

A WALK



THROUGH HOLY WEEK

Holy Annunciation Orthodox Church
Liberty Hill, Texas



PASCHA 2024
Holy Week Schedule

Sunday

April 28 - Palm Sunday Divine Liturgy– 10:00 am

Monday

April 29 – Bridegroom Matins – 7:00 pm

Tuesday

April 30 – Bridegroom Matins – 7:00 pm

Wednesday

May 1 – Presanctified Liturgy 10:00 am

May 1 – Holy Unction– 7:00 pm

Thursday

May 2 – Divine Liturgy – 10:00 am

May 2 – Holy Thursday (The 12 Gospels) - 7:00 pm

Friday

May 3 – Royal Hours – 9:00 am

May 3 – Descent from the Cross Vespers – 12:00 pm

May 3 – Confession – 5:30 pm – 6:45 pm

May 3 – Lamentations at the Tomb – 7:00 pm

Saturday

May 4 – Divine Liturgy with Baptism – 9:00 am

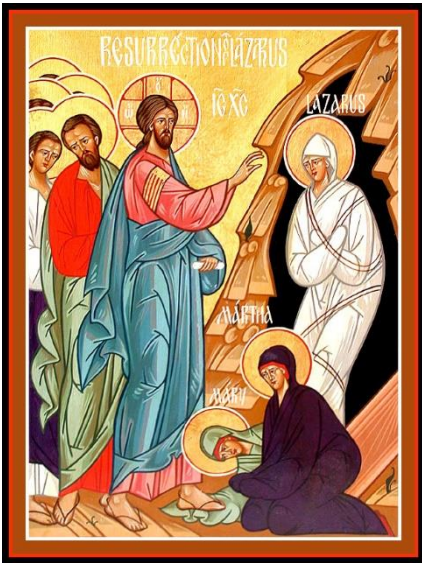
May 4/5 – Nocturns, Matins, Divine Liturgy – 11:30 pm

Sunday

May 5 – Agape Vespers – 4:30 pm

Nearing Holy Week . . .

Our journey through Holy Week actually begins as we approach Holy week. We celebrate two triumphant moments of Christ's ministry amongst the Jews with the raising of Lazarus and his triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, commonly called Palm Sunday. Lazarus Saturday is followed by Palm Sunday. The Lord's Entry into Jerusalem marks the beginning of Holy Week.



They lived in Bethany near Jerusalem. Lazarus became extremely sick and died. Jesus came to Bethany four days after Lazarus died. Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead by saying, "Lazarus, come forth!" (John 11:44). Lazarus came out of his tomb alive. The miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead shows that Christ is the resurrection and the Life and our Resurrection.

Lazarus Saturday

The day before Palm Sunday is Lazarus Saturday, which celebrates Christ's raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-45). Lazarus, and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were good friends of Jesus.

When:
Saturday, April 27

Time:
10:00 a.m.

Notable:
After the Liturgy, we will fold the palms for Palm Crosses to be worn on Sunday.

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday celebrates the glorious and brilliant feast of the Entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. Because Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and had performed other miracles, many people glorified him as the Messiah, the Savior. The main road leading to Jerusalem was covered with palm trees. The multitudes, with palm branches in their hands, spread their cloaks on the road as a show of respect, crying out “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord.” This fleeting victory would soon turn to shameful betrayal as the many of the same crowd would cry “Crucify Him, Crucify Him . . . We have no king but Caesar!”

When:
Sunday, April 28

Time:
10:00 a.m.

Notable:
Palms are blessed and distributed to the faithful at the Liturgy. It is customary to carry these home and place them over your doorway or bed.



Bridegroom Matins

The Bridegroom services may be served on the first three nights of Holy Week. They are the Matins (morning) Service, but as with all the Holy Week services they are done in anticipation. The Monday service, therefore, is done on Sunday night, Tuesday's service on Monday night and Wednesday's on Tuesday evening.

The name "Bridegroom" is based on the main figure in the parable of the ten virgins, (Matthew 25:1-13), which is read on Holy Tuesday. Christ is the bridegroom. The troparion sung at the beginning of each service begins, "Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night."

The icon of Christ as Bridegroom shows Christ wearing a crown of thorns and a purple robe. This is how he appeared before Pilate who presented him saying, "Behold the man." (John 19:5) The Bridegroom is the suffering servant. The readings and hymns during the Bridegroom service suggest an intimacy of love as well as themes of the Second Coming. On Sunday the story is told of the Old Testament Patriarch Joseph and the empty fig tree. Holy Tuesday commemorates the parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) who awaited the bridegroom. The parable of the Talents is also recounted; it too is a story about the Second Coming. On Great Wednesday, we remember the betrayal by Judas and the woman who anointed Jesus with oil.

When:
Monday, April 29
Tuesday, April 30

Time:
7:00 p.m.

Notable:
Our focus on
preparation and
readiness for that day
when Christ returns
in glory!

Holy Unction

Holy Unction is a Mystery (Sacrament) of the Church offered on Holy Wednesday, for the healing of both physical and spiritual illness, including the forgiveness of sins. Jesus continues to heal people today through the oil of unction, the prayers of the saints, and the prayers of our friends, just as He did in the Gospels. James 5:14-15 is the basis for the Sacrament: "If any is sick among you, let him call the presbyters of the Church; and let them pray over him; anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he has committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

At the end of the service the priest anoints the faithful as he makes the sign of the cross on the face and top and palms of the hands saying, "For the healing of soul and body." This signifies that Holy Unction addresses not only our physical maladies, but our spiritual ills as well.

When:
Wednesday, May 1

Time:
7:00 p.m.

Notable:
Baptized Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves receive the anointing with the Holy Oil, for the healing of both soul and of body.



Holy Thursday Morning

On Holy Thursday we remember the washing of the disciples' feet, the institution of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and the betrayal of Christ by Judas.

Holy Thursday Morning is an special Liturgy because we are with Jesus and the Disciples at the first Holy Communion which took place at the meal Jesus shared with His disciples the day before the Passover known as the Mystical Supper. Jesus gave bread and wine to His Disciples and told them to "do this in remembrance of me."

This also marks the day on which the consecrated bread that is kept on the altar for the communing of the sick is replaced each year. The Body from last year will be removed and consumed with the chalice, and the consecrated Lamb for the next year will be prepared on the altar and placed in the Tabernacle.

When:
Thursday, May 1

Time:
10:00 a.m.

Notable:
The only Divine Liturgy other than Annunciation which is served on a weekday between Forgiveness Sunday and Pascha.



Twelve Gospels

The Holy Thursday Evening service of the 12 Gospels (also called the Passion Gospel service) is one of the most solemn services of the Holy Week.

In the evening of Holy Thursday, we remember how Jesus was betrayed and arrested and crucified at the service of the Twelve Gospels. After the fifth Gospel, the priest carries the cross in a procession around the church. The body of Jesus is then placed on the cross in front of the church. During the procession, a special hymn is sung while the faithful kneel.



This service begins with a Matins service with readings of Psalms and verses. The priest reads twelve Gospels. A candle is lit by the priest, one by one, after each Gospel. In many churches, it is the custom for all the faithful to hold lighted candles during the reading of the Passion Gospels.

Before each Gospel, the choir sings, “Glory to Thy passion, O Lord” and after the Gospel, the choir sings, “Glory to thy long-suffering O Lord.” Hymns, which tell about the people who were present during Christ's Passion, are sung between the Gospels.

When:
Thursday, May 2

Time:
7:00 pm

Notable:
In procession the priest will place the corpus of Christ upon the cross, chanting:
“Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung on the tree”

Great and Holy Friday Royal Hours

Good Friday is the most solemn day of the year for Orthodox Christians. On Great and Holy Friday, we remember the burial of Jesus. The day begins with the Royal Hours of Pascha, a service from the early days of the Byzantine Empire. This service takes its name from the fact that it used to be officially attended by the Emperor and his court at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. By his presence, the Emperor acknowledged his submission to Christ the true King.

When:
Friday, May 3

Time:
9:00 am

Notable:

Royal Hours are only celebrated three times a year: before Nativity, Theophany and Pascha.



Descent from the Cross Vespers

When:
Friday, May 3

Time:
12:00 pm

Notable:
Before the Dismissal, we sing the beloved hymn “The Noble Joseph” in honor of Joseph of Arimathea and in foreshadowing of Christ’s Resurrection.

Sometimes called the “Unnailing Vespers” this service commemorates Joseph of Arimathea’s request to Pilate to bury the body of Christ. Towards the end of the Gospel reading, the priest, holding a white cloth, comes out to the cross that holds the crucified Lord and takes down the body from the cross and wraps it in the cloth. Later, a special “shroud” called the epitaphios or plaschanitsa is carried in procession. The holy shroud is a large cloth with an icon of Christ’s burial painted or sewn on it. The clergy process with the shroud to the tomb, which has been placed in the area

in front of and in the center of the iconostasis.



Lamentations at the Tomb

The Lamentations Matin Service on Great and Holy Friday is the funeral service of Christ. Before the decorated Tomb of our Savior containing his Epitaphios, we sing the Lamentations, reflecting the sorrow and loss his disciples and followers felt following his Crucifixion.

These hymns of praise to the Lord relate the grief of His very real human death overcome by His ultimate triumph over death. During this service, the entire flower-



When:
Friday, May 3

Time:
7:00 pm

Notable:
At the end of the service the faithful venerate the Epitaphios and receive a flower from the tomb from the priest.

bedecked Sepulcher, symbolizing the Tomb, is carried in procession, usually outside, around the church. In some parishes, girls in white dresses represent the myrrh bearers and lay flower petals in front of the Sepulcher. This procession confirms for us, the faithful, that Christ has defeated the power of death and gives life to all that love and believe in Him.

Lamentations is one of the most moving and beautiful services of all of Holy Week and should be a priority for all the faithful.

Great and Holy Saturday

On the morning of Great and Holy Saturday, a Vesperal liturgy is served and any catechumens who are ready for Holy Baptism will be baptized, chrismated and communed at this Liturgy. This service is sometimes called the “First Resurrection”, signifying Christ’s appearance in Hades and freeing of the captives. After the Epistle, something quite moving takes place. Portions of Psalm 82 are chanted: “Arise O Lord and judge the earth, for to Thee belong all the nations,” while bay leaves, in some traditions, are scattered all around the church. This is a symbol of the first news of Christ's resurrection from the dead – His destruction of death.

When:
Saturday, May 4

Time:
9:00 am

Notable:
If there are to be Baptisms for Pascha, they are usually performed during the Great and Holy Saturday morning liturgy.



Great and Holy Pascha

As the morning nears, we gather in the Church for the Nocturns in anticipation of the Resurrectional Liturgy. The only light comes from a few flickering candles. At midnight, our priest comes out of the Sanctuary singing Come receive the Light from the Light that is never overtaken by night and glorify Christ Who is risen from the dead. We all light our candles from his.

A procession leads outside the Church and the gospel is read

before the doors. We sing loudly and with great excitement:



Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death and to those in the tombs, bestowing life. The Church is full of bright candlelight! The priest's white vestments seem to glow! The Cross and the Tomb of Jesus are to the side as reminders of what happened to Jesus this week. The Matins and Liturgy are served in the bright light of the

When:
Saturday, May 4

Time:
11:30 pm

Notable:
The Feast of Feasts!
We will joyously proclaim "Christ is Risen" with lit candles and break our fast with the Paschal feast after the Liturgy!

Resurrection as the priest shouts “Christ is Risen!” and the faithful reply, “Indeed, He is Risen!”

English: Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!

Greek: Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!

Arabic: El Messieh kahm! Hakken kahm!

Spanish: Cristo ha resucitado! En verdad ha resucitado!

Russian: Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!

Portuguese: Cristo ressuscitou! Em verdade ressuscitou!



Agape Vespers

The Agape Vespers closes the day of Pascha with a poignant reminder that Christ was sent for all of mankind. The Gospel reading - John 20:19-25 - is read in as many languages as there are people who can read it - English, Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Russian, Albanian, Arabic, German and more. The “Good News” (the meaning of word “gospel” in Greek) that Jesus died and rose from the dead is for the entire world because God loves all people alike.

When:
Sunday, May 5

Time:
4:30 pm

Notable:
The Gospel is read in as many languages as possible by as many people who wish to speak.

