

PALM SUNDAY -- FLOWERY SUNDAY



Icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend



Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.

Although yesterday, Lazarus Saturday, marks the beginning of the Great and Holy Week because it prefigures the revelation that life is immortal, this weekend we remember how Jesus, Our Savior and Lord, voluntarily went into Jerusalem to face the greatest challenge of His life, His own death. He humbly made His entry seated, not on a great warhorse, but a simple colt. If He had been power-hungry and self-centered, He could have rallied those who greeted Him to cause a great rebellion. He did not! Rather, He taught us how to meet the challenges of life in order to derive the most benefit from them.

Our readings are taken from Paul's letter to the Philippians and John's Gospel. He writes: *Live according to what you have learned and accepted, what you have heard me say and seen me do. Then will the God of peace be with you.* Paul tried, after his conversion, to live like Jesus.

Before John relates the event of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem, he includes the story of how Judas, the traitor, belittled Mary for anointing Jesus' feet with a costly perfume. He exclaimed that the perfume could have brought three hundred silver pieces, and the money given to the poor. John then includes an aside: *he did not say this out of concern for the poor, but because he was a thief*). What a great difference between the behaviors of Mary and Judas! We must ask ourselves: *Who am I more like, Mary or Judas? Am I more concerned about things or others? Do I pretend to be someone I am not, only saying I care for the poor but really don't?*

Then, of course, John includes also the reaction of the Pharisees. He says that they: *remarked to one another, "See, there is nothing you can do! The whole world has run after him."* Such absolute jealousy.

During this coming week we will hear again how Jesus dealt with all the various feelings that He encountered: *hatred, jealousy, betrayal, kindness, cruelty, greed, fear* and a host more. In all instances He kept His own counsel and did not allow the passions of others to change His behavior. He realized that His feelings were His own and chose to respond to all these things with one passion: LOVE. There is much we can learn during this coming week if we open our hearts and minds to God's revelation through Jesus.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

Our Great and Holy Week begins this year in a unique way, we celebrate both the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem and the Feast of the Annunciation (*Mary's conception of Jesus*). As I searched back in my collection of Proper Prayers, I discovered that in the 51 years of my priesthood I only celebrated this combination of feasts once before. They are both major feasts of our Church and we do not transfer their celebration to some other day, but rather, we combine their observance. We pray in this fashion:

Today is the fountain-head of our salvation and the revelation of an eternal mystery: the Son of God becomes a virgin's Son.... and also,

In heaven You were seated upon a throne and on earth You rode a colt and also, O Mother of God, we your servants sing a hymn of thanks to you, hymn of triumph to a valiant leader....

Jesus, like His mother Mary, placed His total trust in God and, therefore, was able, like her, to embrace life's challenges with nobility and dignity. When you think about it, Jesus was born into a strong "religious" family: Zechariah and Elizabeth (John the

Baptizer's Parents), Joachim and Anna (Mary's parents), Jacob and Heli (Joseph's Parents), and, of course, Mary and Joseph. Jesus, as a man, was able to respond to life the way He did because He had a host of relatives who were committed to their belief in God. Which reminds us that if we want our children to have a good set

of morals and live as compassionate people who do incorporate love of neighbors in their lives, then we have to provide them with a strong religious background - provide them with a family that truly lives in accord with their beliefs. Children will imitate those around them, especially their families, if their families are sincere

about their beliefs and the way that they choose to live.

God choose to come into a family that had strong religious beliefs. This made it impossible for Him to accomplish this miracle. Jesus was able to trust in God's love even at His darkest hour because He had learned how to trust in God from His family. We do well to think about this and ask ourselves: *How do children become selfish and self-centered?*



Our Worship of God Through the Great Fast

The first part of Great and Holy Week presents us with an array of themes based chiefly on the last days of Jesus' earthly life. The story of the Passion, as told and recorded by the Evangelists, is preceded by a series of incidents located in Jerusalem and a collection of parables, sayings and discourses centered on Jesus' divine sonship, the kingdom of God, the Parousia, and Jesus' castigation of the hypocrisy and dark motives of the religious leaders. The observances of the first three days of Great Week are rooted in these incidents and sayings. The three days constitute a single liturgical unit. They have the same cycle and system of daily prayer. The Scripture lessons, commemorations, hymns and ceremonials that make up the festal elements in the respective services of the cycle highlight significant aspects of salvation history, by calling to mind the events that anticipated the Passion and by proclaiming the inevitability and significance of the Parousia.

Matins (Morning Prayer) of each of these days is called the Service of the Bridegroom. The name comes from the central figure in the well-known parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). The title Bridegroom suggests the intimacy of love. It is not without significance that the kingdom of God is compared to a bridal feast and a bridal chamber. The Christ of



the Passion is the divine Bridegroom of the Church. The imagery connotes the final union of the Lover and the beloved. The title Bridegroom also suggests the Parousia. In the patristic tradition, the aforementioned parable is related to the Second Coming; and is associated with the need for spiritual vigilance and preparedness, by which we are enabled to keep the divine commandments and receive the blessings of the age to come. The *tropar* "Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night...", which is sung at the beginning of Matins of Great Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, relates the worshipping community to that essential expectation: watching and waiting for the Lord, who will come again to judge the living and the dead.

While we don't serve Matins each day, it is good to think, during this time, of Jesus being our Bridegroom. This fact should spark many thoughts in those who dare to think about this.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE

Tuesday, March 27th @ 7:00 PM

This will be a part of the
Presanctified Liturgy

SPECIAL HOLY WEEK SERVICE

Holy Saturday - 9 AM
Jerusalem Matins

Our Deacon Candidate, Len Mier, will be serving Jerusalem Matins on Holy Saturday Morning. This is a very beautiful "mourning" service that is very traditional. I used to service this Saturday mornings when I didn't have two parishes to serve. If you have never heard these prayers, you might want to join Len.

VIGIL AT THE GRAVE

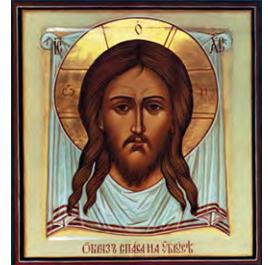
Friday 6:30 PM - Saturday 5:30 PM

Help us keep Vigil at the Lord's Grave. Sign up so that we know that there will be someone in the Church during the hours. The doors are kept locked at night. So if you come and the doors are locked, please knock loudly. More than one person can sign up/hour. The more the better. Thank You!

Can you not watch at least one hour?

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As we enter into this Great and Holy Week of 2018, it dawned on me that perhaps *holiness* is directly connected to how we think about what the Church will celebrate



during this coming week. Holiness, right not to me, means feeling and knowing that the events we relive with Jesus were and are real. They are indicators of life and the choices we have in life. We can be loyal, or we can be a betrayer. We can be supportive of others or we can be deserters. We can be cruel or we can be kind. We can love or we can hate. We can be cruel or we can be kind. All of these are within our power to do. It is all a matter of choice. The one thing that strikes me is that if I pick and choose when to love or to hate, I reduce my overall ability to love. Love, like all emotions, become stronger when I turn them into habits - that is when I always choose the one over the other. I believe that when we look at the life of Jesus, He always chose love over hate. He always chose kindness over cruelty.

True *holiness* begins when I make a decision to live

(Continued on page 8)

Some Special Prayers We Pray This Great and Holy Week

Great Monday

Today the Holy Passion shines forth upon the world with the light of salvation; for Christ in His love hastens to His sufferings. He who holds all things in the hollow of His hand consents to be hung upon the Tree, that He may save mankind.

Great Tuesday

Brethren, let us love the Bridegroom and prepare our lamps with care, shining with the virtues and right faith; that, like the wise virgins of the Lord, we may be ready to enter with Him into the wedding feast. For God the Bridegroom grants to all the crown incorruptible.

Great Wednesday

O Son of the Virgin, the harlot knew You to be God and she prayed to You lamenting, for she had committed sins worthy of tears. 'Loose me from my debt,' she cried, "as I unloosed my hair. Show love to her who loves You, though rightly she deserves Your hatred, and with the Publican I shall proclaim You, O Benefactor Who loves mankind.

Great Thursday

Instructing His friends in the Mysteries, the true Wisdom of God prepares a table that gives food to the soul, and He mingles for the faithful the cup of the wine of life eternal. Let us approach with reverence and cry aloud: Christ our God is greatly glorified.

Great and Good Friday

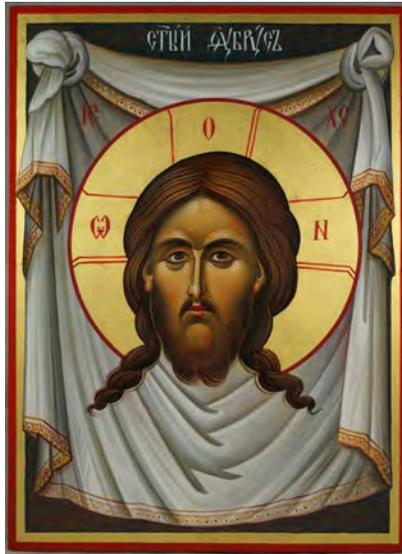
A dread and marvelous mystery we see come to pass this day. He whom none may touch is seized; He who looses Adam from the curse is bound. He who tries the hearts and inner thoughts of man is unjustly brought to trial. He who closed the abyss is shut in prison. He before whom the powers of heaven stand with trembling, stands before Pilate; the Creator is struck by the hand of His creature. He Who comes to judge the living and dead is condemned to the Cross; the Destroyer of hell is enclosed in a tomb. O You Who endured all these things in Your tender love, Who saved all men from the curse, O longsuffering Lord, glory to You.

Holy Saturday

Do not weep for me, O Mother, even though you have seen lying in the tomb the Son to whom you gave birth in a wondrous manner; for I shall arise and be glorified; and in my divine glory, I shall forever exalt the faithful who love you and sing the praises of Your glory.

O Mother, the earth covers Me by my own will; but the guardians of Hades shudder to see Me wearing the bloody garment of punishment; for, on the Cross, I have struck down my enemies; I shall arise as God and you shall be exalted.

We truly have the most beautiful hymnology in the entire Christian world.



The Great and Holy Week in Our Church

One of the unique traditions within our Church is the use of the Holy Shroud (*Plaschanytsia*) on the Great and Good Friday. The Shroud, as it is used today in the Great Friday and Saturday services, is of comparatively recent date, for it is scarcely several hundreds of years old. Its origin dates back, however, to the time of Christ's death. The Holy Shroud is nothing but the winding sheet in which Christ's dead body was wrapped when it was laid in the tomb. The Holy Shroud, as it is used in today in our Church was unknown to the Eastern Church for about fifteen hundred years.

Christians of the Church of Jerusalem in the first centuries on Good Friday, venerated the wood of the cross which was discovered at the beginning of the fourth century by St. Helena.

The custom of venerating the Holy Cross later spread to the Greek Church. This is seen in the service of the Twelve Holy Gospels.

Under the influence of the Eastern Church, the veneration of the Holy Cross in the middle of the seventh century reached to the Western Church where it is still practiced.

During the Divine Liturgy the Eastern Church covers the holy gifts with a large rectangular veil, which is called the "aer". This was later developed into the "antimension" which contains the relics of saints sealed into the cloth with wax.

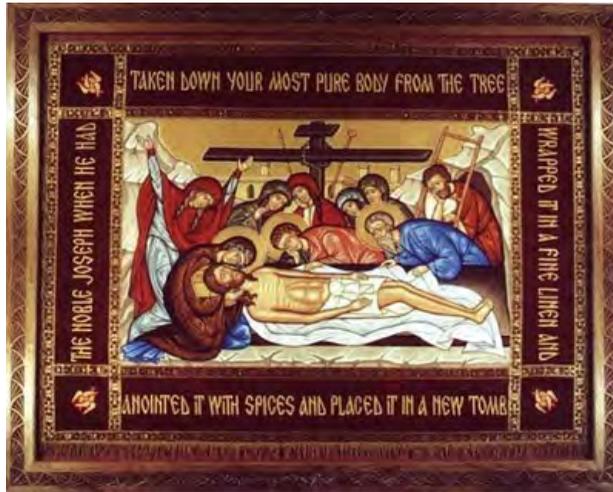
In the sixteenth century there appears among our people the custom of carrying the "aer"-shroud with the

icon of the dead Christ during the entrance of the Holy Gospel during Matins.

This was later developed into the larger Shroud that we now use on the Great and Good Friday and which we venerate. The veneration of

the Holy Shroud in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries because a general universal practice and custom of the entire Eastern Church.

This is one of our most beautiful traditions. Keeping VIGIL at the tomb of Christ is truly one of the most, spiritually rewarding practices that we have. It is like joining Mary, His Mother, and others who came to His tomb after His death and sat vigil. They, however, did not know of His Resurrection. They came, out of love, to remember Him and Who He was. Will you sit VIGIL?



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, March 25 - Flowery/Palm Weekend - Festal Tone
10:00 AM + Joseph, Ann and Sharon

GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

Holy Monday, March 26 – Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel

No Service Scheduled

Holy Tuesday, March 27 - Procopius, Venerable Father
7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy & Communal Penance

Holy Wednesday, March 28 - Basil, Venerable Father

No Service Scheduled

Holy Thursday, March 29 - Basil of Ancyra, Priest-Martyr
7:00 PM - Vespers Liturgy & Holy Anointing

Great and Good Friday, March 30
5:00 PM - Vespers and Burial - Parish Vigil Begins

Holy Saturday, March 31
1 to 2:00 PM Confessions; 5:30 PM Parish Vigil Ends

THE GREAT DAY - Easter, Sunday, April 1
8:00 AM + Resurrection Matins and Divine Liturgy
Blessing of Food After Divine Liturgy

St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

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LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
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Leonard Mier
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Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

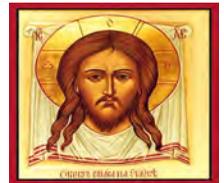
Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

like Jesus. This means making a very conscious decision of who I want to be as a human being. It means making a conscious effort to choose how I respond to life and to others. It means living in a very conscious way, always thinking before I react and making a conscious choice how I will react.

To live this way, however, means that I realize that my reactions and feelings ARE MY OWN. No one can make me feel what I feel. We may perceive that others are not nice to us, but our reaction to their rudeness is OUR REACTION. No one can make us feel what we do. You can't blame your feelings on to others.

Look to Jesus! See how He lived!



<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

The Great and Holy Week in Our Church

The Great and Holy Week in Our Church institutes the sanctity of the whole Church calendar year. Its center of commemorations and inspiration is Pascha (Easter), wherein the glorified Resurrection of Christ is celebrated. In fact, every Sunday is dedicated to the Resurrection of the Lord. The Eight Tones that are used during regular time are a repetition of the Eight Tones of Bright Week, the Week beginning with Pascha and ending with that of the Anti-Pasch when we remember: "Doubting Thomas".

During Great and Holy Week we are invited to enter into the experiences of the last days of the Lord's Life not as spectators but as participants in the commemoration and enactment of the Divine Acts that changed the world. As we believe, there is no time in God's dimension of existence and therefore all these events we recall are actually taking place right now. We do not just remember past historical events. We remember events that changed the world and are, hopefully, also changing us right now.

A Christian must always be well-trained and well-armed to fight against those who try to corrupt his spirit and

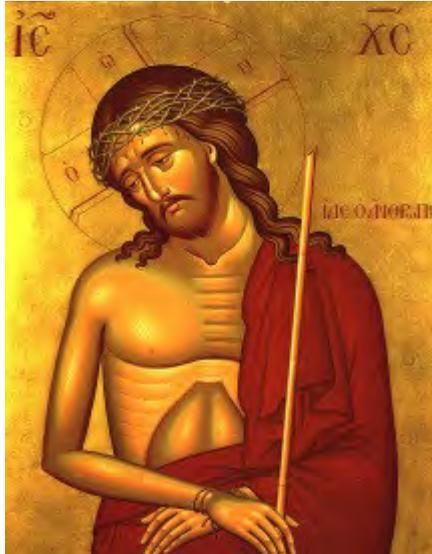
take away his freedom. The Christian must keep his own spiritual kingdom intact and his freedom of religion and uprightness vivid in order to be a part of the Kingdom of God, where the compassion of the Lord and His Resurrection will be experienced. There is no other place where the Kingdom of

God can be expanded except the heart of man; and there is no other gate whereby we can enter the Kingdom but that of personal change (*Metanoia*). Jesus continued the teaching expressed by John the Baptizer: *Change your heart and mind for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

And what are we called to change? Our behavioral responses

to the events and circumstances of life and our fellowmen. As we live this week with Jesus, we see how He choose to respond. Unconditional love and forgiveness were at the forefront of His responses to the events which enveloped His life.

The entire Great and Holy Week leads us to the very pinnacle of God's revelation to us about our human life, namely that it is immortal and the way to prepare ourselves to experience this immortality, is to attempt to imitate Jesus, Our Savior and Lord.

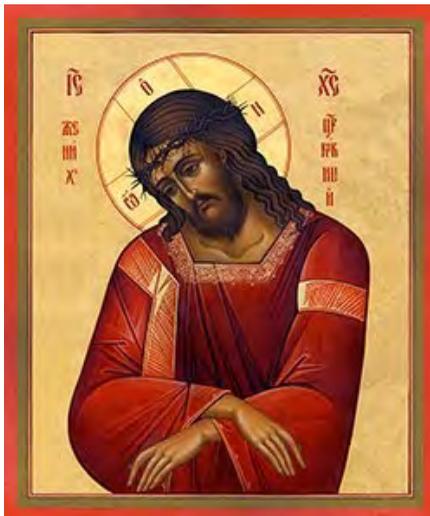


The Courage to Pray

One can truly say that Great and Holy Week is truly an intense time of prayer, that is of course, if we become fully involved in the Church's services. The prayer, for example, on Great and Good Friday are some of the most profound in our entire liturgical life. It is important as we pray during this week that we realize that our prayer expresses much more than we are conscious of. It is an attachment and consent to be what we are in Christ. Our whole being is involved. Our true being is a gift of God in Christ, in communion with Him. We should accept it as a gift. We should live in that freedom which is the recognition of that gift of love by which we are all that we are. We should see everything that happens to us in the light of our life in Christ, then we will understand it properly. We should accept it meekly, believing and accepting the mystery. What we are in Christ is hidden from us, but we come to it by an act of faith, which is contained in the faith of the Church. We find our unfailing support in the faith of the church, with which we are in communion.

While this is true, we must also realize that what is of greatest importance is our relationship with God, through Christ in the Spirit. In the Spirit means that we join ourselves with Christ and, moved by the Spirit, make every attempt to live like Christ.

In the Great and Holy Week we clearly see how Jesus lived. We see how He approached life, especially the challenges of His life. We see His humility, His nobility and His unwillingness to let the events of His life change how He decided to live His life. That is why this Great and Holy Week is so very important for us and, if we truly join ourselves with Christ during this week, we can gain great insights into how we are called to



live our lives.

In the light of this faith we can grasp what our heart guesses at, and live by it through all manner of adversity. For example, one of the behaviors that we see very clearly exhibited by Jesus during Great and Holy Week is His ability to remain totally silent in the face of false accusations and hatred. We as humans have a tendency to “defend” ourselves when we are unjustly accused and, of course, that always proves highly ineffective. We can learn from Him how to meet more effectively the challenges of life. We can learn so much from Jesus about how to live.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

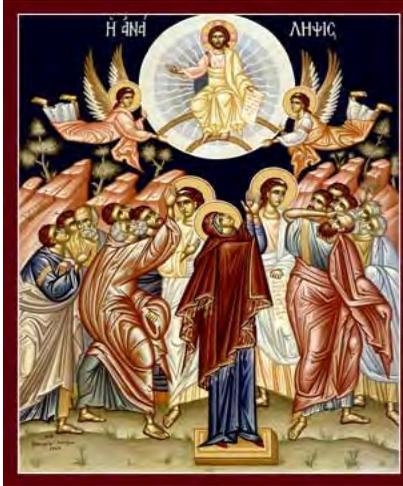
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 12 PALM or FLOWERY WEEKEND March 24-25, 2018

The Spirituality of the Christian East

Our Eastern Spirituality calls us to make the Great and Holy Week a week like none other in the year. It calls us to make an extra effort to quiet our lives and spend time thinking about the events that are celebrated during this week - to join ourselves to these events in a real and meaningful way. I know that this can be difficult in our modern world. It

is so easy to become addicted to “social media” and “cell phones” that we almost need them in our lives in order to function. BUT, *What can a man offer in exchange for his life? Is it too difficult to eliminate those things that keep us so shackled to this world for just one week?*

If we truly think about what it is that we celebrate during Great and Holy Week, we will have the courage to shut out the world for just a few days so that we can understand more clearly everything that God has done



Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

for us so that we might come to know the real meaning and purpose of our lives.

The meaning and purpose of our lives is to become more like Jesus. He is truly the archetype of what God intended when He created human beings. Great and Holy Week highlights the behaviors of Jesus in a most brilliant way. God's true revelation through

Jesus is spelled out most clearly during this special week.

Just as Jesus voluntarily went to His ignoble death in order to reveal to us how we are to live, so to we can voluntarily enter into Great Week with our whole heart, soul and mind. If you choose to do this, I can guarantee you that you will not be disappointed. It will change your life in some way. It will lessen that attachment to this fleeting life and you will begin to see what you have to do in order to truly inherit eternal life.

Palm Sunday

The hymns and prayers celebrating Christ's glorious journey into the Holy City reflect both the joy and the concern about what shall in short time occur in this City.

The introductory Vespers' hymn expresses these sentiments in these words: "Today the grace of the Holy Spirit has gathered us together, and we all take up Your Cross and say; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" The Palm Sunday exclamation, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord ..." is repeated over and over and we know that it was also taken into the Liturgy's solemn hymn, "Holy, holy, holy ..."

A Palm Sunday liturgical text beautifully expresses the full dimensions of this greeting when it says, "Blessed are You, You have come and are

coming again in the name of the Lord God our Savior!" The serene sunshine of the Palm Sunday could not last long. Evening is approaching of the first day of the Holy Week. Jesus' enemies were not idle; they gather and debate how to stop any similar demonstration. He should be arrested.

The Church reminds us of this change: "As we pass from one Divine Feast to another, O faithful, let us go with haste to the reverent and saving celebration of Christ's sufferings. Let us behold Him undergo voluntary suffering for our sake, and let us sing to Him with thankfulness a fitting hymn: O Fountain of tender mercy and Haven of salvation. Lord, glory be to You!" The Great, Holy Week of Christ's Passion began.

Father Vladimir Vancik