

PALM SUNDAY -- FLOWERY SUNDAY



*Icon of the Entrance into Jerusalem*

## A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

As we celebrate Jesus' Entrance into Jerusalem, we hear readings from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians and also from St. Mark's Gospel. St. Paul exhorts the Philippians and us to *Joy and Peace*. He wrote: "Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude. Then God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding, will stand guard over your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus". How truly appropriate these words are as we enter into the mystery of the last days of the life of our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ. We must approach our remembrance of these holy days with true peace in our hearts. Why? Because the repeat again God's revelation that human life is immortal through the very actions of His Son Jesus. Jesus destroyed death! His actions of suffering and dying on the Cross and then His resurrection confirmed this revelation.

Mark's Gospel not only presents Jesus' third prediction of His passion and resurrection, but also declares so very clearly how Christians are called to live. Jesus says to His disciples: "Anyone among you who aspires to

greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all, The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve - to give his life in ransom for the many."

This so clearly speaks to the way that Jesus lived and articulates a model for how we should live. It speaks of discipleship - which means to be a "learner". We are called to learn how to live from God Himself Who became a human being so that He could model for us how to live this earthly life.

In the Gospel passage that we read on the Third Weekend of the Great Fast we also

heard this: "If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self, take up his cross and follow in my steps."

We do well, during this coming Great and Holy Week, to reflect each day on these words of Jesus Christ. We are called to bury them deep within our hearts and minds so that we can grow in our likeness of Jesus. The primary purpose of earthly life is to grow in our likeness of Jesus so that we can increase our "communion" with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



## THE LENTEN TRIODION



As I indicated in the last issue of this article, there are possibly five real misconceptions of the spirituality that underlies the Triodion. I presented the first three. The fourth, paradoxical though it may seem, is that the period of Lent is a time *not of gloom but of joyfulness*. It is true that fasting brings us to repentance and to grief for sin, but this penitent grief, in the vivid phrase of St. John Climacus, is a 'joy-creating sorrow'.

The season of Lent, it should be noted, falls not in midwinter when the countryside is frozen and dead, but in spring when all things are returning to life. The English word "Lent" originally had the meaning "springtime". Lent

signifies not winter but spring, not darkness but light, not death but renewed vitality. Certainly it has its somber aspect, with the repeated prostrations at the weekday services, when the dark vestments of the priest, with the hymns sung to a subdued chant, full of compunction. In the Christian Empire of Byzantium theatres were closed and public spectacles forbidden during Lent; and even today weddings are forbidden in the seven weeks of the fast. Yet these elements of austerity should not blind us to the fact that the fast is not a burden, not a punishment, but as gift of God's grace.

The fifth misconception is that our Lenten abstinence *does not imply a rejection of God's creation*. As St. Paul insists, "Nothing is unclean in itself. All that God has made is 'very good.'" To fast is not to deny this intrinsic goodness but to reaffirm it.

I would add a sixth misconception, namely, that my fasting does not in any way or manner change God's attitude towards us. He unconditionally loves us and there is nothing we can do that will increase His love for us. Fasting is a discipline that helps me come to a deeper understanding, hopefully, of His unconditional love. It is not so much that I "give things up" as that I discipline myself to make true choices when I eat and live.

***Ask yourself: Why do I observe the Great Fast?***

## ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

The darkened deep in Genesis referred to the primordial chaos that God would have to overcome. Faced with such chaos, God begins His work, for we see the *ruach* of God moving over the face of the waters. The word *ruach* of course can mean either “wind”, “breath” or “spirit” according to context. These meanings were based on the common observation that a person with breath was alive and had spirit.

Breath/*ruach* also refers to the movement of air, not only in human beings, but also throughout the earth, in the form of wind. We see this multiplicity of meaning in such writings as Ezekiel (37:8-10), in which the prophet is bidden to summon the *ruach* (i.e., the wind) to come from the four winds into the bodies of the kdead to give them breath so that they may have spirit and life. The bodies had sinews and skin, “but there was no *ruach* in them. Then God said to me, “Prophecy to the *ruach*; prophesy, son of man, and say to the *ruach*, Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four *ruachoth*, O *ruach*, and breathe on these slain, that they may live”. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the *ruach* came into them, and they lived.” The word *ruach* here combines all three meanings of breath, wind and spirit.

We see a similar multiplicity of meaning in Psalm 104:29-30: God takes away *ruach* (here usually rendered ‘breath’) from His creations, and they die and return to the dust. When he sends forth His *ruach* (here usually rendered ‘Spirit’) like a wind sweeping through the earth, they are created, and He thereby renews the face of the ground.

This illustrates the difficulty involved in choosing a single word to translate *ruach* and



the advantage of sometimes leaving it untranslated. God's *ruach* is His life, the power He sends forth to enliven His creation and give them breath. It was this very life-giving *ruach* that He sent to move upon the primordial waters of chaos. It came on the deep like a wind, full of God's power and force and Spirit. Later Christian Trinitarian theology would identify this *ruach* with the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. This was not wrong but should form no part of our primary exegesis of Genesis or be read back into that text. Then text here simply says that God's power was moving over the waters.

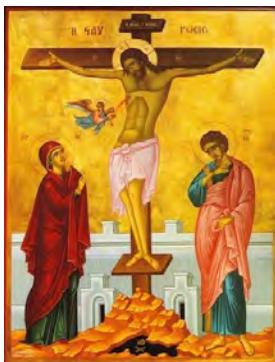
# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## GREAT AND HOLY WEEK

*A Week Unlike All Others*

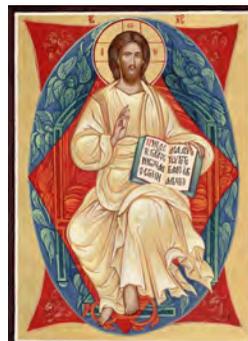


We are entering into a week which is like any other if we are people of faith. I would urge you to take home a copy of our Great and Holy Week Services and plan to be here with us for the services scheduled. You will not be sorry if you enter into this very, very powerful week of prayer. We will experience, through prayer, the DEATH and RESURRECTION of our God in the Person of Jesus. This should strongly influence the way that we live. It is a glorious experience which can only help us to live the life that we are presently experiencing and living.

*Through hard work, perseverance and a faith in God, you can live your dreams*

## A CALL TO HOLINESS

As we enter into the Great and Holy Week, the call to holiness is a call to truly reflect upon the lessons that Jesus taught us through His passion, death and resurrection. It is my firm belief that



His greatest lessons were taught from the Cross. He taught us how to truly unconditionally love others and not allow the actions of others to dictate how we decide to live. His final days were brutal, to say the least. Most of His friends abandoned Him. One of His friends betrayed Him. He was unjustly accused by the leaders of His religion. He was brutally tortured by enemies of His people. He was scoffed at and ridiculed.

How did He respond? With truly unconditional love and forgiveness. WOW! Do you think God was trying to teach us something through His Son? Was it the value of unconditional love for others? Was it the lesson that we need to decide how we want to live and not base our reactions to others on how they treat us? These are truly the lessons (Continued on page 8)

# A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

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## WILLOW SUNDAY, APRIL 14<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father today the Church calls me to recall Jesus' entrance into the city of Jerusalem, the city of His passion, crucifixion and death. I believe that, although He knew that His entrance into the city would lead to His death, He voluntarily entered the city to face the greatest challenges of His life. He calmly rode on a simple donkey and did not allow the flattery of the people to lessen His resolve to courageously and humbly face betrayal, pain, suffering and death. I know that He was able to accomplish His noble death because of His total trust in You, Heavenly Father. I ask You to help me eradicate any lack of Trust. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

## HOLY MONDAY, APRIL 15<sup>th</sup>

Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night; and bless is the servant whom He shall find watching, but unworthy is he whom He shall find in slothfulness. Beware, then, O my soul, and be not overcome by sleep, lest you be given over to death and shut out from the Kingdom. But return to soberness and cry aloud: Holy, holy, holy are You, O God: through the Mother of God have mercy upon us. AMEN.

## HOLY TUESDAY, APRIL 16<sup>th</sup>

Impious Judas with avaricious thoughts plots against the Master, and ponders how he will betray Him. He falls away from the light and accepts the darkness; he agrees upon the payment and sells Him that is above all price; and as the reward for his actions, in his misery he receives a hangman's noose and death in agony. O Christ our God, deliver us from such a fate as his, and grant remission of sins to those who celebrate with love Your most pure Passion. AMEN

## HOLY WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17<sup>th</sup>

The woman who was once a prodigal suddenly became chaste and hating the works of shameful sin and the pleasures of the body, she thought upon her deep disgrace and the torment to which harlots and prodigals shall be condemned. Of them I am the first and I am afraid, yet senselessly I continue in my evil ways. But the woman who was a harlot, filled with fear, made haste and came crying to the Deliverer: "O merciful Lord Who loves mankind, deliver me from the filth of my works. O merciful Father, help me to imitate the prodigal woman and beg forgiveness from my sins. AMEN

# A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

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## HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 18<sup>th</sup>

O God the Lord and Creator of all, You became poor, uniting a created nature to Yourself, while remaining free from passion. Since You are the Passover, You have offered Yourself to those for whose sake You were soon to die; and You cried: "Eat My Body and you shall be firmly established in the faith. Filling Your cup of salvation with joy, O loving Lord, You made Your disciples drink from it. For You offered Yourself in sacrifice, crying: "Drink My Blood and you shall be firmly established in the faith." AMEN

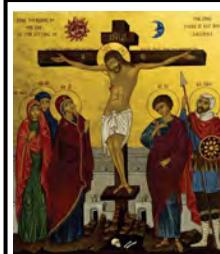
## GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 19<sup>th</sup>

Today the Master of Creation stands before Pilate; today the Maker of all things is given up to the Cross and of His own will He is led as a lamb to the slaughter. He who sent manna in the wilderness is transfixed with nails; His side is pierced and a sponge with vinegar touches His lips. The Deliverer of the world is struck on the face and the Creator of all is mocked by His own servants. How great is the Master's love for mankind. For those who crucified Him, He prayed to His Father, saying: "Forgive them this sin, for in their wickedness they know not what they day." AMEN.

**MAKE THIS DAY TRULY SPECIAL BY  
HOW YOU LIVE IT!**

## HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 20<sup>th</sup>

He who closed the abyss lies before us dead; and as a corpse the Immortal is wrapped in linen with sweet spices and laid in a tomb. The women come to anoint Him with myrrh, weeping bitterly and crying: "This is the most blessed Sabbath on which Christ sleeps, but on the third day He shall rise again. For by His death He transformed mortality and by His burial, corruption. With divine power He made incorruptible the nature He took, rendering it immortal. For, O Master, Your flesh saw not corruption nor was Your soul left in hell as that of a stranger. AMEN



## A SPECIAL WEEK

Make this Great and Holy Week truly a special time in your life and in the lives of those who are closest to you.

Fill it with *gratitude* and *prayer*. Don't miss the opportunity to truly make your faith something real. Think about the events that are being celebrated and their meaning. If you can, keep out all noise, stress and useless activity. You will never be sorry. This week will mean as much to you as you make it. Remember all that Jesus taught us by His death and resurrection.

# SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**Sunday, April 14 - Palm or Willow Sunday - Festal Tone**  
**10:00 AM - Michael & Helen Husak; Husak Family**

## GREAT & HOLY WEEK

**Monday, April 15 - Arstarchus, Pudus & Trophimus, Apostles**  
*No service scheduled*

**Tuesday, April 16 - Agape, Irene & Chionia, Martyrs**  
**7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy—Communal Penance**

**Wednesday, April 17 - Simeon of Persia, Venerable Father**  
*No service scheduled*

**Thursday, April 18 - Antipas, Bishop-Martyr**  
**7:00 PM - Vesperal Liturgy & Holy Anointing**

**Friday, April 19 - John, Hermit; Paphnutius, Martyr**  
**5:00 PM - Vespers & Burial Service**

**Saturday, April 10 - Theodore, Venerable Father**  
**Parish Vigil at the Grave of Christ Jesus**

**Sunday, April 21 - The Great Day - Easter**  
**8:00 AM - Resurrection Matins & Divine Liturgy**  
**Blessing of Paschal Food**

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  
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Daria Drobny  
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky  
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur  
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Gordon Malaniak  
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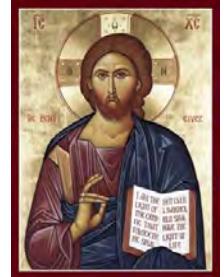
Leonard Mier  
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313.624.9867

*(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)*

that I truly believe God was trying to teach us through the Person of His Son Jesus. We know that there was a man named Jesus who came into the world as a Jew and, when He grew up, taught others about life through His parables and His very life, how humans should live in order to truly be God's children. The story is filled with great lessons. Although He dedicated His life to helping others, He was rewarded for His actions with betrayal, hatred, cruelty and death. But He did not allow the actions of others to influence how He had decided to live, that is to live as a Son of God. If we allow ourselves to reflect upon the lessons He taught us through these events, we cannot but wish to change our ways of thinking and acting.



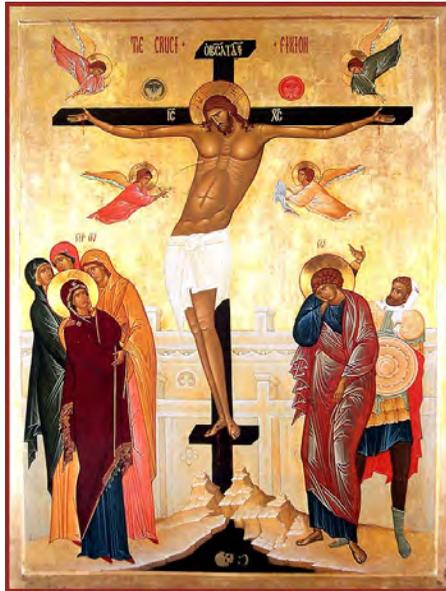
<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

## THE PRACTICE OF THE HOLY GREAT FAST

Referring to the duration of the fast before the Pasch (Easter) in various countries, the historian Socrates, reports: "The fast before the Pasch is observed variously in localities; namely, in Rome, before the Pasch the faithful fast for three weeks, except Saturdays and Sundays. In Illyrium, through-out all Greece and Alexandria they fast for six weeks before Easter and this is called the Forty Days Fastg. In other places the people fast seven weeks before the feast of the Pasch."

In Egypt, important testimony regarding the gradual transition from the short fast to the Forty Days Fast is found in the paschal letters of Athanasius the Great. In 329 CE, in the first of these letters, he does not specifically mention the Forty Days Fast but speaks only of the beginning of the "holy fast" associated with the Monday of Passion Week. In the eleventh paschal letter of 340 written in Rome and addressed to bishop Serapion of Thmuis, who in the absence of Athanasius had governed the Church in Egypt, St. Athanasius gives the following instruction: "Notify the brethren regarding the Forty Days Fast

and at the same time instruct them that when the whole world fasts, we alone, who live in Egypt should not expose ourselves to ridicule by not fasting, but rather rejoicing during that time." In the nineteenth letter of 346 CE, Athanasius speaks of the observance of the Forty Days Fast as an indispensable condition for a worthy celebration of the Pasch (Easter): "He who neglects the Forty Days Fast and enters without reflecting the holy of holies with an impure heart, he does not celebrate the feast of the Pasch".



and at the same time instruct them that when the whole world fasts, we alone, who live in Egypt should not expose ourselves to ridicule by not fasting, but rather rejoicing during that time." In the nineteenth letter of 346 CE, Athanasius speaks of the observance of the Forty Days Fast as an indispensable condition for a worthy celebration of the Pasch (Easter): "He who neglects the Forty Days Fast and enters without reflecting the holy of holies with an impure heart, he does not celebrate the feast of the Pasch".

Wherever the custom of the six week fast was in practice, it began on the Monday of the second week of our present day Fast. At the time this practice prevailed, the

first week of the Forty Days Fast had not yet become an integral part of the fast.

According to an ancient tradition of the Eastern Church, Saturdays and Sundays were not regarded as fast days. Therefore, so that the total number of fast days would be forty, the fast was extended from six to seven weeks. By the end of the fourth century the pre-paschal fast had already become an accepted practice.

## MORE ABOUT HOLY SCRIPTURES: THE GOSPEL OF MARK

The gospel of Mark is also considered the most primitive. This means that it almost certainly existed before the other three, even though most extant Greek codices of the New Testament present the Gospels in the order Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. The priority of Matthew in these lists is due to the fact that early second-century Christianity believed a gospel of Matthew had been written first “in Hebrew”. Since this work, however, did not survive, the Gospel of Mark has taken first place among the four Gospels we now possess. It is the almost universal conviction of scholars that Mark was extensively used by the author-editor of the Greek Gospel “according to “Matthew” which the Church today receives as inspired. In this supposition the author of the canonical Matthew worked with the text of Mark before him.

A minority opinion maintains that things went just the opposite; in other words Mark had Matthew before him as a source book, or else St. Peter (on whom St. Mark depends) used Matthew in his preaching as an aid to memory. Mark abridged Matthew, at the same time adding realistic touches from the preaching of Peter whose “interpreter” he was - according to Papias (c. 130 CE). In support of this view there is St. Augustine’s description of Mark as one who followed Matthew’s footsteps and abbreviated him.

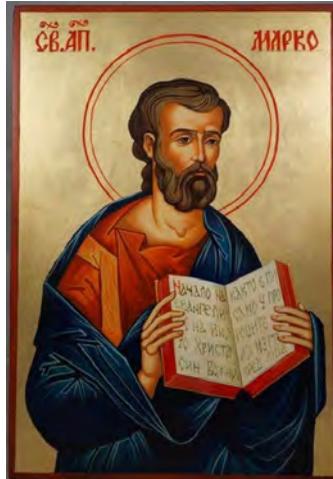
The fact is, however, that Mark’s version of an incident is often notably

fuller and longer than Matthew’s; he will supply details which are lacking in the first Gospel. Though many of Matthew’s Aramaisms are missing from Mark, the latter has a number of his own which are not derived from canonical Matthew. It is generally supposed that the greater richness of detail in Mark and his independent Semitic turns of phrase are either proper to him as an inspired writer or are drawn from the sources to which he had access.

There seems to be no reason to doubt that the author of the Gospel is the same person as that Roman disciple of Peter who is called “my son Mark”. The further identification of this man with the John Mark of Jerusalem who was the son of Mary in whose house

many gathered for prayer has been disputed, though there is no solid reason to deny it. The identity of this “John whose other name is Mark” with Mark the cousin of Barnabas, the levite from Cyprus and companion of Paul, would account for the considerable interest in him which Luke shows in Acts. If he is the same person, then he is not merely the immature deserter of “the work” at Perge in Pamphylia who went on to achieve maturity in the apostolate, but he is also important as the author of a Gospel used by Luke in his own composition.

As you can see, the composition of the Gospels is a complex story. My question, does it really matter who wrote Mark?



**The Evangelist Mark**



# THE EASTERN HERALD

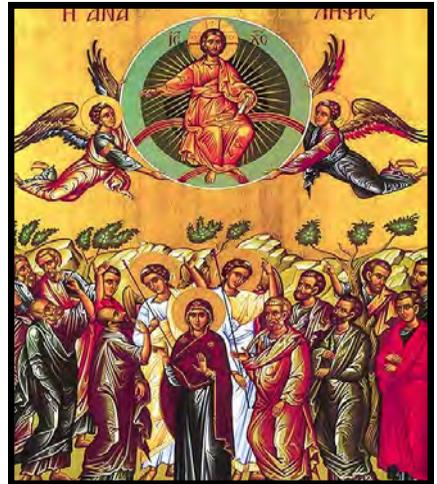
## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Vol. 65 No 15 Willow Weekend April 13-14, 2019

### THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

I have been writing about the Holy Spirit and His role in *Theosis*. Interestingly, the Eastern fathers attribute to the Spirit all the multiplicity of names that can be attributed to grace, as is evident, for example, in St. Gregory Nazianzen and St. Basil. They freely speak about the Holy Spirit as effecting deification, perfection, adoption and sanctification. Eastern Christians sing, “The Holy Spirit gives life to souls; He exalts them in purity; He causes the sole nature of the Trinity to shine in them mysteriously. The Eastern Church teaches that that which is common to the Father and the Son is the divinity which the Holy Spirit communicates to humans within the church, in making them partakers of the divine nature. According to Gregory Nazianzen, deification is the highest gift and blessing of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, as St. Seraphim of Sarov said, “the true aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God.”

The Holy Spirit, however, always respects human freedom. The Spirit does not actually bring about the human being’s deliverance but gives her access to the regenerative and divine work of Christ that has been accomplished once for all. And as Gregory Palamas often reminds us, it is only by means of the Holy Spirit that Christ himself enters the church and remains her head for all eternity. In the spirited church, the Holy Spirit is the contact point between the corrupted



*Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father*

Human being and the glorified God-bearing Logos who is Christ.

In fact, the idea of deification cannot be truly expressed on a Christological basis alone, but demands a Spirit-based development as well.

I truly believe that the implications of the Eastern Church’s approach to salvation is absolutely essential for our spirituality.

## *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*