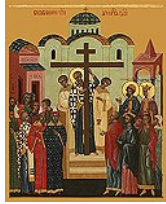


✠Bulletin✠

Week of April 12th to April 18th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

V. Rev. Fr. Leonid Palceski
2365 South Olga Drive
Fort Myers, Florida 33905
www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org
Phone: 239-265-6562
Cell: 239-699-3119
HolyCrossFtMyers@gmail.com

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

HOLY PASCHA
THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
[Beginning of the Pentecostarion]

St. Basil the Confessor, Bishop of Parium (9th c.). Hieromartyr Zeno, Bishop of Verona (ca. 260). Ven. Isaac the Syrian, Abbot of Spoleto (550). Monastic Martyrs Menas, David, and John, of Palestine (7th c.). Venerable Anthusa of Constantinople (801). Ven. Athanasia, Abbess, of Aegina (860). Ven. Acacius the Younger, of Kavsokalyvia (Mt. Athos—1730). Transfer of the Holy Sash of the Theotokos to Constantinople (942).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

HOLY PASCHA Sunday Morning— April 12th

*****8:00 am*****

MATINS & RESURRECTION LITURGY

***Blessing of Baskets & Egg Hunt**

Bright Wednesday April 15th

8:45 am - Paschal Hours

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

How do you look upon death?

By Fr. George Timko

“Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. I have the keys of death and hades.” Rev 1:17-18

Death is a dark and distressing event. When a person dies, he appears as inert as a piece of wood or stone. He ceases to exist and function within this physical realm of existence. From the viewpoint of the earthly and material forms of life, a dead person is absolutely lifeless. And so, we tend to look upon death as the total absence of life. But this is only one way of looking at death. There is also another way of looking at death; and that is the Christian way.

If we look at death from the standpoint of Christian understanding, we see a different picture. For Christ has provided us with a different view. He has shed a new light upon the whole mystery and darkness of death. Our Lord has changed the “condition of death by His own death and resurrection. Actually, the reality of death has been remodeled by Divine Power.

The resurrection troparion expresses this new outlook on death: *“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.”* If we really believe what these words express, then we must look upon the dead with a new kind of understanding. We must see the dead as really living in the world beyond; no longer should we fear death, as St. John Chrysostom says: *“Let no one fear death, for the Savior’s death has set us free. Jesus Christ, Who was held the prisoner of death, has annihilated death.”*

Jesus Christ is the cause of our new understanding and outlook on death. He has revealed to us a new insight into the nature of death. He has taken away the destructive power of death. He has taken away the horror of dying. He has completely transformed the meaning and condition of death. And with this new meaning, we can look upon death with a different attitude and feeling. We can actually die with peace and joy.

Death has lost its lifeless power and quality. It has been deprived of its terrifying and final hold upon all mankind. This is so because Christ Himself descended into the state of death and imbued it with life. *“Christ also died for us once for all..., so that he might bring us to God. He was put to death in the body, but He was brought to life in the spirit. And in the Spirit, He went*

and preached to the spirits imprisoned in death, to those who formerly did not obey... Why was the good message preached to those who are dead? So that even though they received the judgment of death in the body, which is common to all men, they might live in the spirit with the life of God." [1 Peter]

In its essential reality, death is destroyed. For death is no longer the exclusion of life. Death has lost its catastrophic features. It has been deprived of its binding power. Its terrifying hold upon mankind has been obliterated. Death is no longer the final end of man's destiny but simply another milestone on the road to eternal life with God.

It is true that we still die. But in Christ we can die and still live. This is what Jesus meant when he said: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who lives in Me and believes in Me, even though he die, yet shall he live; he who believes in Me and lives in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" Those who give themselves to Jesus Christ and who live in His reality are assured of possessing life even though they cease to exist in this physical world. Why then fear death?

Those who are truly united with Christ have become one with Him; and in that unity they are identified with Him. In Christ's death, they see the real occurrence of their own death. In Christ's empty tomb, they see the actual appearance of their own graves. And in Christ's glorified being and resurrected existence, they see the true likeness of their own being and existence.

Jesus Christ transmits the power and effects of His resurrected reality to all mankind. And by being in real communion with Christ, we are enabled to share His total experience and state of being. His deliverance is our deliverance; His victory is our victory; His life is our life. And when we die, we will not be deprived of life; we will not be dwelling in darkness; we will not be separated from Him. Even in death, we will be exposed to His light; we will be united with Him; we will be living with His life.

St. John Chrysostom explains it in this way: "We do indeed die, but we do not continue in death. And not continuing in death is not really to die at all. For the tyranny of death is found in the total absence of life. True death is when a person dies and is never again allowed to possess life. But if after dying, one is still living - and living a better life at that - then such is not really death."

Since the manifestation of Jesus Christ, death has taken on a totally new quality and meaning. Death is a "passing-over" into another form of life. The reality of death is no longer dark and frightening. For death is actually the entrance into a heavenly paradise of closer fellowship with Jesus Christ. This is why St. Paul could say: "my desire is to depart and be with Christ. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Sooner or later each of us must face death. And we should look upon it in the perspective of Christ's teachings about it. We should view death from the standpoint of our spiritual life in Christ and with faith and trust in God. For the power of divine life has permeated death.

"Death is an awful thing and full of terror for those who are ignorant of God's truth. They see death as the complete dissolution of life, as the end of living; and they are afraid and terrified with good reason. For they look upon death as though they were passing into non-existence. But we who have received the truth from above and who by the grace of God have learned the secrets of His Wisdom, have no need to fear and tremble at death. For we deem the action of death to be a passage to another place. And so, we should rather rejoice and be glad when we die. For in leaving this perishable life through death, we go to a life which has no end and which is far better and brighter." [St. John Chrysostom]

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

tithe.ly.com

Another way to "donate". This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

Prayer Requests

Walter Kallaur – brother of the Constantine & Arlene Kallaur

Heather (Helen) Auld

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,
Roman, Mykola
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei
Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Variable Hymns and Readings

The First Antiphon – Psalm 66

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! Sing of His name, give glory to His praise.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Say to God how awesome are Thy deeds! So great is Thy power that Thy enemies cringe before Thee! *(Refrain)*
Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee! Let it praise Thy name, O most High! *(Refrain)*
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Refrain)*

The Second Antiphon - Psalm 67

God be bountiful to us and bless us! Show the Light of Thy Countenance upon us and have mercy on us!

Refrain: O Son of God, Who arose from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all nations! *(Refrain)*
Let the people give thanks to Thee O God! Let all the people give thanks to Thee! *(Refrain)*
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(“Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God...”)

The Third Antiphon - Psalm 68

Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those who hate Him flee from before His face!

Troparion of the Feast

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

As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish, as wax melts before the fire!

Troparion of the Feast

So the sinners will perish before the face of God but let the righteous be glad! *Troparion of the Feast*

Introit of the Little Entrance: Bless God in the churches, the Lord, O you who are of Israel’s fountain!

Troparion

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

Hypakoe

Before the dawn,
Mary and the women came and found the stone
rolled away from the tomb.
They heard the angelic voice:
"Why do you seek among the dead as a man the One who is everlasting light?
Behold the clothes in the grave!
Go and proclaim to the world: The Lord is risen!
He has slain death, as He is the Son of God,
saving the race of men."

Kontakion (Tone 8)

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal,
Thou didst destroy the power of death!
In victory didst Thou arise, O Christ God,
proclaiming "Rejoice" to the myrrhbearing women,
granting peace to Thy apostles,
and bestowing resurrection to the fallen.

(Instead of the Trisagion, we sing:)

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Tone 8 Prokeimenon

This is the day which the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

V. O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever. *(Ps. 117:1)*

Acts 1:1-8 (Epistle)

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

John 1:1-17 (Gospel)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born,

not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading John 1:1-2 Only

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

1a. In the beginning was the Word. I say again what I said in the preface, that the **Evangelist John takes as his theme the Godhead** which became incarnate for our sake. John omits any account of the Lord's birth in the flesh, His childhood, and His growth to manhood, because these matters have been dealt with sufficiently by his fellow disciples. This is not to say that the other Evangelists neglected to speak about the divinity of the Only-begotten Son: if you look closely you will see that they too proclaimed it, but not at length. Nor was John so intent on the exalted Word that he neglected the *economia* of the incarnation; for it is one and the same Spirit which moved and inspired all the Evangelists. John, then, tells us about the Son, for the Father was already known from the Old Testament. Yet he is not silent about the Father; on the contrary, he mentions the Father while speaking of the Son. He shows that the Only-begotten is eternal when he declares, *In the beginning was the Word*, which means, "From the beginning." Because the Word is from the beginning, there was no time when He did not exist. "How do you know," one might ask, "that *in the beginning* means the same as 'from the beginning'?" We know this both from the common meaning of the words and from what this same Evangelist says in one of his Epistles: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard* [I Jn.1:1].

Furthermore, why does the Evangelist say, *In the beginning was the Word*, and not, "In the beginning was the Son?" He does so out of condescension to our weakness, so that we would not hear at the very start about a "Son" and at once imagine a passionate and carnal engendering. He names the Son *Word*, so that you may understand, O reader, that as a word is generated by the mind without passion, so the Word was begotten of the Father without passion. He also calls Him *Word* because Christ the Word proclaimed to us the things of the Father, just as every word proclaims the thoughts of the mind. Furthermore, he calls the Son *Word* to show that the Word is co-eternal

with the Father. Just as it is impossible that a mind [nous] could ever exist without thought or word, so is it impossible that God the Father ever existed without the Son. The Evangelist said, *the Word*, using the definite article, for there are many other words of God, such as prophecies and commandments. It is written of His angels that they are *mighty in strength, that perform His word* [Ps.102:18], meaning, His commands. But the very Word Himself is divine essence existent in person.

1b. and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Here John affirms even more clearly that the Son is co-eternal with the Father. Lest you imagine that the Father was ever without the Son, the Evangelist states that *the Word was with God*, that is, together with God, in the bosom of the Father. "With" means as it does elsewhere in the Scriptures: "*And are not His brothers and His sisters here with us* [Mk. 6:3]?" This means "living with us and among us." It is impossible that God could ever be without word, reason, wisdom, or power. Therefore, since the Son is the Word, the wisdom, and the power of God [see I Cor. 1:24], we believe that He always *was with God*, meaning, with the Father. But how can a son not come after his father? I will explain by means of an example from the material world. The radiance of the sun is from the sun, is it not? Does it then come after the sun in time, so that the sun was once without radiance? But this is impossible- how can the sun be devoid of brightness? If the sun and its effulgence must co-exist, how much more so, God the Father and God the Son? Because the Son is the brightness of the Father, as the Apostle Paul says [see Heb. 1:3], He always shone with the Father; He could not have come after Him. The great John proclaims that the Word and the Father are different from each other, but not in kind. They are different in their persons, but one and the same in nature. Here is an example to make the point clearer: Peter and Paul are different from each other because they are two different persons; but they are not different in kind, because they have the same human nature. Likewise, the Father and the Son are different from one another in Their two persons; but They are not different in kind, because They share the same divine nature.

2. The same was in the beginning with God. God the Word never was separated from God the Father. Since John had said that *the Word was God*, he wanted to quell any devilish suspicion that, because the Word was God, He might have risen up against the Father, separated Himself from Him, and become His enemy. Such rebellions are the common stuff of pagan Greek mythology. So, John stresses that, while the Word is indeed God [and equal in power to the Father], He is always with the Father and never separated from Him.

(Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing the following)

Paschal 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!
Exalt now and be glad, O Zion!
Be radiant, O Pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!

Communion Hymn

Receive the Body of Christ! Taste the fountain of immortality!
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!