

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF APRIL 12, 2009

Please Remember in Prayer

Carole Boris (newly-departed), Archpriest Michael, Monk Christian, Nadia, Kathy & Bill Parrish, Diane Evanusa, Marie, Thomas, Judith Kocinski, Jane Koshutko, Robert Evanusa, Nicholas & Linda, Nicholas, Anna, Yvonne, Katherine, Michael, Gregory, Todd & Olga Leisure, Nina Gordon, Constantina & Christos. Requests? Let Fr. John know.

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH

ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour
7:00p.m. Bridegroom Matins

HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 13TH

7:00p.m. Bridegroom Matins

HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 14TH

7:00p.m. Bridegroom Matins

HOLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15TH

7:00p.m. Holy Unction

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 16TH

9:00a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy
7:00p.m. Matins with 12 Gospels

HOLY FRIDAY, APRIL 17TH

3:00p.m. Vespers with Shroud
7:00p.m. Matins with Procession

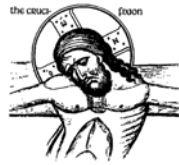
HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 18TH

9:00a.m. Vespers Divine Liturgy
11:30p.m. Nocturns

HOLY PASCHA, APRIL 19TH

Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

12:00a.m. Matins
Divine Liturgy
Blsg. of Baskets & Meal
12:00p.m. Paschal Vespers



Holy Week and Paschal Services

provide us with an opportunity to be at the Lord's side during His Passion, Death, and Resurrection. There are liturgical services offered each day this week. While it may be difficult, or even impossible for some, to attend all of these services, we should do our best to be present at the very least on Holy Friday (when we find ourselves at the Lord's Cross) and Pascha (when we celebrate the Lord's Resurrection from the dead). Let us keep watch this week during the Lord's darkest hour so that we might celebrate with joy His bright and saving Resurrection on the third day!

The Mystery of Holy Unction

will be served on Great and Holy Wednesday, April 15th, at 7:00pm. The Church's practice of anointing with holy oil for the healing of soul and body dates back to Apostolic times, when St. James wrote, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters (priests) of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14) According to Church discipline, those who wish to receive this Mystery should approach only after having first made a recent Confession, usually this means during Great Lent.



An Altar Servers / Ushers Meeting

will be held today, Sunday, April 12th, following the coffee hour.



The Paschal Meal

will be held immediately following the "Midnight Service", which concludes with the Pascha Divine Liturgy. Everyone is invited! If you are able to bring food to share, please sign your name on the sheet in the coffee hour room to let us know what you can bring.

Out of Town for Pascha?

Be mindful to let the priest of the parish you are visiting know beforehand who you are. If you are prepared to receive Holy Communion, you should let him know. This should not be done at the time you approach for Communion, but before the Liturgy. A phone call or email is in good order.



The Next Parish Council Meeting

Will be held on Sunday, May 3, 2009, following the coffee hour.

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 12th

Kathy Parrish

Sunday, April 19th

Jen Alexion





THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY UNCTION

From "These Truths We Hold"

This Sacrament is described in Holy Scripture by St. James the Brother of the Lord: Is any among you sick? Let him, call for the elders of the Church,

and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven (ch. 5:14-15).

From the above text, we can see that this Sacrament has a twofold purpose bodily healing and the forgiveness of sins. The two are joined, for man is a unity of body and soul and there can be no sharp distinction between bodily and spiritual sicknesses. Of course, the Church does not believe that this anointing is automatically followed by recovery of health, for God's will and not man's prevails in all instances. Sometimes the sick person is healed and recovers after receiving the Sacrament, but in other cases he does not recover, but the Sacrament, nonetheless, gives him the spiritual strength to prepare for death.

The Sacrament is formally performed by seven Priests, reflecting an ancient practice of performing in the course of seven days, each day having its own prayers, although, if due to necessity, it can be performed by three or even one Priest. At each of the anointings the following prayer is repeated: Holy Father, Physician of souls and bodies, Who sent Thine Only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ Who healed every illness and delivered from death, heal Thy servant from the weakness that holds his/her body, of either body or soul, and enliven him/her by the grace of Thy Christ, by the prayers of the All-holy Lady Theotokos and all the Saints.

Seven Epistle and Gospel readings are said and seven anointings are performed. After the seventh, the open Gospel Book is placed over the head of the one receiving the Sacrament, during which the senior Priest reads the Absolution Prayer containing the following: I do not lay my sinful hands on the head of him who comes...but Thy mighty and powerful hand, which is in the Holy Gospel. This replaces an ancient practice of laying-on of hands.

We must note that Holy Unction is not only for those on their deathbed, but for anyone who is sick. It may also be performed over the healthy as well (as is the custom on Holy Wednesday) and in Greece it is often performed over the healthy before Holy Communion, since the rite also contains elements of repentance, although it should be noted that this does not replace the Sacrament of Confession.



10 TIPS FOR HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA

1. Make participation at the Services a priority.
2. In our homes we should strive to "keep out the world" and enter into the peace, solemnity, and theology of the events of the last days of our Lord.
3. Be sure to read the last chapters of the Holy Gospels that speak of the Passion, Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ.
4. If you are visiting another parish and wish to receive Communion, make sure that the priest knows who you are and that you are prepared. This should be done in advance by phone, email, or any other way.
5. Last year's palms and pussywillows should be placed outside in an area to decay where they will not be disturbed. They are holy and should not be simply thrown out with the garbage.
6. Before venerating Holy Objects, such as the Cross, the Chalice, Icons, or the Winding-Sheet, make sure to wipe off your lipstick or chapstick. Reminder: we do not kiss the face of our Lord, His Mother, or the Saints – instead kiss the hands or feet.
7. If you haven't yet made your Confession during Great Lent, try to make it during the beginning of Holy Week. Speak with Fr. John to arrange a time.
8. Try to make amends with those we may be upset with or those who are upset with us, so that on Pascha we can joyfully sing, "Let us call brothers, even those that hate us, and forgive all by the Resurrection!"
9. Try to stay after the "Midnight Service" on Pascha morning for the blessing of baskets and festive meal. Let us share in the joy of the Lord's Resurrection with fellowship and love.
10. During Bright Week, sing or read the Paschal Hours (you can pick up a copy in the back of the church) instead of your "normal" morning and evening prayers. Let the joy of praising the Lord's Resurrection accompany you throughout Bright Week, the Paschal season, and your whole life.

CHURCH LEADER SPARKS GEORGIAN BABY BOOM

By Tom Esslemont, BBC News, Tbilisi

Two years after having one of the lowest birth rates in the world, Georgia is enjoying something of a baby boom, following an intervention from the country's most senior cleric.

At the end of 2007, in a move to reverse the Caucasian country's dwindling birth figures, the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Ilia II, came up with an incentive. He promised to personally baptize any baby born to parents of more than two children. There was only one catch: the baby had to be born after the initiative was launched. The results are, in the words of the Georgian Orthodox Church, "a miracle".

Easy decision

The country's birth rate increased by nearly 20% during 2008 - a rate four times faster than the previous year. Many parents say they took the decision to have another child on the basis of the Patriarch's incentive.

Giorgi and Pati Bluashvili have just had their fourth child. He is a boy called Giviko. He has big blue eyes and a loud laugh. As I try to interview his mother he takes delight at interrupting by babbling away. Pati says the decision to have another child was an easy one. "There's no doubt in my mind that we had Giviko because

of the Patriarch's incentive," she says. "When he announced that he would baptize any child born to parents with at least two children already we could not resist the opportunity to have another baby. To have a child baptized by the Patriarch is so very special." Many other parents agree. It is perhaps not surprising in a country where more than 80% of people follow the Orthodox faith.

On a Thursday afternoon, dozens of parents are queuing up outside a registry office in central Tbilisi to put their child's name down for the Patriarchal mass baptism. The ceremonies take place four times a year.

Scribbling down the name of her three-month-old boy, Nino - a young mother - says it is an honor to be contributing to the task of boosting birth rates. "The Patriarch did a really good thing launching this initiative," she says. "I am sure that most parents decided to have more babies because of him. If his Holiness baptizes your child it means he becomes his or her godfather and that is such an honor."



No surprise

The next baptism is scheduled for early April, when thousands of moms, dads and their children will cram into Tbilisi's biggest church, the Sameba Cathedral. The babies will be briefly dipped into a gigantic inflatable font after receiving a blessing from his Holiness, Ilia II.

The Patriarch plays a very influential role in Georgian society. Many see him as the most authoritative figure in their life.

But to Church insiders, the increased birth rates come as no surprise. "Faith is getting stronger," says Irakli Kadagishvili, a spokesman for the Patriarch Foundation, a movement set up to promote the interests of the Church. "The Patriarch is seen not only as a religious figure, but also as a national authority. When he saw the need to increase the birth rate he only had to provide an incentive. It was the only stimulus most parents needed if they

were already thinking about having more children."

The Church is taking the credit for the sudden trend in having babies. But there are other factors to consider, including economic ones. The head of Georgia's civil registry, Giorgi Vashadze, has been monitoring the recent figures. He tells me

that the jump from 48,000 in 2007 to 57,000 in 2008 can, in part, be explained by the Patriarch's incentive, but also by the rise in average household incomes.

"Who is now creating families? People who five years ago were out of work," he says. "Previously, they had no income. They could not get married. Today they are working. They have salaries. They are maybe not as high as in [other] European countries but they are quite normal for Georgia. So I think this is a major factor."

In a country which early last year boasted of having economic growth rates of 7.9% there is little doubt that economic factors may have played a role in bringing on the baby boom. But the role of the Church cannot be underestimated in Georgia. Twenty years ago, just before Georgia gained independence from the Soviet Union, the Orthodox religion was all but suppressed in the country. Now it is more than clear that the faith has never been stronger.



THE THEOLOGY OF GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

We now enter the most sacred week of the year. It starts with the feast of the Entry of our Lord into Jerusalem, also known as Palm Sunday. The joy of the raising of Lazarus who was four-days-dead, is coupled with the harrowing humiliations which are to follow.

The Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Great and Holy Week are a preparation for the Passion. They already have a strongly accented character of mourning and repentance. The Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the Great and Holy Week belong to the paschal solemnities - each one of these days reveals to us a special aspect of the mystery of Pascha. One could even say that this mystery has three aspects, each of which corresponds to a day: Thursday, Friday and Saturday. One could also say that each of these three aspects corresponds to a place: the Upper Room, Golgotha, the Holy Sepulcher. Great and Holy Thursday commemorates the mystery of the Upper Room, Great and Holy Friday the mystery of Golgotha, and Great and Holy Saturday the mystery of the tomb of Christ.



On the Thursday, in the Upper Room, Jesus, through a sacramental action, both announces and represents, consecrates and offers what is to take place in the following days. On Friday, at Golgotha, Jesus, by His death on the Cross, accomplishes our redemption. On the Saturday, Jesus rests in the tomb; but the church already looking ahead to the feast of Resurrection Sunday, speaks to us of the victory over death that our Savior has won. This anticipation of the Resurrection on Great and Holy Saturday allows us to say that the mystery of Christ's Resurrection, triumphantly celebrated on Pascha, already belongs, although incompletely, to the Great and Holy Week. And so, this week constitutes a summary of the whole economy of salvation.



It would be a great mistake to want to concentrate on one of the aspects of the paschal mystery by separating it from the others. The word "Passover," in the traditional language of the church, does not only designate the Sunday of the Resurrection, it also covers the mystery of the Eucharist (Thursday), the mystery of the Cross (Friday) and the mystery of the Tomb (Saturday). The Sunday of Pascha, completes the one and unique paschal mystery. This whole unity is the Christian

transposition of what the Jews called "the Passover," that is to say, the passage. The elements of the Jewish mystery correspond to those of our paschal mystery. For them, there was the feast in which the lamb was eaten. There was the blood of the lamb - the sign of salvation for those houses whose doors were painted with it and whom the angel of death would spare. There is the crossing of the Red Sea - the departure from the land of Egypt and slavery - the miraculously divided waters and the passage across on dry ground and, at last, the arrival on the other side, the side of freedom and hope. The Great and Holy Week will only have its true meaning for us when we see it as a "passover," a passage from death to life.

