

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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SUNDAY, APRIL 23

Antipascha: 2nd Sunday of Pascha

St. Thomas Sunday

Holy Glorious Greatmartyr, Trophy-bearer, and Wonderworker, George

Tone 7

Troparion

(Pentecostarion)

*From the sealed tomb, Thou didst shine forth, O Life!
Through closed doors Thou didst come to Thy Disciples, O Christ God.
Renew in us through them an upright spirit,
by the greatness of Thy mercy, O Resurrection of all!*

Tone 4

Troparion

(St. George)

*As a martyr of Christ, thou wast bound for good deeds, O George;
by faith thou didst conquer the torturer's godlessness.
Thou wast offered as a sacrifice pleasing to God, thus receiving the crown of victory.
Through thine intercessions, forgiveness of sins is granted to all.*

Tone 4

Kontakion

(St. George)

*As a martyr of Christ, thou wast bound for good deeds, O George;
by faith thou didst conquer the torturer's godlessness.
Thou wast offered as a sacrifice pleasing to God, thus receiving the crown of victory.
Through thine intercessions, forgiveness of sins is granted to all.*

Tone 4

Kontakion

(Pentecostarion)

*Thomas touched Thy life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God,
when Thou camest to Thine Apostles through closed doors.
He cried out with all: "Thou art my Lord and my God!"*

Prokeimenon

Tone 3 (from the Pentecostarion)

*Great is our Lord, and abundant in power, / His understanding is beyond measure. (Ps. 146:5)
V. Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps. 146:1)*

Tone 7 (St. George)

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord / and shall hope in Him. (Ps. 63:11a)

The Epistle Reading

Acts 5:12-20 (*Epistle*)

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

Acts 12:1-11 (*Epistle, Saint*)

Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands. Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people."

Veprat e Apostujve 5:12-20

Edhe me anë të duarve të apostujve bëheshin shumë shenja e çudira në mes të popullit; edhe ishin me një zemër të gjithë në portikun e Solomonit. Edhe nga të tjerët asnjë s'guxonte të bashkohej me ta; por populli i madhëronte ata. Edhe shtoheshin më shumë duke besuar në Zotin turma burrash e grash; aq sa nxirrnin jashtë nëpër rrugë të sëmurët, edhe i vinin mbi shtresa e mbi shtretër, që kur të shkonte Pjetri të paktën hija e tij të zinte ndonjë nga ata. Edhe mbledheshin në Jerusalem të gjitha qytetet përreth, edhe sillnin të sëmurët edhe ata që ngiteshin prej frymësh të ndyra, të cilët shëroheshin të gjithë. Atëherë u ngrit kryepriifti dhe gjithë ata që ishin bashkë me të, të cilët ishin sekt i Saduqenjve, edhe u mbushën me smirë; edhe vunë duart e tyre mbi apostujt, edhe i vunë në burgun publik. Po një engjëll i Zotit natën hapi dyert e burgut, edhe si i nxori jashtë, tha: Shkoni, edhe rrini e i flisni popullit në tempull gjithë fjalët e kësaj jete.

Veprat e Apostujve 12:1-11

Në atë kohë mbreti Herod vuri duart t'u bëjë keq disave prej kishës. Edhe vrau me thikë Jakovin, të vëllain e Joanit. Edhe kur pa se kjo është e pëlqyeshme për Judenjtë, vuri ndër mend të zërë edhe Pjetrin; edhe ishin ditët e të pabrumëtave. Edhe e zuri atë dhe e vuri në burg, edhe ua dorëzoi katër

palë ushtarëve prej katër vetash secila, që ta ruajnë, sepse pas pashkës donte ta nxirrte përpara popullit. Pjetri pra po ruhej në burg; po prej kishës bëhej pa pushim lutje për të. Edhe kur do ta nxirrte atë Herodi përpara, atë natë Pjetri lidhur me dy vargonj ishte duke fjetur në mes të dy ushtarëve, edhe rojat ruanin burgun përpara derës. Edhe ja një engjëll i Zotit erdhi papandehur, edhe dritë ndriti në atë vend; edhe si i ra Pjetrit në brinjë, e zgjoi, duke thënë: Ngrihu shpejt. Edhe i ranë vargonjtë nga duart. Edhe engjëlli i tha: Ngjishu, edhe mbath sandalet e tua; edhe ai bëri ashtu. Edhe i thotë: Vish rrobën tënde, edhe eja pas meje. Edhe ai si doli, i vinte pas, edhe nuk dinte se ishte e vërtetë kjo që bëhej prej engjëllit, po pandehte se sheh vegim. Edhe si kaluan rojen e parë e të dytë, erdhën në portën e hekurt që çon në qytet, e cila iu hap atyre prej vetiu; edhe si dolën, shkuan nëpër një rrugë; edhe përnjëherë engjëlli u nda nga ai. Edhe Pjetri, si erdhi në vete, tha: Tani e di me të vërtetë se Zoti dërgoi engjëllin e tij dhe më shpëtoi nga dora e Herodit dhe nga gjithë shpresa e popullit të Judenjve.

Деяния 5:12-20

Руками же Апостолов совершались в народе многие знамения и чудеса; и все единодушно пребывали в притворе Соломоновом. Из посторонних же никто не смел пристать к ним, а народ прославлял их. Верующих же более и более присоединялось к Господу, множество мужчин и женщин, так что выносили больных на улицы и полагали на постелях и кроватях, дабы хотя тень проходящего Петра осенит кого из них. Сходились также в Иерусалим многие из окрестных городов, неся больных и нечистыми духами одержимых, которые и исцелялись все. Первосвященник же и с ним все, принадлежавшие к ереси саддукейской, исполнились зависти, и наложили руки свои на Апостолов, и заключили их в народную темницу. Но Ангел Господень ночью отворил двери темницы и, выведя их, сказал: идите и, став в храме, говорите народу все сии слова жизни.

Деяния 12:1-11

В то время царь Ирод поднял руки на некоторых из принадлежащих к церкви, чтобы сделать им зло, и убил Иакова, брата Иоаннова, мечом. Видя же, что это приятно Иудеям, вслед за тем взял и Петра, --тогда были дни опресноков, -- и, задержав его, посадил в темницу, и приказал четверем четверицам воинов стеречь его, намереваясь после Пасхи вывести его к народу. Итак Петра стерегли в темнице, между тем церковь прилежно молилась о нем Богу. Когда же Ирод хотел вывести его, в ту ночь Петр спал между двумя воинами, скованный двумя цепями, и стражи у дверей стерегли темницу. И вот, Ангел Господень предстал, и свет осиял темницу. [Ангел], толкнув Петра в бок, пробудил его и сказал: встань скорее. И цепи упали с рук его. И сказал ему Ангел: опояшся и обуйся. Он сделал так. Потом говорит ему: надень одежду твою и иди за мною. [Петр] вышел и следовал за ним, не зная, что делаемое Ангелом было действительно, а думая, что видит видение. Пройдя первую и вторую стражу, они пришли к железным воротам, ведущим в город, которые сами собою отворились им: они вышли, и прошли одну улицу, и вдруг Ангела не стало с ним. Тогда Петр, придя в себя, сказал: теперь я вижу воистину, что Господь послал Ангела Своего и избавил меня из руки Ирода и от всего, чего ждал народ Иудейский.

Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (Ps. 94:1)

V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth. (Ps. 94:3)

Tone 4

V. The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. (Ps. 91:11)



The Gospel Reading

John 20:19-31 *(Gospel)*

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 15:17-16:2 *(Gospel, Saint)*

These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates Me hates My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father. But this happened that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me without a cause.' But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

Joanit 20:19-31

Në atë ditë pra, të parën e javës, si u ngrys, edhe dyert ishin mbyllur atje ku ishin mbledhur nxënësit nga frika e Judenjve, erdhi Jisui dhe ndenji në mes, edhe u thotë atyre: Paqe mbi ju. Edhe si tha këtë, u tregoi atyre duart dhe brinjën e tij. U gëzuan pra nxënësit kur panë Zotin. Edhe Jisui pra u tha atyre përsëri: Paqe mbi ju. Siç më dërgoi Ati, edhe unë ju dërgoj ju. Edhe si tha këtë, fryu dhe u thotë atyre: Merrni Frymë të Shenjtë. Kujtdo që t'u falni mëkatet, u janë falur atyre; kujtdo që t'ua mbani, u janë mbajtur. Po Thomai, një nga të dymbëdhjetët, që quhet Binjak, nuk ishte bashkë me ata, kur erdhi Jisui. Nxënësit e tjerë i thoshin pra: Pamë Zotin. Po ai u tha atyre: Në mos pafsha në duart e tij shenjën e gozhdëve, edhe të vë gishtin tim në shenjën e gozhdëve, edhe të vë gishtin në brinjën e tij, s'kam për të besuar. Edhe pas tetë ditësh përsëri ishin brenda nxënësit e tij, edhe Thomai me ata. Vjen Jisui, ndonëse dyert ishin mbyllur, dhe ndenji në mes e tha: Paqe mbi ju. Pastaj i thotë Thomait: Sill gishtin tënd këtu, edhe shih duart e mia; edhe sill dorën tënde e vëre në brinjën time, edhe mos u bëj i pabesë, po besëtar. Edhe Thomai u përgjigj, e i tha: Zoti im dhe Perëndia im. Jisui i thotë: Sepse më pe, besove. Lum ata që nuk panë dhe besuan. Edhe shumë çudira të tjera bëri Jisui përpara nxënësve të tij, të cilat nuk janë shkruar në këtë libër. Po këto u shkruan që të besoni se Jisui është Krishti, i Biri i Perëndisë, edhe duke besuar të keni jetë në emrin e tij.

Joanit 15:17-16:2

Këto ju urdhëroj që të doni njëri-tjetrin. Nëse ju urren bota, dijeni se mua më ka urreyer më parë se ju. Të ishite prej botës, bota do të donte të sajën; po meqenëse nuk jeni nga bota, por unë ju zgjodha ju nga bota, prandaj ju urren bota. Mbani mend fjalën që ju thashë unë juve, nuk ka shërbëtor më të madh se i zoti. Nëse më përdoqën mua, do t'ju përndjekin edhe ju; nëse ruajtën fjalën time, do të ruajnë edhe tuajën. Po të gjitha këto do t'jua bëjnë juve për emrin tim, sepse nuk e njohin atë që më dërgoi. Të mos kisha ardhur e të mos ju kisha folur atyre, nuk do të kishin mëkat; por tani nuk kanë ç'të thonë për mëkatin e tyre. Ai që më urren mua, urren edhe Atin tim. Të mos kisha bërë ndër ata punët që s'i ka bërë asnjë tjetër, nuk do të kishin mëkat; po tani edhe panë, edhe na urreyen edhe mua edhe Atin tim. Po kjo u bë që të përmbushet fjala që është shkruar në ligjin e tyre: "Më urreyen pa ndonjë shkak". Po kur të vijë Ngushëllimtari, të cilin do t'jua dërgoj unë juve prej Atit, Fryma e së vërtetës, që buron prej Atit, ai do të dëshmojë për mua. Po edhe ju dëshmoni, sepse që në fillim jeni bashkë me mua. Jua thashë juve këto, që të mos skandalizoheni. Do t'ju nxjerrin nga sinagogat; por vjen një orë, në të cilën kushdo që t'ju vrasë do të pandehë se i bën shërbim Perëndisë.

От Иоанна 20:19-31

В тот же первый день недели вечером, когда двери [дома], где собирались ученики Его, были заперты из опасения от Иудеев, пришел Иисус, и стал посреди, и говорит им: мир вам! Сказав это, Он показал им руки и ноги и ребра Свои. Ученики обрадовались, увидев Господа. Иисус же сказал им вторично: мир вам! как послал Меня Отец, [так] и Я посылаю вас. Сказав это, дунул, и говорит им: примите Духа Святаго. Кому простите грехи, тому простятся; на ком оставите, на том останутся. Фома же, один из двенадцати, называемый Близнец, не был тут с ними, когда приходил Иисус. Другие ученики сказали ему: мы видели Господа. Но он сказал им: если не увижу на руках Его ран от гвоздей, и не вложу перста моего в раны от гвоздей, и не вложу руки моей в ребра Его, не поверю. После восьми дней опять были в доме ученики Его, и Фома с ними. Пришел Иисус, когда двери были заперты, стал посреди них и сказал: мир вам! Потом говорит Фоме: подай перст твой сюда и посмотри руки Мои; подай руку твою и вложи в ребра Мои; и не будь неверующим, но верующим. Фома сказал Ему в ответ: Господь мой и Бог мой! Иисус говорит ему: ты поверил, потому что увидел Меня; блаженны невидевшие и уверовавшие. Много сотворил Иисус пред учениками Своими и других чудес, о которых не писано в книге сей. Сие же написано, дабы вы уверовали, что Иисус есть Христос, Сын Божий, и, веруя, имели жизнь во имя Его.

От Иоанна 15:17-16:2

Сие заповедаю вам, да любите друг друга. Если мир вас ненавидит, знайте, что Меня прежде вас возненавидел. Если бы вы были от мира, то мир любил бы свое; а как вы не от мира, но Я избрал вас от мира, потому ненавидит вас мир. Помните слово, которое Я сказал вам: раб не больше господина своего. Если Меня гнали, будут гнать и вас; если Мое слово соблюдали, будут соблюдать и ваше. Но все то сделают вам за имя Мое, потому что не знают Пославшего Меня. Если бы Я не пришел и не говорил им, то не имели бы греха; а теперь не имеют извинения во грехе своем. Ненавидящий Меня ненавидит и Отца моего. Если бы Я не сотворил между ними дел, каких никто другой не делал, то не имели бы греха; а теперь и видели, и возненавидели и Меня и Отца Моего. Но да сбудется слово, написанное в законе их: возненавидели Меня напрасно. Когда же приидет Утешитель, Которого Я пошлю вам от Отца, Дух истины, Который от Отца исходит, Он будет свидетельствовать о Мне; а также и вы будете свидетельствовать, потому что вы сначала со Мною. Сие сказал Я вам, чтобы вы не соблазнились. Изгонят вас из синагог; даже наступает время, когда всякий, убивающий вас, будет думать, что он тем служит Богу.

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

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:
“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice,
thy Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!
With Himself He has raised all the dead.”
Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!
The glory of the Lord has shone on thee.
Exult now, and be glad, O Zion!
Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,
in the Resurrection of thy Son!

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise thy God, O Zion! *(Ps. 147:1)*
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! *(Ps. 111:6)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

On Death and Resurrection in Christ

Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him.
Yesterday I died with Him; today I am made alive with Him.
Yesterday I was crucified with Him; today I am glorified with Him.
Yesterday I died with Him; today I am made alive with Him.
Yesterday I was buried with Him; today I am raised up with Him.
Let us offer to Him Who suffered and rose again for us ... ourselves, the possession most precious to God
and most proper.
Let us become like Christ, since Christ became like us.
Let us become Divine for His sake, since for us He became Man.
He assumed the worse that He might give us the better.
He became poor that by His poverty we might become rich.
He accepted the form of a servant that we might win back our freedom.
He came down that we might be lifted up.
He was tempted that through Him we might conquer.
He was dishonored that He might glorify us.
He died that He might save us.
He ascended that He might draw to Himself us, who were thrown down through the fall of sin.
Let us give all, offer all, to Him who gave Himself a Ransom and Reconciliation for us.
We needed an incarnate God, a God put to death, that we might live.
We were put to death together with Him that we might be cleansed.
We rose again with Him because we were put to death with Him.
We were glorified with Him because we rose again with Him.
A few drops of Blood recreate the whole of creation!

—*St Gregory the Theologian, Easter Orations*

PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i></p> <p>Newly-Departed Jonas, Newly Departed Evgeniy, Elmer, Quina, Alice, Roy, Robert, Leyla, Tamara</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the war in Ukraine: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p><i>April 9 - 29</i> Maxx Broeker (B) Kristina Nikolla (B) Margret Vesho (B) Belinda Mentzer (B) Rose Shaloka (B) Stuart Barenbaum (B) Giorgi Gamjashvili (N)</p>	<p><u>Church Lectionary</u></p> <p><u>Today</u> Acts 12:1-11 John 15:17-16:2 Acts 5:12-20 John 20:19-31</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i></p> <p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Tom, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angjeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Fr. Milorad, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena, Lester Jr., Luke and his family, Natalia, Otari, Lasha</p>	<p><u>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</u></p> <p>Mary & Hank Jaxheimer – health Tina Tsiadis - health</p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of</p>	<p><u>Monday</u> Acts 3:19-26 John 2:1-11</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Prayers In General</i></p> <p>Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Juliya and the child to be born of her, Isaac, Jemima and the child Maria, Ansley and the child to be born of her, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi,</p>	<p>Christ or the Birth-giver of God. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p><u>Tuesday</u> 1 Peter 5:6-14 Mark 6:7-13 Acts 4:1-10 John 3:16-21</p>
<p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the war in Ukraine.</p> <p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i></p> <p>Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p> <p>We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, Who in Your mercy and providential care, has called forth Archimandrite NIKODHIM to become a shepherd of wisdom and strength for our Albanian Archdiocese. We ask that You Bless Father NIKODHIM as he readies himself to become our future archpastor so he may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • care for our spiritual well-being, • unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith, • commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name. <p>Hear us and have mercy.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COFFEE HOUR</p> <p><u>April</u> 23 – Dellermann Family 30 – Hot Dog Sunday</p> <p><u>May</u> 07 – Shaloka – Memorial 14 – Dellermann Family 21 – 28 – Pat Lane</p> <p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<p><u>Wednesday</u> Acts 4:13-22 John 5:17-24</p> <p><u>Thursday</u> Acts 4:23-31 John 5:24-30</p> <p><u>Friday</u> Acts 5:1-11 John 5:30-6:2</p> <p><u>Saturday</u> Acts 5:21-33 John 6:14-27</p> <p><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></p> <p>Apr 23: Job 17-20 Apr 24: Job 21-24 Apr 25: Job 25-28 Apr 26: Job 29-33 Apr 27: Job 34-38 Apr 28: Job 39-42 Apr 29: Psalms 1-4</p>

Knowing God Face to Face!

April 17, 2023 · Fr. Barnabas Powell

Christ Is Risen!

What joy! What happiness! What a celebration! Words fail. Songs sung over and over again still cry out for more! Death is conquered by the Unconquered Son. O what news! The whole earth basks in the glow of the Victory of Christ over death! No more fear! No more night! The Son has dawned and there are no dead left in the grave!



It all sounds like so much wishful thinking in light of all our world's troubles, doubts, and chaos. Even we who say we believe struggle to reconcile our hymns with our everyday lives of struggle and pain. Especially when we see a world increasingly gripped by confusion and narcissistic madness.

And yet, here we are once again, in the Week called Bright or Renewal Week. No fasting. No more mourning. Christ is risen from the dead!

So, how do we keep this joyousness in the face of a society perilously close to a post-Christian period? How do we keep Bright Week bright?

Look at our Gospel Lesson for today in John 1:18-28:

No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, he did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" And he answered, "No." They said to him then, "Who are you? let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water; but among you stands one whom you do not know, even he who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." This took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Isn't it amazing on this Bright Monday the Church calls us to remember the beginning of the Lord's ministry? We are taken back to the start of it all as if the beginning holds the seeds of the fully grown fruit of His life. And it does! The way to keep Bright Week Bright is first by embracing that God wants to be known! And God wants to be known so much that He wraps Himself in our flesh and comes among us to show us Himself! God desires to be found. He has never been the One who is hiding!

Not only that, but He is going to show us Himself by enlisting us to help make Him known. He shows us St. John the Baptist as the Forerunner preparing the way for the Lord. St. John clears the Way for the Lord by calling all of us to repentance and a willing heart ready to embrace the Savior. And all of this work, this revelation, is not for God at all, but for us.

On this Bright Monday, we are still being challenged to know God in the face of His Son, our Lord Jesus. We are still being challenged to participate in making Him known to our world as well. And can we look

at our world and not see it desperately needs to know God? But the world won't be able to see Him unless His Body, the Church, accurately reflects His image to the world. The whole world is groaning under the weight of fear and death, and the only remedy for that fear and death lies within the joyous celebration of His Life-Giving Resurrection. How will the world, your world, come to know this God Who wants to be known if His Body hides Him away as if He were some fragile deity that was weak and in need of protection? How will they see Him if we hide Him? How will we explain our attempts to hide Him when He so obviously wants to be found by the whole world?

Today, let us keep a Christian Bright Week by making sure there is not one corner of our world where He isn't seen! Let's be wise enough to be like St. John and point away from ourselves and focus everyone's attention on Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord, the Head of the Body, the Image of the unseen God! Let's be Orthodox on Purpose!

Prayer For The Week

Though You went down into the tomb, You destroyed Hades' power, and You rose the victor, Christ God, saying to the myrrh-bearing women, "Hail!" and granting peace to Your disciples, You who raise up the fallen.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/faithencouraged/2023/04/knowning-god-face-to-face-bright-monday/>

April Events

April

- 23 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
1:30pm Blessing of the Graves
(Oakland)
- 26 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
- 30 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
1:30pm Blessing of the Graves
(Lawnview)

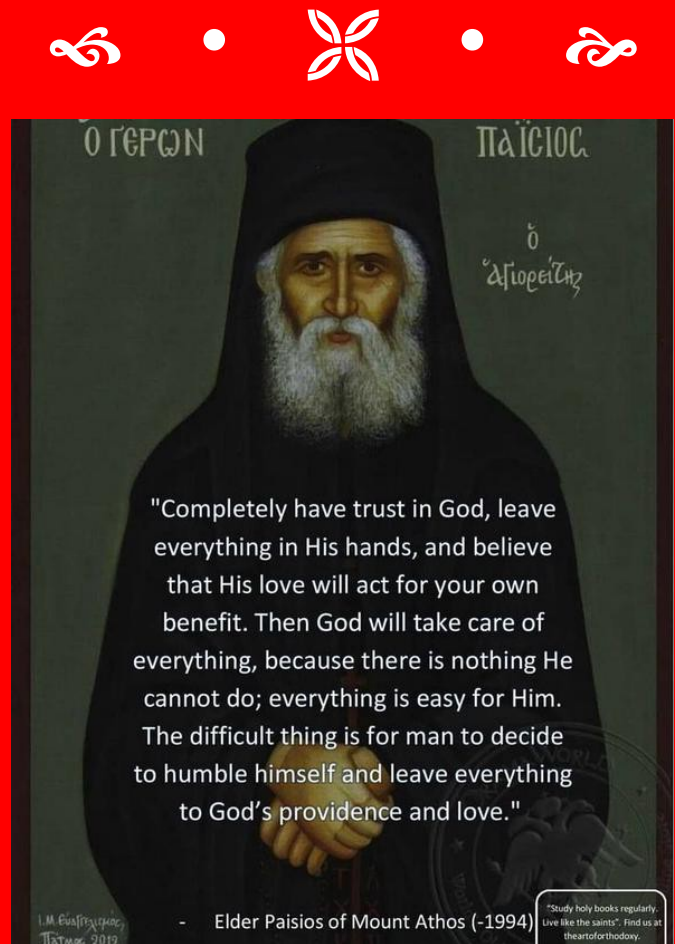
May

- 03 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
- 07 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
1:30pm Blessing of the Graves
(Magnolia)
- 10 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
- 14 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
1:30pm Blessing of the Graves
(Forrest Hills)
- 17 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
- 21 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 24 – 6:30pm Vespertal Liturgy *Feast of Ascension*
- 28 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 29 – Blessing of the Graves
(Fernwood)
- 31 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxcurchor1810>



The Necessity of Christian Friendships



In this age where secularism is on the rise and materialism has become a major distraction from spiritual pursuits, Christian friendships have never been more important. The pursuit of personal fulfillment, entertainment, worldly pleasure, and the acquisition of material goods, has become the dominant theme of our age. Families that once placed the life of the Church as the center of their week, have drifted away from God. Having made idols of worldly pleasures and pursuits, their family life has become focused on transitory goals, leaving them in a state of

spiritual bankruptcy. Parents who once brought their children to the temple, having lost their own way, watch those children stray far from faith.

Centered on worldly pursuits, we've allowed our spiritual life to be displaced by things that are transitory in nature, no longer thinking of the things of God. Spiritual illness has infected our youth like a virus, leaving them with little to sustain them when times get tough. The economic, political, and social instability of our age demands that we be spiritually fit, yet we give our youth virtually nothing that will help them through the hardships ahead. We continue on a path that remains focused on material gain and personal fulfillment. Hardly the elements that can sustain the human heart.

The life of a Christian has never been easy, but in an age that is proving to be hostile towards the things of God, Christian friendship is all the more important. We need each other. We need the encouragement that Christian friendship can give us as we face a world that has rejected Christ. The unity we have when we receive the Body and Blood of the Saviour during each and every celebration of the Divine Liturgy, gives us strength to withstand whatever may be coming. When all else has failed, and our culture, economy, and material world has fallen into ruin, only faith will have the power to sustain us.

It is only our faith, supported and strengthened by our fellowship in Christ, that will have the lasting power to keep us from falling into despair as our world enters into a darkness that seems unconquerable. Hiding from the reality of a world that has lost its way will in no wise make the future brighter. Lifting each other up, as we share our faith in the Christ Who came to make all things new, is the only hope we have. Let us not waste this life God has given us, but let us move forward in faith, together, knowing that ultimately, the gates of hell will not prevail against those who love God.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

OCMC DONATIONS

As you know our Parish has been collecting funds for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center ("OCMC") throughout Lent as a way for us to give and support something outside of ourselves. Through its many ministries, OCMC has shared the love of Christ offering a living witness of the Orthodox Christian Faith in more than 30 countries around the world. Each of these ministries works to build up the Church and help transform the lives of people who hunger and thirst for salvation through a vibrant Eucharistic life in Christ. For every \$600 collected and donated to OCMC we are able to support one Mission Priest for an entire year to bring the Word of Christ to one of these Communities.

Our collections and donations to date has raised just over \$1,200 and through your generosity we are actually able to support 2 of these Mission Priests for an entire year. As we want our Parish's pledge of support for two priests to be an ongoing commitment from year to year, we appeal to you to consider making an additional one time pledge whether it's \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50 or \$100. We have anonymous donors who are willing to match donations over the \$1,200 level and will serve as the foundation for the 2nd year's commitment of support for the 2 Mission Priests.

We are looking to wrap up this OCMC Lenten Collection by April 30th so we can send along the donation to the OCMC. Donations can be given to Donna Bacon or Jim Schaeffer in person - earmarked for the OCMC. Or mailed to the Church.

In Christ,
Your Church Council