if these people will stop shouting and being glad, then the stones themselves, which you see there, will cry out."

The crowd pressing around Jesus was slowly approaching Jerusalem. They were coming down a hill, and there before them lay the beautiful city shining in the sun.

Jesus looked at the city sadly. He knew, even now, that in a few days the people of Jerusalem would turn against Him. But the people surrounding Him did not know this. They followed Jesus rejoicing and singing until He entered the temple.

In Canada and other countries, we use the pussy willows blessed from the Saturday evening vigil service, and bring them to church and hold them to celebrate this Feast Day!

Remember the pussy willows are to be treated respectfully, because they have been blessed. On Palm Sunday when you go home from church, the pussy willows should be put carefully in your icon corner.

Great and Holy Thursday

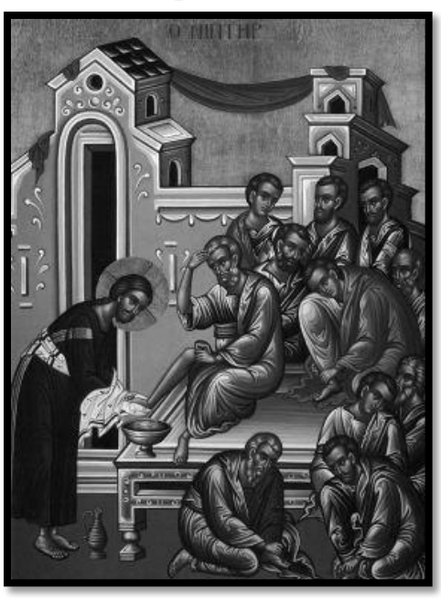
Jesus' Last Supper with His Disciples

On the first day of the great Jewish holiday of **Passover**, *(this year 2017, the first day of the Jewish Passover falls on the full moon of April 11th)* the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him: "Where do you want us to prepare the holiday supper?"

Since the time of Moses, and God's deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians, this holiday *(holiday comes from the word holy day)* supper was a very special meal eaten each year with special prayers and ceremonies.

Jesus answered: "Go into the city. There you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and when he enters a house, go to the owner of the house and say to him: "The Master asks: Where is the guest room where I shall eat the holiday supper with My disciples? Then the owner of the house will show you a large room on the upper floor, furnished and ready. There you can prepare our supper."

Two of the disciples, John and Peter, went and found everything as Jesus told them and made ready for the meal. Then, in the evening, Jesus and the other disciples came to the house, and they all sat down around the table.



You remember that in Jesus' time people did not wear shoes and stockings or socks as we do. They either walked barefoot or wore sandals. The roads were dusty and hot. When someone had guests, he would have a servant bring a basin of water and a towel to bathe his guests' feet. It was a way to welcome guests and make them comfortable.

On the day Jesus and His disciples gathered for the holiday supper there was no servant to serve them. Therefore Jesus got up from His place, tied a towel around his waist, took a basin, filled it with water, and began

bathing His disciples' feet. When He finished, He said: "Do you know what I have done? Even though I am your Master and Lord, I have served you. Therefore, when you go out into the world, you must serve one another." (*In Orthodox Church Cathedrals, on this day, the archbishop or bishop washes all the priests' feet.)*

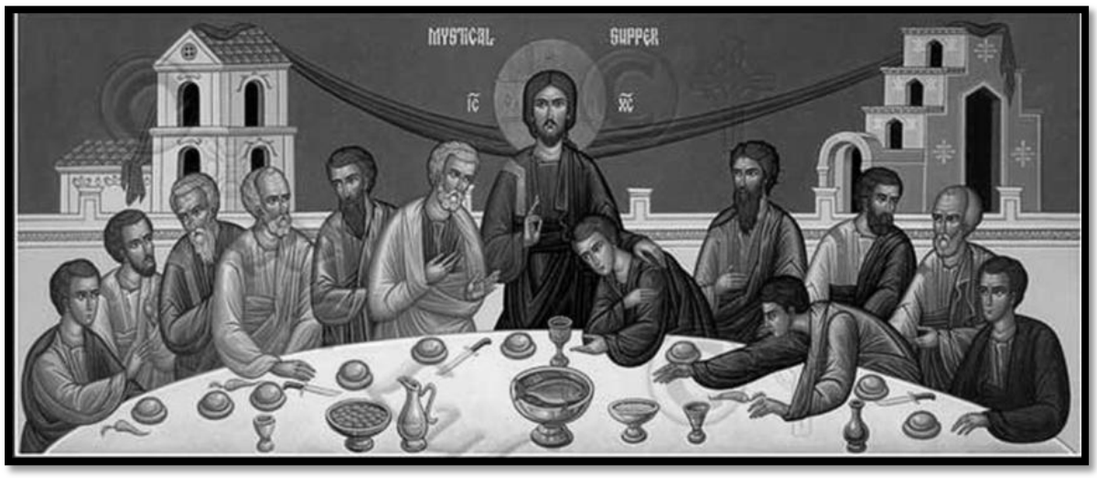
There were twelve disciples gathered with Jesus on that night. All twelve of them had been with Jesus from the time when He began to preach to the people. All of them loved Jesus-all of them except one. His name was Judas.

Judas had received thirty silver coins from the enemies of Jesus because he had promised that he would betray Jesus. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him.

As the supper went on, He said to the disciples: "One of you shall betray Me," and He turned to Judas and said: "What you are about to do, do quickly!" None of the other disciples understood what Jesus meant; but Judas got up and left the room and went to call the Master's enemies.

During the supper, Jesus took a loaf of bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to His disciples, and said: "TAKE, EAT, THIS IS MY BODY." Then He took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "DRINK OF IT ALL OF YOU; FOR THIS IS MY BLOOD, WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY."

(What is this miraculous Sacrament called that we do to this day? How do we prepare ourselves to take this Sacrament?)



This is why we sing this special hymn on Holy Thursday at the Liturgy, and the prayer the priest says before we receive Communion!

♪♪♪ Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God,
accept me today as a communicant;
for I will not speak of Thy Mystery to Thine enemies,
neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss;
but like the thief will I confess Thee:
Remember me, O Lord in Thy Kingdom. ♫♫♫

Jesus Christ Prays and is Judged

When the holy supper was over, Jesus and His disciples went to a garden called Gethsemane which was just outside the city. It was a place where Jesus often went when He wanted to pray alone.

This time He asked three of His disciples to stay and watch with Him while He prayed. This garden is still in Jerusalem. If you visit the Holy Land you can sit in it too and think of Jesus.

For a long time Jesus prayed, for His heart was heavy and sad. He knew what was going to happen to him.

When He came back He found that the three disciples had fallen asleep. "Could you not keep watch with Me for one hour?" He said, and then He went away to pray again. But the disciples were so tired that they fell asleep again, leaving Jesus to pray alone.

This is why on Holy Thursday evening we have the service where we read all the Passion Gospels and hold candles...

We are keeping watch with Jesus, the Light of the world.

*After the Gospels, **we** take home the Gospels' light in a special lantern and light our home's icon corner with it.*

Since ancient times each year, pilgrims from all the Orthodox countries would walk hundreds of miles to Jerusalem in the Holy Land, and bring home the Great Thursday flame.

Sometimes, if they were able to receive the miraculous Holy Fire on Great Saturday, they would also bring it home to their village, so their church could keep the flame burning as long as it could be properly attended.

At last Jesus woke them up and said: "Arise, and let us go. Here comes the man who has betrayed Me." And Judas, one of the twelve disciples, came up, followed by a great crowd of soldiers.

Judas had told the soldiers beforehand: "I will show you who Jesus is. I will come up to Him and kiss Him."

When Judas saw Jesus in the garden Judas came up to Him and greeted Him with a kiss. "Judas," said Jesus, "is it with a kiss that you betray Me?" Then the soldiers took Jesus and led Him away.

One of the disciples, Peter, wanted to fight for Jesus. He had a sword with him; he took it out and struck one of the soldiers. But Jesus told him to put the sword away. Then Jesus healed the man that Peter had wounded.

All of Christ's friends and disciples were so frightened that they ran away; they left Jesus alone with the soldiers. Only Peter followed Him - from a distance.

At first the soldiers led Jesus to the high priest of the Jews. All the most important Jewish people were gathered there. They all tried to find some fault with Jesus so that they could put Him to death. But no matter how hard they tried, they could not find anything wrong.

At last the high priest asked Jesus: "Are you Christ, the Son of God?" Jesus answered: "Yes." Then the high priest was so angry that he tore his clothes and said: "This man calls Himself the Son of God!" And all those who were there cried: "Put Him to death! Put Him to death!"

And the servants took Jesus in the yard, laughed at Him, spat in His face, and struck Him. Now Peter had followed the crowd and was standing in the yard. He was warming his hands over a fire when one of the servant girls recognized him and said: "You were also with Jesus!" Peter was frightened and said: "No, I do not know Him." Then another servant came up and said, pointing at Peter: "This is one of the disciples of Jesus," and again Peter said: "No." Again someone said: "You must be one of them, for you speak the same way they do." But Peter, speaking loudly, said he was sure he did not even know Jesus Christ. As soon as he said this, he heard the cock crowing, and from the other side of the yard Jesus turned around and looked at him. Then Peter remembered how Jesus had told him during the supper: "This very night, before the cock crows, you will three times deny Me," and Peter left the yard, crying.

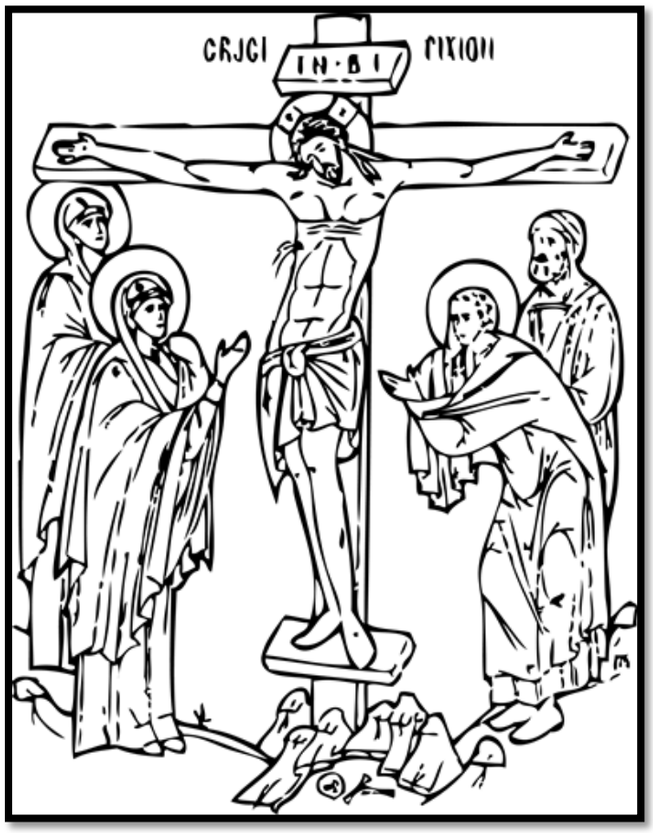
The Jews led Jesus to the Roman governor of their country. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, wanted to be fair in everything he did. He knew that Jesus Christ had done no harm. He asked Jesus some questions and wanted to let Him go. But the crowd began shouting: "Put Him to death! Put Him to death!"

Pontius Pilate thought the people would feel sorry for Jesus if they saw Him treated badly. So he told his soldiers to take Jesus out and punish Him.

The soldiers made a crown of prickly thorns and put it on Christ's head, and they put a red robe, like that of the king, on his shoulders. They laughed at Him and said: "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck Him again and again.

Then they brought Him back to the front porch. Pilate showed Jesus to the crowd, His forehead bleeding, His face and body bruised. Pilate said: "Here is your king," but the crowd shouted: "We have no king but the Roman king! Put - Jesus to death!"

And Pontius Pilate had a bowl of water brought to him. He washed his hands to show that it was not his fault if he did this unjust thing. Then he told his soldiers to take Jesus and put Him to death by nailing Him to a cross.



Jesus Christ is Hung on the Cross

When Pontius Pilate told the soldiers to take Jesus, they led Him away and put a big wooden cross on His shoulders.

Jesus had to carry the cross up a hill called Golgotha. The cross was heavy and Jesus stumbled again and again.

Finally He fell to the ground under its weight. The soldiers had to call a man who was passing by and made him carry the cross. The soldiers placed the cross on the hill of Golgotha.

They then crucified Jesus by nailing Him to the cross. There were two other crosses put up, one on each side of Him. Two robbers were also crucified. They were being punished for having killed and robbed many people. At the top of the cross on which Jesus was crucified the soldiers nailed a board with the words: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

A great crowd had followed Jesus to Golgotha. Some of them were His friends who stood by crying because there was nothing they could do to help Him.

But many others laughed at Jesus, saying: "He saved others, let Him save Himself." The soldiers stood at the foot of the cross and divided among themselves the clothes of Jesus. Jesus, seeing them and the crowd gathered there, prayed to His Father: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

One of the two robbers spoke angrily to Jesus: "If You are Christ, then save Yourself and us." But the other robber, the Good Thief stopped him, saying:

"We are punished because we did many bad things, but this Man has done nothing wrong." And turning to Jesus, he said: ***"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."*** And Jesus answered: "Verily I say unto you: Today you shall be with Me in Paradise."

Then Jesus looked at His mother and His favorite disciple, John, who were standing at the foot of the cross. He said to His mother: "This will be your son." And He said to John: "See, this is your mother." And from that day on John took the mother of Jesus to his home and took care of her.

About three o'clock in the afternoon Jesus said: "I thirst."

One of the soldiers dipped a sponge in vinegar; and put it on a stick to give to Jesus, but Jesus wouldn't take it. Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice: "Father, into Thy hands, I commend My Spirit." And having said this, He died.

On this sad day when Christ died, the sun became dark. The unexpected solar eclipse at Christ's crucifixion is described in the Gospels, and by other historians. The earth trembled and rocks broke into pieces all over the world.

The altar curtain in the great temple of Jerusalem was torn in two.

*(**Tradition says this is the curtain cloth being woven by the Virgin Mary when she was living in the temple at the time of the Annunciation.** The temple veil tearing by unseen hands represents the Old Covenant being transfigured to become the New Covenant in Christ. The deeper point of this fact is that God, in this act, opened the Covenant (solemn agreement) to the whole world, breaking down the wall that separated the rest of the world from a benefit previously given only to the Jewish people.)*

The people who were gathered on Golgotha saw many of these things. They became frightened and hurried home. The officer who commanded the soldiers, after seeing all this, exclaimed: "Truly, this was the Son of God." Jesus died on the cross on Friday. Every year we remember this very sad day. We call it Great (Good-in old English, means blessed) and Holy Friday.

On the same evening a friend of Jesus, called Joseph of Arimathea, came to Pilate and begged that he be allowed to take down the body of Jesus from the cross and bury Him. Pilate agreed. Joseph and another friend of Jesus, called Nicodemus, took Jesus' body, rubbed it with precious scented oils, and wrapped it in a linen cloth.

Not far from Golgotha there was a garden, and in that garden was a small cave, a tomb. The tomb in the garden had never been used before, so Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus and put it there.

A few women, friends of Jesus, stood by crying. They agreed that they would all stay home during the next day, Saturday, which was a holiday. The women were very brave. Even though they knew it might be dangerous to return on Sunday with scented oils and spices, to take care of everything that had not yet been done with the body of Jesus. These women are called The Holy Myrrh-bearers. A great, huge stone was rolled up close to the entrance of the cave. Soldiers remained at the entrance to guard the body of Jesus. This way nobody could enter or leave the tomb. It was secure.

Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?

Because of God's great love for us, He did something so special for each one of us. It is almost too amazing to even try and think about it!

When we love someone very much, we help them as much as we can- without thinking how hard it might be for ourselves to do this. Through Adam and Eve, the first created man and woman, sin entered the world, and now we all sin.

There are big sins and little sins, but everyone sins, and any sin separates us from God.

Jesus, the Son of God willingly took all the sins of everyone *ever* born, you, me, the whole world, and put <u>all</u> these sins upon Himself, because sin separates us from God.

When Jesus died and was buried, all our sins died and were buried too. We also remember this at our baptism.

We are now forgiven because of what Jesus did for us on the cross! Jesus loves us so much!

And, even if you were the ONLY person living in the whole world, Jesus still would have done this- just for you! Just for one person, because He knows each one of us and loves us all so much!

And, because He is the Son of God- He arose victorious, from the dead!

This is why we no longer fear death, for death is a new beginning, and **Pascha- the Resurrection of Christ, is the BIGGEST feast day of all!**

We see in His icons/and on prosphora, the Greek initials "IC XC NIKA"- which means Jesus Christ, Victor (Conqueror)!

The cross is a symbol of Christ's *triumphant* victory and power over death!

The Womb and the Tomb

It should be never forgotten that Jesus came to us in order to die – this was known by Him, at least, from the very beginning.

In Iconography, the manger in the Nativity Icon deliberately resembles a stone coffin, the swaddling clothes resemble a burial shroud, and the cave itself prefigures Christ's tomb.

The Holy Myrrh Bearers

The greatest and happiest miracle took place – on the third day, Christ rose from the dead. This miracle changed the lives of all the people in the world.

While it was still dark Sunday morning, the women who were friends of Jesus hurried to His tomb. They were carrying precious scented oil and spices to rub on the body of Jesus Christ.

This was the custom in those days to prepare a body for burial.

As they were hurrying they spoke to each other: "Who will roll away the heavy stone that closes the entrance to the cave?" It was a big, heavy stone, and they knew they were not strong enough to roll it away themselves.

As the women approached the tomb, they saw that the entrance to it was already opened and the stone was rolled away. An angel was sitting on the stone. His face was shining like lightning, and his dress was white as snow.

The soldiers who were guarding the tomb were so frightened when they saw the angel that they fell senseless to the ground.

But the angel said to the women: "Do not be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here. He is alive again, risen from the dead. Remember what He said to you when He was still with you: that He would be taken by evil men and crucified, and that on the third day He would rise again. Go, tell His disciples that Jesus Christ is risen and will meet them in Galilee."

One of the women, called Mary Magdalene, did not stay at the tomb long enough to hear the message of the angel. As soon as she saw the stone rolled away, she hurried to tell the news to the disciples. She found Peter and John and said to them: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid Him."

Then Peter and John hurried to the tomb as fast as they could. John was younger than Peter, and so he ran faster and was the first to arrive. He did not enter the cave. He waited for Peter, and they entered the tomb. Together they looked at the folded linen cloth and the napkin that had covered the Lord's head. They could not understand what had happened and returned home to tell the news to the other disciples.

Mary Magdalene stood crying outside the cave. As she cried, she bent down and looked into the tomb.

Suddenly she saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been lying. The angels said: "Mary, why are you crying?" And Mary answered: "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

As she said this, she turned back. Suddenly she saw Jesus standing near her in the garden. But Mary did not recognize Him. Jesus said: "Why are you crying? For whom are you looking?" Mary, thinking it was one of the gardeners, said: "Sir, if you have taken Him away, tell me where you have laid Him." Then Jesus said: "Mary." And suddenly Mary recognized Jesus. "Master!" she cried and threw herself at His feet. Jesus said: "Go and tell the disciples that I am going to My Father."

The greatest, the most wonderful miracle happened that first Pascha (Easter) morning: Christ, who suffered and died for us on the cross, arose from the dead.

He is *stronger* than death; He opened the doors to heaven for everyone.

There is no greater holiday than PASCHA, no happier day in the year. *-http://dce.oca.org/resources/*

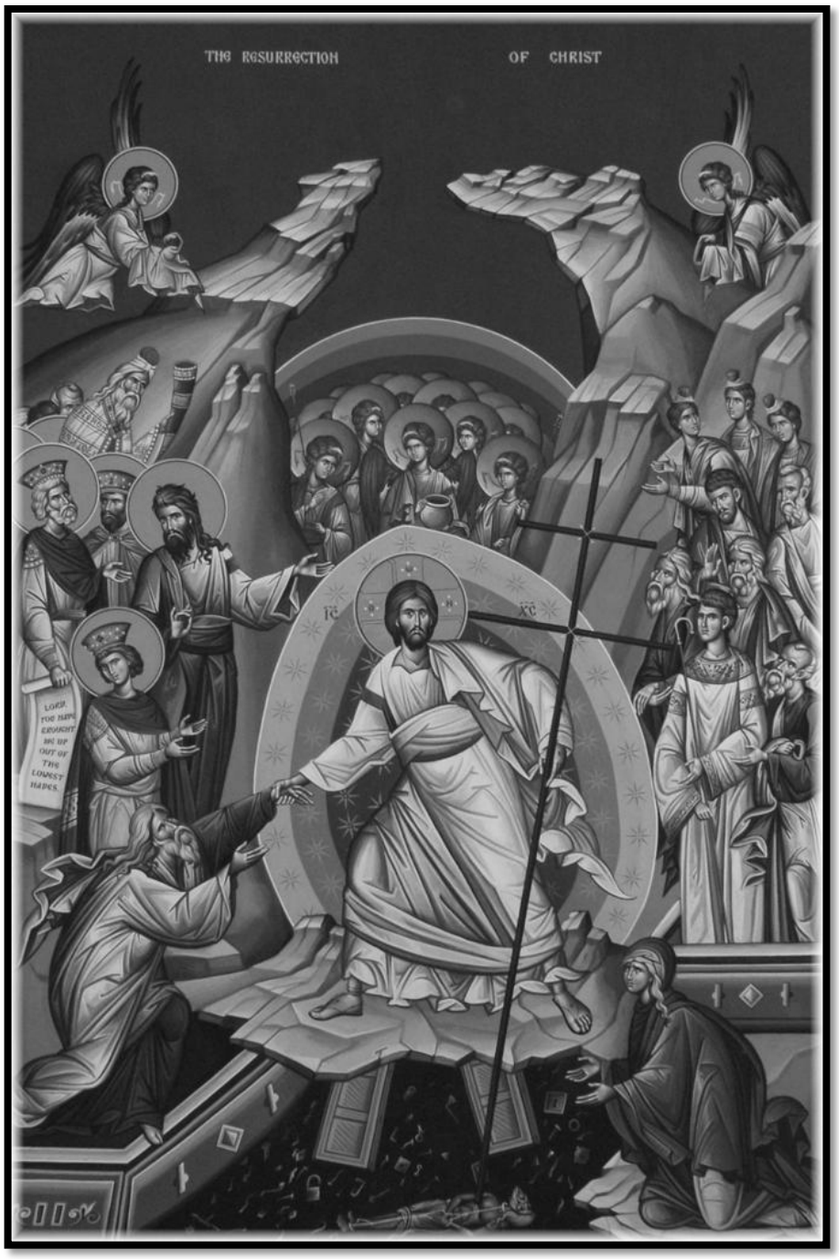
Even the Sun dances with joy at dawn on this day!

The Resurrection

Can you find Adam and Eve being raised from their tombs?

How about those departed who are standing to the sides of Christ, St. John the Baptist and King David (on Christ's right). Abel, the son of Adam (on Christ's left) and the first man to die, is present and depicted wearing a shepherd's robe.

Why are there keys and broken locks under the Cross?



Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by Death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing Life! *- Paschal Tropar*

No longer will the dominion of death be able to keep men captive. For Christ descended, demolishing and destroying the powers thereof. Hades is bound; the Prophets rejoice with one voice, saying: A Saviour has come for them that have faith. Come forth, ye faithful, for the Resurrection. *- Resurrection Kontakion*

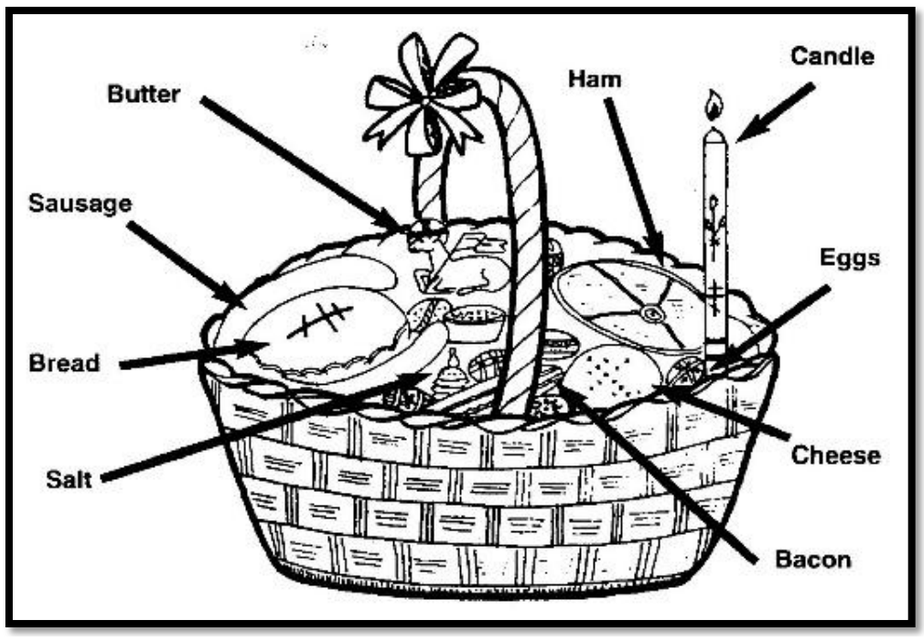
Preparation for Pascha

Our "passage" derived from the Hebrew "Pesche, or Passover" has been a Lenten Fast for 40 days.

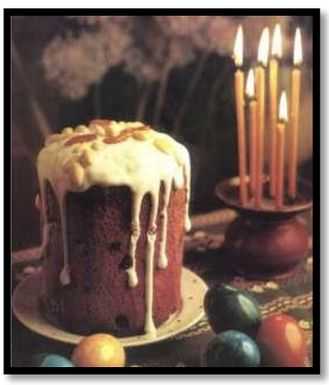
This culminates with a special sequence of events that occur during Holy Week, beginning with Christ raising Lazarus.

All of Creation has been preparing for Christ's Victory over Death and this is what we celebrate and remember when we fill our special baskets with yummy treats.

Our Orthodox festivities are as much infused by Tradition, as our entire life is by the Holy Spirit.



Sweet bread is always included, leavened with yeast. This is a symbol of the New Covenant; the Jews made unleavened bread, and we, as children of the new covenant, make leavened bread. Russian Kulich – the tall sweet bread stands like a Candle, is lit with a candle before the Blessing of Baskets. Christ is the Giver of Life and Light. *"I am the Light of the World…" -St. John 8:12*



A Greek Tsourekia Sweet Braid, displays the symbol of the Trinity with 3 red eggs.

The bitter herbs, remind us of the first Passover (horseradish is eaten as a traditional part of the original Passover meal) and of the bitter sufferings which Christ endured for our sake.

Sometimes the herb is colored red with beets, symbolizing the Blood of Christ. The bitter herb is also to bring to mind the Jews' 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, or our 40 days of the fast.

Wine, cheese, and butter are figurative of all the good things of life, and remind us of the earthly gifts that come from God.

Meat is included in remembrance of the sacrifice of the Old Testament Passover, which has been replaced by Christ, the New Passover and Lamb of God.

We are "the salt of the earth…"
-St. Matthew 5:13

The red or decorated eggs, which we crack, are likened to the tomb from which Christ arose.

This is because of the miracle of new life which comes from the egg, just as Christ miraculously came forth from the tomb… shattering the bonds of sin, bringing to all the Miracle of a New Life.

A Suggested Orthodox Children's Book in the Parish Library

The Miracle of the Red Egg
By Elizabeth Crispina Johnson

At Pascha, Orthodox Christians all over the world dye and bless red eggs. Here is the story of how this tradition started—way back in apostolic times, with St. Mary Magdalene and a blessed miracle that dazzled the unbelieving Roman emperor with the reality and power of Christ's Resurrection.

Jesus Comes to See His Friends

After that Pascha morning when Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He showed Himself several times to His friends. One day two of Jesus' disciples were walking along the road toward the village of Emmaus. They were talking about the death of Jesus. They were also talking about the strange news that the women had brought them that Christ was risen.

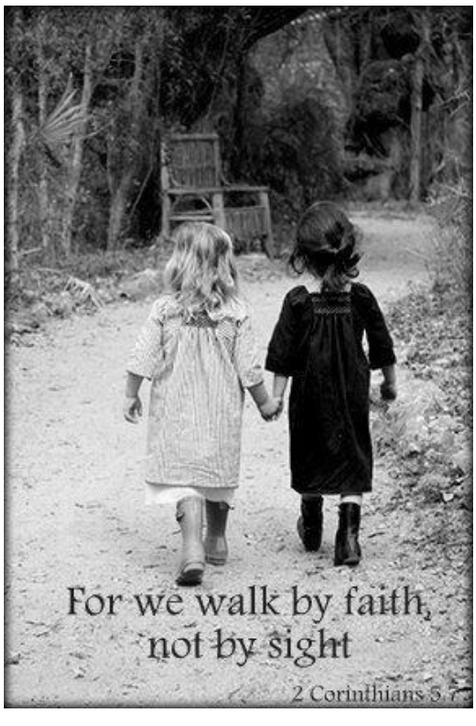
Suddenly a Stranger joined them and walked beside them. The Stranger said: "Why are you so sad? What are you talking about?" They looked at Him and said: "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know these things? Have you not heard the sad things that have happened these last days?" And they told Him all that had happened to Jesus: how Jesus was judged and put to death on the cross, how the women went to the tomb and found it empty, and how the angel told them that Jesus was living.

Then the Stranger said: "Oh, how slow you are to understand! Didn't the Bible tell you what would happen to the Savior?" Then He explained to them everything that was said in the holy books about Jesus Christ; He explained to them how Jesus would suffer, die, and rise from the dead.

When they entered the village, the two disciples asked the Stranger to have supper with them. As they were about to eat, the Stranger took a loaf of bread and broke it and gave it to them. He broke the bread the same way Jesus Christ had broken it at the Last Supper. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, but Jesus disappeared from their eyes. "Did not our hearts burn within us, when He talked to us?" they asked each other.

Then they hurried back to Jerusalem. They found the other disciples and said to them: "The Lord is risen indeed!" Jesus Christ came to see and speak to the disciples when they were all gathered together.

The disciple Thomas was not there when Jesus came. So, when later, they told Thomas about this, he would not believe them. He said: "If I do not touch His wounds with my own fingers, I shall not believe it."



Eight days later Jesus came again when Thomas was with them and said:

"Come here, Thomas, touch My wounds with your fingers and believe."

Thomas said: "My Lord and my God."

Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” - *St. John 20:29*

(Editor’s note: What a wonderful verse from the Gospels. Jesus calls <u>us</u> blessed… we who haven’t seen this miracle with our own eyes, yet believe! This is called faith.)

“The Ark” Word Puzzle! Fill in the Blanks & Search the Word!

G W I C J F B E Q X U N R E R
J A D L R T Q K Q P O I B A S
Z B B M Z C G S B I T T D D S
N S K R X H F L T B Z I Z Y O
L O H D I A U A H L A I L W R
M I E G N E I K H N L N L L H
R X J E V C L G T C E Q T J O
L H S U N C V Q L W S U E L L
U I O U K C O C A E P A O A Y
R F N L M U L Q B P O D P Z W
N N R D Y E D U F Z M F O A E
A J Q E T H I R D A E C U R E
M L A P V Y B O R U J T L U K
H U M I L I T Y K F M R P S E
J Y E G V C O A D G D Q M A R

The Sun is said to Dance with Joy on this
Feast Day _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

The symbol of our Lord’s Crucifixion _ _ _ _ _

The Archangel _ _ _ _ _ _ _ announced to Mary.

The seven days between Palm Sunday and Pascha are called
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem “on the foal of an ass” to help us learn
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _.

This friend of Jesus lay in his tomb 4 days dead, miraculously coming to life again. _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Jesus arose from the tomb on the _ _ _ _ _ day.

The Virgin who became His Holy Mother _ _ _ _

The children were holding _ _ _ _ branches and singing Hosanna.

_ _ _ _ _ _ is considered the Feast of all Feasts.

The colourful _ _ _ _ _ _ _ is a symbol of the Resurrection.

A word to describe Jesus, full of light and glory,
at his Resurrection and Ascension _ _ _ _ _ _ _

At Pascha, we all proclaim “Christ is _ _ _ _ _!”

The Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ (40 Days after Pascha)

After His Glorious Resurrection, our Lord Jesus Christ often appeared to His apostles and taught them about the Kingdom of God.

Not all of these teachings were written down in the Holy Scripture. Some of them were written down by the apostles in the Divine Liturgy, and some of them, they taught to the new bishops by word of mouth. These things are called “sacred tradition”.

On the fortieth day after His Resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to the apostles for the last time. Together they walked on the top of the Mount of Olives. Our dear Saviour was giving His followers His final instructions and strengthening them. Jesus told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there until they received the special gift of the Holy Spirit which was going to descend on His Holy Orthodox Church. Our Saviour said, “John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

The Lord then told His apostles that He was going to return to Heaven to prepare a place for the faithful. He promised to return at the end of time and gather all His true followers into the Heavenly Kingdom, where they will live with Him forever.

The Saviour then told His apostles to go throughout the whole world, teaching people about Him, and baptizing them into his Holy Church, “in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit.”

After this, our Saviour was caught up into heaven.

When the apostles saw this, they trembled with fear and joy.

They went back to Jerusalem, glorifying God, and waited there for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost

Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit

After Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, the disciples went back to Jerusalem. They stayed there all together, and some of the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, were with them. They were all waiting for the Comforter that Jesus had promised them.

One day Peter stood up and said: "Let us choose someone who was with us from the day that Jesus Christ was baptized until His death. Let us make him one of the Twelve to replace Judas, who betrayed our Lord." The other disciples agreed. They chose two names among those of Jesus' friends who had always been with Him. They prayed and asked God to show. which one of the two He wanted to be chosen. Then they drew lots, and the good lot was drawn by a man called Matthias. From that day on Matthias became one of the twelve apostles in the place of Judas. "Apostle" is the name given to Jesus' twelve closest friends and disciples.

A great holiday was approaching. The city of Jerusalem was crowded with people who had come there for the holiday. The twelve apostles and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were all together in the upper room of their house.

Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as if a mighty wind were rushing through the entire house. A flame of fire appeared over the head of each one of the apostles. And through these flames of fire a great and mysterious strength came down on them.

This was the Comforter, God the Holy Spirit, entering into the disciples. Suddenly the apostles felt that they had become quite different from what they had been before. They knew now what they had to say to people about the things Jesus had taught them. They knew how to say these things so that people would believe them.

Many people who were in Jerusalem for the holiday, heard the rushing noise made by the wind. They gathered before the house. They had come from many different countries and spoke many different languages. Then they heard the apostles speaking to them in their own languages and telling them the story of Jesus Christ, who was the Saviour promised from olden days.

The Apostle Peter told the people how He was crucified and arose from the dead and ascended into heaven and how He had promised that a special Comforter, God the Holy Spirit, would come down to His disciples and give them special strength and wisdom. The people who listened to Peter believed him and said: "What shall we do then?" Peter said: "Be sorry for all the bad things you have done. Come and be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

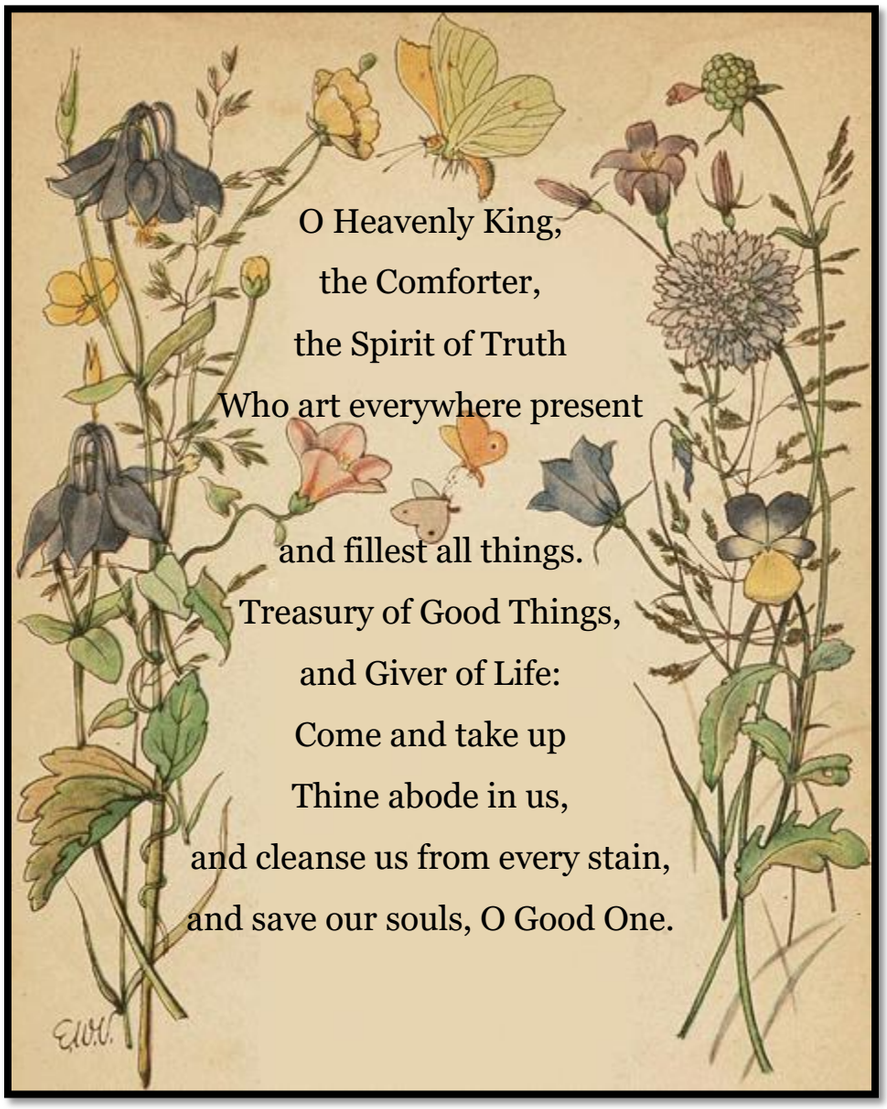
The church is decked with greenery and we hold flowers on Pentecost, because the Holy Spirit is the Giver of Life.

The Church Is Founded

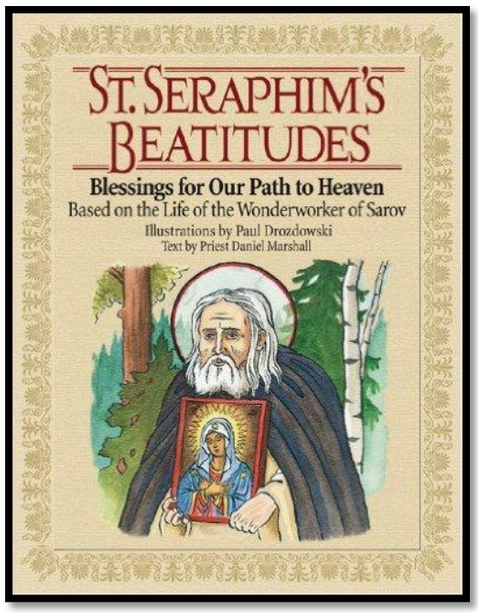
All the people who were gathered there listened to Peter and were baptized. From then on they all lived as one family. They prayed and thanked God for everything. They came together often to receive the Holy Communion. They listened to the things the apostles told them and shared with each other everything they had. No one was in need of anything. They lived happily together.

This is the way God made His church on earth. Ever since then we receive special power and strength in the church. We belong to the true church founded by Jesus Christ. We must remember that it is the greatest treasure we have.

There is a special prayer in our church to the Holy Spirit.



-http://dce.oca.org/resources/



A Suggested Orthodox Children's Book in the Parish Library

St. Seraphim's Beatitudes
By Paul Drozdowski

This life of St. Seraphim of Sarov delights with lavish, historically-accurate illustrations and inspiring stories that every young Christian will enjoy reading again and again.

Short sayings patterned after the Lord's Beatitudes present St. Seraphim's wisdom in clear, memorable phrases.

Question: *There are so many people on Earth. Does God really know every one of us?* **Answer:** *Absolutely!*

It's impossible for us to count or know how many people have ever lived on earth since the beginning of time, until now.

God is not hindered by mortal limitations as we are. There is no time for God. God created the universe… He created everything.

This is painful for us to even try to understand! Our minds reel when we try to ponder infinity or eternity, because, for each one of us, we live only moment to moment. For us, there is only past, present and future.

But, God knows each and every one of us. He *knows* you! Although each one of us has free choice, things we haven't even done yet, are already written in the Book of Life.

God knows us when we are inside our mothers' wombs. He sees everything. He knows what's in our hearts; He knows everything we say, everything we do. He knows our thoughts, our plans, our every joy and teardrop… and *He loves* us, regardless!

Noah's Ark

Centuries after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden; the people on earth chose to forget about God and became very wicked. Only one man and his family in the whole world remained good. His name was Noah, and he loved God and always tried to obey Him.

One day, God said to Noah: "The earth is wicked and I shall wash away with a flood of waters, all which is wicked. Every living thing will perish, but your family and those with you, for you have obeyed My laws." Then God told Noah to build a huge covered boat, called an ark.

People laughed at Noah and his sons when they began to build this boat in the middle of dry land. Even though they made fun of him and were cruel, Noah knew he still must do what God told him. Then God told Noah to take into his boat two of every kind of creature that lived on earth, and God sent them unto Noah. At last all was ready, with food stored away for many months within the ark.

Noah and his wife, his sons and their wives and all the creatures entered the ark. And the Lord shut them in. After seven days the rain began to fall. It rained for forty days and forty nights without stopping, even the mountains were covered with water. Nothing remained alive on the earth.

During the seventh month after the beginning of the flood, Noah's ark came to rest on a mountain. Noah opened the window of his ark. He took a dove and let it fly. The dove flew around, but could find no place to rest, so it returned to the ark. Noah waited another seven days and let the dove out again. When it returned, it carried a green olive leaf in its beak. After another week passed, the dove flew away and did not come back.

Noah opened the doors of the ark and saw that everything was fresh and green on earth once more. God told Noah to leave the ark and let out all the animals that were with him. The earth was once more filled with animals, birds, and insects.

Noah was very happy and grateful. He and his family thanked God for keeping them safe. Suddenly a beautiful rainbow appeared in the sky shining with many colours.

God said, "This is the sign of My promise to you that never again shall there be a flood great enough to destroy all living things on the earth."

The rainbow is God's beautiful Promise in the sky!