

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church



SERVICES

See last page for this week's coming services

**Today: Matins (Orthros)
8:45 AM**

**Children's Sunday School
9:30 AM | Divine Liturgy
10:00 AM.**

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

April 21, 2019 – Palm Sunday

Today Christ enters the path not only of His sufferings but of that dreadful loneliness which enshrouds Him during all the days of Passion week. The loneliness begins with a misunderstanding; the people expect that the Lord's entry into Jerusalem will be the triumphant procession of a political leader, of a leader who will free his people from oppression, from slavery, from what they consider godlessness – because all paganism or idol-worship is a denial of the living God. The loneliness will develop further into the dreadful loneliness of not being understood even by His disciples. At the Last Supper when the Savior talks to them for the last time, they will be in constant doubt as to the meaning of His words.

And later when He goes into the Garden of Gethsemane before the fearful death that is facing Him, His closest disciples, Peter, John and James - whom He chose to go with Him, fall asleep, depressed, tired, hopeless. The culmination of this loneliness will be Christ's cry on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Abandoned by men, rejected by the people of Israel He encounters the extreme of forsakenness and dies without God, without men, alone, with only His love for God and His love for mankind, dying for its sake and for God's glory.

The beginning of Christ's Passion is today's triumphal procession. The people expected a king, a leader - and they found the Savior of their souls. Nothing embitters a person so much as a lost, a disappointed hope; and that explains why people who could receive Him like that, who witnessed the raising of Lazarus, who saw Christ's miracles and heard His teaching, admired every word, who were ready to become His disciples as long as He brought victory, broke away from Him, turned their backs on Him and a few days later shouted, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." And Christ spent all those days in loneliness, knowing what was in store for Him, abandoned by everyone except the Mother of God, who stood silently by, as She had done throughout her life, participating in His tragic ascent to the Cross; She who had accepted the Annunciation, the Good Tidings, but who also accepted in silence Simeon's prophecy that a sword would pierce her heart.

During the coming days we shall be not just remembering, but be present at Christ's Passion. We shall be part of the crowd surrounding Christ and the disciples and the Mother of God. As we hear the Gospel readings, as we listen to the prayers of the Church, as one image after another of these days of the Passion passes before our eyes, let each one of us ask himself the question, "Where do I stand, who am I in this crowd? A Pharisee? A Scribe? A traitor, a coward? Who? Or do I stand among the Apostles?" But they too were overcome by fear. Peter denied Him thrice, Judas betrayed Him, John, James and Peter went to sleep just when Christ most needed human love and support; the other disciples fled; no one remained except John and the Mother of God, those who were bound to Him by the kind of love which fears nothing and is ready to share in everything.

Once more let us ask ourselves who we are and where we stand, what our position in this crowd is. Do we stand with hope, or despair, or what? And if we stand with indifference, we too are part of that terrifying crowd that surrounded Christ, shuffling, listening, and then going away; as we shall go away from church. The Crucifix will be standing here on Thursday and we shall be reading the Gospel about the Cross, the Crucifixion and death - and then what will happen? The Cross will remain standing, but we shall go away for a rest, go home to have supper, to sleep, to prepare for the fatigues of the next day. And during this time Christ is on the Cross, Christ is in the tomb. How awful it is that, like the disciples in their day,

we are not able to spend one night, one hour with Him. Let us think about this, and if we are incapable of doing anything, let us at least realize who we are and where we stand, and at the final hour turn to Christ with the cry, the appeal of the thief, Remember me, Lord, in Thy Kingdom! Amen. – Met. Anthony of Sourozh
(from tokandylaki.blogspot.com)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 4:4-9

Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord *is* at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 12:1-18

At that time, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, who would betray Him, said, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed *is* He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!" Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming,

sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him. Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

From each work and deed of Christ, our Savior, the magnitude of His love for us is apparent, and the graces of salvation are splendidly unfolded to us; and as the abundant sweetness of joy is distilled into men's souls, it wipes away the bitter pollution of ancestral sin. The memory and topic of the passion and the burial is, however, an awful and inexpressible matter, but inasmuch as it is the end of the Incarnation, and anchors us, so to speak, in the very harbor of re-creation, and sounds forth in clear trumpet tones the Creator's providence concerning us, so the feeling it arouses is neither simple nor unmixed, but it both overwhelms us and revives us with courage; it grieves and gladdens, the former by the passion and the death, the latter by the destruction of the passions and the slaying of death - which things are marvelously wrought for our resurrection in a manner surpassing words....

Pleasant to see is Lazarus called up from the grave and rising on the fourth day, and the hymn of the branch-bearing children, perfected for the King of glory. Yet not so pleasant as a passion that brings in rich measure freedom from passions, as a death blooming with the beauty of immortality; not so pleasant as Hell despoiled, as death slain, as tombs emptied out, and the Lord through His own struggles winning victory over all. Indeed, for the Maintainer and Maker of the universe to have been hanged incarnate on the cross, to have been buried in the entrails of the earth, to have visited Hell and been numbered among the dead, is terrible even to hear, frightful even for angels to conceive, and, while this is being performed, it is unbearable to the whole creation, even to that which is inanimate. But in the same measure that this has left nothing to exceed it in wonder and terror, not even capable of conception by one's mind, so do mercy and Providence open out for us to an unutterable degree. The veil of the temple is rent, and the sun, charioteer of the day, is plunged into deep darkness, and the earth takes fright and quakes, affected by the sadness of the passion. But also tombs become pregnant and bring forth the dead, and the palaces of Hell are emptied and abolished, despoiled by the Sufferer's victory, while the human race - this was the Lord's goal, for which He endured sufferings and death - is delivered from that bitter and ancient domination.

...Who shall tell the mighty acts of the Lord? Who shall cause all His praises to be heard? Nails are piercing the Lord's hands, and they are tearing up, roots and all, the offshoots of our wickedness which had become implanted in our members, and by which human kind was laid waste and corrupted. A crown of thorns is bound round His head, and that encircling and painful collar of the ancient curse is cast off our neck. His side is transfixed with a spear, and the fount of our salvation opens up and is constantly widened, as blood and water, the cleanser of the universal transgression, well from the wound even after death. Who shall tell the mighty acts of the Lord? Who shall cause all his praises to be heard? A disgraceful death has delivered the world from shame, and, receiving in His face the spittle of the Jews, He who has generated the drops of dew, and counts the drops of the sea, drains the flood of sin. Who shall tell the mighty acts of the Lord? Who shall cause all His praises to be heard? The Lord is covered with a tomb, but the Lord's providence for all things is not shut in with it, nor does He make the sin of His insulters an occasion for universal destruction. No, the Creator dwells in a tomb, yet steers the universe in goodly order. For it was not to wreak disaster that He willingly endured the cross, death, blows, spitting and every torment, but in order to deliver humankind from it. The Lord is covered with a tomb, and a throng of ungrateful slaves have made the tomb secure and are sitting around.

They are astounded even as they see the Creator dead; they are astounded indeed, but they remain unconverted in their ingratitude; for the hardening of the mind is a terrible thing in that it does not even distinguish what is at one's feet and most easy from what is most difficult and obscure. They are astounded, but they do not sing glory, and though they guard Him like a king, these wretched men insult Him like a criminal. They have made Him secure like a treasure, and while seeing others drawing therefrom through faith the riches of salvation, they themselves, oppressed by extreme poverty, miserably end their life in the ruin of unbelief. They know the resurrection, but are hiding it; for they have betrayed truth through avarice, and they have exchanged for falsehood what they have seen with their own eyes.

...How does He suffer His body to be wrapped in grave-clothes Who has spread out the vault of heaven as a much-famed wonder? How could He, the Life and Resurrection of all men, have submitted to the laws of death, even though He abolished its power in His own flesh? How does He, Who before all time was jointly enthroned with the Father, become a joint-dweller with the dead? Oh, the Lord's graces for our sake! Oh, the power of Him who became dead! O tomb, who are the emptying out of tombs, and the destruction of Hell, and the slaying of death, and the much-sung bridal-chamber of our resurrection! The wedding-chamber of the Creation begot marriage, nourished the expectation of children, and

housed the husbandmen of the human race, but it had sorrows sprouting underneath, and death installed close, by which the flower of life was spoiled, and happiness in life was made uncertain; while the wedding-chamber of the tomb, which houses the Author Himself both of our creation and of our re-creation, does not put forth the roots of children, which quickly wither away together with their offshoot, nor does it pledge to us a life and an existence harassed by death, but it joins virginity in wedlock to human nature, giving angelic life free scope on earth, and restores to our ancestors, who had defaced the Lord's image by their passions, that bridal and pristine beauty. Having consecrated to the lot of men a sorrow-less and untroubled life, it has made the gift of immortality above passions and corruption.

The ark of Noah, when the common deluge had poured from the heavenly founts, preserved its occupants as the seed of a second world, but kept them for a second experience of sorrows, the evils of life. While this work-saving ark of the Savior's body, which has treasured up the Dispenser of life and Giver of joy, preserves human kind by lifting it above spiritual shipwreck. Having made the tombs empty of their dead, it pours forth the inexhaustible grace of the resurrection, and transporting us to the kingdom of heaven, it guards and keeps us forever away from the experience of further evils. The tabernacle made for Moses had a pot and manna and a lantern and a table and the ordinances of the Law engraved on stone tablets; while this life-giving and venerable tabernacle does not pride itself on shadows and forms, the symbols of worship according to the Law, but having served the Lawgiver and common Lord Himself for a three-day burial, it has revealed the divine and great mystery of grace, after extending piety, without itself moving, to the ends of the world. Even if it does not hold the treasure (for He is risen as He had willed), it has not been depleted of the riches of grace, for it keeps an inexhaustible store of miracles: it cures diseases, drives away sickness, routs demons, sanctifies souls, proclaims the folly of the Jews, preaches the Lord's resurrection with visible signs, and confirms the abyss of His mercy on our behalf. Wondrous too was the manger at Bethlehem which received my Lord, wrapped in swaddling clothes after the manner of babes, as He had just emerged from a virgin's womb and entered human life. Yet the tomb exhibits a far greater miracle: for in the former the mystery of Christ's incarnation was taking its beginning, as the Godhead was already being covered with flesh; in the latter, however, is accomplished the end, and the purpose of God's advent - our perfection and re-creation - is completed, gleaming brilliantly and illuminating everything with the flash of the resurrection. At the former, the magi from the East offer gifts to the new-born; at the latter, the peoples of East and West and the other ends of the world, nations and tongues and every generation, bring to Him who has risen from

the dead not myrrh and frankincense and gold, the produce of inanimate earth, but they hand over to Him, inasmuch as He is the universal King and Creator of all, their very bodies and souls, exhaling the fragrance of faith and bedecked with the gold of piety. The songs of angels sounded over the manger, while by the tomb, too, angels were present and caused amazement. At the former, as if hinting at the condescension of the new-born, they struck up songs of "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, and good will toward men" (Lk. 2:14); while at the latter, without any veil or riddle, they sound forth the power of the risen One in a loud and clear voice, crying out and saying, "He is not here; for he is risen as He said. Tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead," (Mt. 28:6-7) and "Do not be afraid; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; He is risen; He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him," (Mk 16:6) and "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." (Lk 24:5-6) Later, the Lord Himself and Author of the Resurrection says, "Woman, why do you weep? Whom do you seek? Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God" (Jn. 20:15,17); and, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." (Mt. 28:18)

Let us, too, willingly bring the gifts of victory to Him who became man for us, and suffered and was buried for our sake, and delivered us from the ancient domination of hell, as He is rising from the dead and winning victory over all. You who pride yourselves on your wealth offer the care and consolation of the poor; you who are oppressed by poverty, patience and gratitude; those in power and authority, the sparing of the goods of others, protecting the wronged, and governing your subjects mildly as fellow-countrymen, instead of being haughtily arrogant towards them as to aliens, that you may yourselves show that this power and authority was in truth appointed and granted to you by God, and that you may not, through deeds that lead you into iniquity, arm the tongues of the many against their Creator who has appointed your authority. Those who are numbered as subjects, offer the striving to be properly and humanely governed, instead of the desire to exhaust by continuous disorder the patience of the rulers, foolishly making their clemency an excuse for negligence. Those who still draw the yoke of wedlock, offer concord in good will and modesty; for thus may wedlock preserve its honor. Those who have divorced themselves from this libidinous need, freed as from some painful bondage, direct yourselves toward the path of temperance. Those who have overcome these things, offer virginity as your oil, and that with a humble heart, that you may not be disappointed of being called wise, and your lamp be not dimmed by the spirit of conceit. Priests and shepherds, offer the watchful care of your flock, exhibiting yourselves as models to those you tend, and drawing them to virtue by example rather than by verbal exhortations. Laymen, offer obedience

and ready compliance with Paul, who testifies saying, "Obey those who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch over your souls." (Heb. 13:17) And all of us by all means let us bear fruit in mutual love and unhesitating faith in Him and piety, without which we would not be able to be enrolled not only among the disciples, but not even among the servants or the attendants.

Let Christ our God, who has despoiled Hell and slain death, and raised us along with Himself, adorn all the more with piety and the other virtues him whom He has granted to reign on earth in His stead, and show him worthy of the heavenly kingdom, and along with him all of us, by the intercessions of our most holy Lady, the Mother of God, and of all the saints. Amen.

– St. Photius the Great, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Homily 11* (delivered on Holy Saturday, year unknown - Ed.)

Also Commemorated Today: Hieromartyr Januarius & Companions

Hieromartyr Januarius Bishop of Benevento, and the deacons Proculus, Sossius and Faustus, Desiderius the Reader, Euty chius and Acution suffered martyrdom for Christ about the year 305 during the persecution ordered by the emperor Diocletian (284-305).



They arrested Saint Januarius and led him to trial before Menignus, the governor of Campagna (central Italy). Because of his firm confession of Christianity, they threw the saint into a red-hot furnace. But like the Babylonian youths, he came out unharmed. Then at Menignus's command, they stretched him out on a bench and beat him with iron rods until his bones were exposed.

In the crowd were Deacon Faustus and the Reader Desiderius, who wept at the sight of their bishop's suffering. The pagans surmised that they were Christians, and threw them into prison with the hieromartyr Januarius, in the city of Puteolum. At this prison were two deacons who had been jailed for confessing Christ: Saints Sossius and Proculus, and also two laymen, Saints Euty chius and Acution.

On the following morning they led out all the martyrs into the circus to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch them. Menignus claimed that all the miracles were due to sorcery on the part of the Christians, and immediately he became blinded and cried out for help. The gentle hieromartyr Januarius prayed

for his healing, and Menignus recovered his sight. The torturer's blindness of soul, however, was not healed. He accused the Christians of sorcery, and ordered the martyrs beheaded before the walls of the city (+ 305).

Christians from surrounding cities took up the bodies of the holy martyrs for burial, and those of each city took one, in order to have an intercessor before God. The inhabitants of Neapolis (Naples) took the body of the hieromartyr Januarius. With the body, they also collected his dried blood. Since the fifteenth century, the blood liquifies when the container is placed near another relic, believed to be the martyr's head. Many miracles proceeded from the relics of the hieromartyr Januarius. During an eruption of Vesuvius around 431, the inhabitants of the city prayed to Saint Januarius to help them. The lava stopped, and did not reach the city. (*from oca.org*)

Parish News

❖ Schedule of services for the coming week (**please carefully note the times**):

- Today, we will celebrate Bridegroom Matins after social. Please stay if you can.
- On Wednesday evening, we will celebrate the service of Holy Unction at **7 PM**.
- On Thursday, we will celebrate the Institution of the Eucharist (DL) at **8 AM**.
- Also on Thursday, we will read the Passion Gospels at **7 PM**.
- On Friday, we will chant the Royal Hours of Great Friday at **9 AM**.
- Also on Friday, we will commemorate the Burial Service of our Lord at **7 PM**.
- On Saturday, we will celebrate the Harrowing of Hell (DL) at **9 AM**.
- Also on Saturday, we will celebrate Resurrection Matins at **8 PM**.
- On Holy Pascha, the only service will be Divine Liturgy at **10:00 AM**.
- On Bright Monday, we will celebrate a Divine Liturgy at **8:00 AM**.

On Holy Pascha, we will have a potluck feast after liturgy. Please contact Kelsey Moore to coordinate what to bring.

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Santiago Alzugaray, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Alexander Shostko, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectaros and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)