



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

April 2020



Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 12:

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

6:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Monday, April 13:

3:00 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

6:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Tuesday, April 14:

3:00 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

6:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Wednesday, April 15:

3:00 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

6:00 pm - Holy Unction

8:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Thursday, April 16:

10:00 am - Divine Vesperal Liturgy

6:00 pm - Holy Passion Gospel Matins

Great and Holy Friday, April 17:

3:00 pm - Great Vespers

6:00 pm - Lamentations Service

Great and Holy Saturday, April 18:

9:00 am - Divine Vesperal Liturgy

11:00 pm - Paschal Vigil and
Resurrection Service

12:00 am - Paschal Divine Liturgy

Paschal Sunday, April 19:

11:00 am - Agape Vespers

Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Mary Magdalene, and the other women who were present at the burial of our Savior on Friday evening, returned from Golgotha to the city and prepared fragrant spices and myrrh, so that they might anoint the body of Jesus. The Sunday that followed, almost thirty-six hours since the death of the Life-giving Redeemer, they came to the sepulcher with the spices to anoint His body. While they were considering the difficulty of rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, there was a fearful earthquake; and an Angel, whose countenance shone like lightning and whose garment was white as snow, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The guards that were there became as dead from fear and took to flight. The women, however, went into the sepulcher, but did not find the Lord's body. Instead, they saw two other Angels in the form of youths clothed in white, who told them that the Savior was risen, and they sent forth the women, who ran to proclaim to the disciples these gladsome tidings. Then Peter and John arrived, having learned from Mary Magdalene what had come to pass, and when they entered the tomb, they found only the winding sheets. Therefore, they returned again to the city with joy, as heralds now of the supernatural Resurrection of Christ, Who in truth was seen alive by the disciples on this day on five occasions.

Our Lord, then, was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, before the setting of the sun, which was the first of His "three days" in the grave; observing the mystical Sabbath, that "seventh day" in which it is said that the Lord "rested from all His works" (Gen. 2:2-3), He passed all of Saturday in the grave; and He arose "while it was yet dark, very early in the morning" on Sunday, the third day, which, according to the Hebrew reckoning, began after sunset on Saturday.

The feast itself is called Pascha, which is derived from the Hebrew word which means "Passover"; because Christ, Who suffered and arose, has made us to pass over from the curse of Adam and slavery to the devil and death unto our primal freedom and blessedness.

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
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2020 Parish Council

President: Luke Yanka
Vice President: Spiro Thomo
Secretary: Debby Thomo
Treasury: Paul Yanka

2020 Ladies Society Committee

President: Alexandra Nasto
Vice President: Louise Boilard
Secretary: Debbie Thomo
Treasurer: Mary Andreea

Clergy

Fr. John Downie fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com

Parish News & Events

Happy Birthday!!
God Grant You Many More Years!!

April 12th – Ludmila Sousa

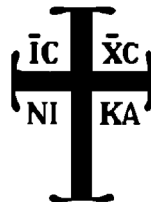
April 15th – Anna Tanca

April 18th – Sophia Pitsillides

April 26th – Andrew Silva

Happy Name Day

April 1st and 5th – Mary Grabosky (St. Mary of Egypt)



Coffee Hour Volunteers Needed

We need more volunteers for each Sunday. If you volunteer, you can dedicate the coffee hour to the memory of a loved one. Any help would be greatly appreciated!

Please contact Deb Thomo to sign up.

Confession

Receiving Christ in Communion during the liturgy can never be routine, never something we deserve, no matter what the condition of our life may be. Examination of conscience, and going to confession is part of preparation for Communion. It is good for us to confess at least once before a major feast day, such as Pascha.

Fr. John will be available for Confession by appointment.

Please Pray for:

Preoteasa
Camelia
Carol Porra
Bill & Lauren
Smith
Mary
Grabosky
Henrietta Panu
Jennifer Silva
Alexander

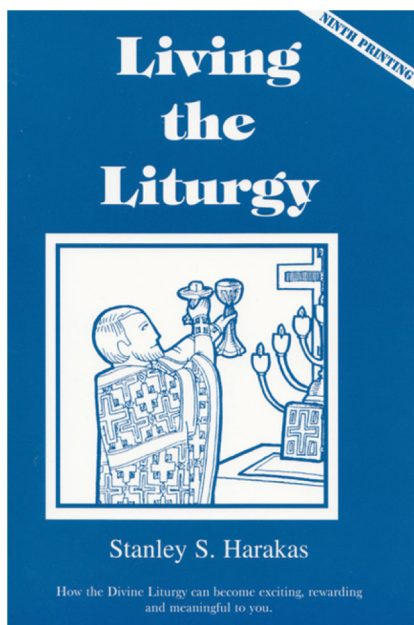
~ Movie & Book Corner ~



Movie: *The Life of St. Mary of Egypt*

Our venerable mother Mary of Egypt was a desert ascetic who repented of a life of prostitution. She lived during the sixth century, and passed away in a remarkable manner in 522. The Church celebrates her feast day on the day of her repose, April 1; additionally, she is commemorated on the Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt, the fifth Sunday in Great Lent.

URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVyJe1-W9qE&feature=youtu.be>



Book: *Living the Liturgy*

Full of meaning and undoubtedly relevant to today's Christian community, the book "Living the Liturgy" contains the answers to one of the most common dilemmas faced in the Orthodox Faith. This book aims to help many Orthodox Christians who struggle to find the meaning of going to Church and participating in the Divine Liturgy.

The Joyful Sorrow of Pascha Metropolitan Hierotheos (Vlachos)

One of the strongest and most expressive words encountered in our tradition is the word "joyful-sorrow." All things in our life are mixed with sorrow and joy. Life is not a theater with scenery changes, but an experience that is both joyful and sorrowful, where sorrow turns to joy and at the point where joy culminates, sorrow emerges, due to the mortality of our passionate nature.

We encounter this word "joyful-sorrow" in the 6th century book of Saint John of Sinai titled *The Ladder*, where we are urged to acquire "the blessed and joyful sorrow of holy compunction" which can "present you a cleansed offering to Christ" (Step 7). It can be an ascetic experience, but also one of the world, since we all live in the desert of the city, often called Christian society.

The word "joyful-sorrow" can be considered synonymous with the word "crucified-risen Pascha" which shows how on Great Friday everyone can rejoice in the putting to death of Hades and death, and on the Bright Day, Pascha, there can be sorrow for a beloved person who is being swallowed by death, that hungry beast, which continues to gobble people up and in the present time and split a community of loving persons.

One daily lives this experience of "joyful-sorrow" on a personal existential level, within ones family, community, or national space. Lately we are living this on the economic level, because on the one hand we are facing an existential crisis, and on the other hand we are looking

forward to the experience of love, affection, solidarity and existential freedom from the enslavement of false ideologies that disorient a thinking person. We hope to experience the truth that a person is not what one has, but has that which is, and this is the glory of our timeless traditions.

We also lately experience this in the intense criticism of the Church. No one is unaware that there do exist triggers for such criticism, because various people of the Church, even the great dignified Clergy, do not fully express the ethos and

"The Church experiences this crucified-risen life, she lives her own joyful-sorrow, and in this way she guides her children..."

life of ecclesiastical experience. But this criticism also, even the points where the Church bears no responsibility, the

Church accepts, like any mother who accepts with love the outbursts of her children, whether responsible or not. The Church is the mother of the Orthodox people, who accepts all the reactions of her children with love, affection and forbearance, offering the caress of familiarity, the smile of loving affection, and the bowels of compassion, as was shown by the Archbishop, the Holy Synod, and the majority of Clergy, who did not want to quarrel with their children.

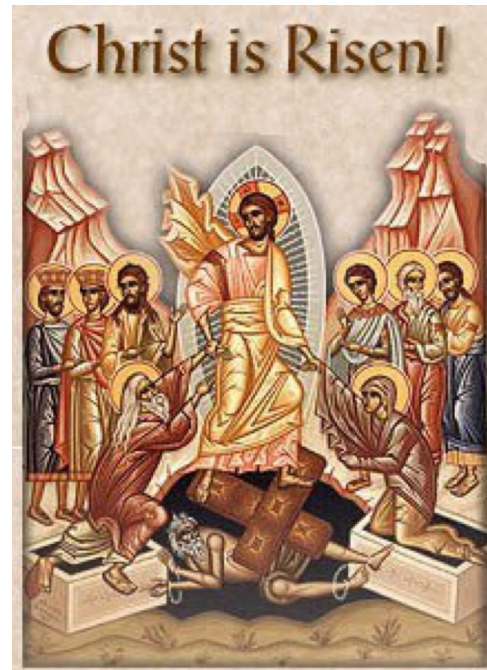
Still, this "joyful-sorrow" appeared this past Holy and Great Week and culminated on Pascha. The Church showed that its wealth is not in salaries and dividends, but in her theology, her culture, her hymnography, her gatherings of worship, which are directed through its timeless tradition. In this Week the Church showed her wealth which is her

Bridegroom, who arrived out of "passionate love" to be stripped, humiliated and crucified, without reciprocating in the least, and without uttering a word, and in the end He rose, without fanfare or theatrics, without terrorizing His crucifiers and the guardians of His tomb, without punishing the irresponsible and unjust political power, headed by Pilate, and without being triumphant over His resurrection or pulverizing the religious leaders who pretended piety. Still, the wealth of the Church is the harlot woman, who showed exuberant love to Christ, changing one erotic love for another erotic love, who knew how to love exuberantly, with an overflow of love and works and not in a way of conventional life. Her wealth is also the crucified robber who was able to recognize the divinity within the humiliating Cross and became a great empirical theologian.

The Church experiences this crucified-risen life, she lives her own joyful-sorrow, and in this way she guides her children, even the most "unruly." She is still the mother of the people, who bears with pain the pregnancy with her children, and is in pain at their birth, feeds them from her breast, and sacrifices herself for their growth, and sometimes accepts with love and forbearance the tantrums of their pain. The Church resembles the Fools for Christ, who although they were laughed at by all, they lived internally complete and gave of their greatness, even in their extreme obscurity. She lives the apparent weakness of the Crucifixion with the completeness of the Resurrection.

With this joyful-sorrow of Pascha, we experience the celebration of the crucified-risen "Pascha the Lord's

Pascha", exchanging the embrace of love and sending out greetings to everyone saying: "Christ is Risen, my joy!"



St. Paisios on the Joy of the Resurrection

- *Elder, how can we live the joy of the Resurrection?*

- We should cultivate joyful mourning, in order for true joy to come to us. If we live Holy Week with reverence and solemnity, we will live with spiritual jubilation and divine joy the Holy Resurrection.

- *Elder, is it natural to not feel much joy on the night of the Resurrection?*

- Yes, it's natural. Because the feeling of sorrow is greater than the feeling of joy, we cannot in one day get over this condition of the soul. However, slowly-slowly, during Renewal Week, which is like one paschal day, the pain of Holy Week departs and the soul is filled with resurrection joy.

Are Ecumenical Councils Infallible?
How the Orthodox Church views the Ecumenical Councils
Fr. John Whiteford

We do not believe that everything that anyone happened to say at an Ecumenical Council is infallible, but we most certainly do believe that the canons and decrees of the Ecumenical Councils are infallible, and this is because we believe that the Church as a whole, is infallible. Individual members, and even local Churches may err, but it is not possible for the entire Church to teach that which is erroneous—and Ecumenical Councils are certainly an example of what the Church as a whole teaches.

Fr. George Florovsky observed: “The teaching authority of the Ecumenical Councils is grounded in the infallibility of the Church. The ultimate ‘authority’ is vested in the Church, which is forever the Pillar and the Foundation of Truth” [1]

The Patriarchal Encyclical of 1895, [2] which was written in response to a Papal encyclical by Pope Leo XIII, in which he called for the reunion of the Orthodox Church with the Roman Church, states: “Having recourse to the fathers and the Ecumenical Councils of the Church of the first nine centuries, we are fully persuaded that the Bishop of Rome was never considered as the supreme authority and infallible head of the Church, and that every bishop is head and president of his own particular Church, **subject only to the synodical ordinances and decisions of the Church universal as being alone infallible**, the Bishop of Rome being in no wise excepted from this rule, as Church history shows.”

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And St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain states, as he begins his famous commentary on the Ecumenical Canons: “So every Ecumenical Council that possesses these characteristic features is in fact the Holy and Catholic Church itself in which in the Symbol of Faith (called the Creed in English) we profess to believe. ...being infallible and sinless. For the Church, which the Ecumenical Council takes the place of as its personal representative, is a pillar and framework

of the truth, according to St. Paul (1 Tim. 3:15);

accordingly, whatever seems right to

Ecumenical Councils seems

right also to the Holy Spirit of Truth: for, it says, *He shall teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said unto you* (John 14:26).” [3]

Canon 1 of the Seventh Ecumenical Council states, with regard to all the Ecumenical canons and decrees of the previous Councils (as well as those of local Councils and Fathers whom these Councils specifically affirmed), states:

“For those who have been allotted a sacerdotal dignity, the representations of canonical ordinances amount to testimonies and directions. Gladly accepting these, we sing to the Lord God with David, the spokesman of God, the following words: *I have delighted in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all wealth, and thy testimonies which thou hast commanded witness righteousness,...* Thy testimonies are

righteousness forever: give me understanding, and I shall live (Ps. 119:14, 138 and 144). And if forever the prophetic voice commands us to keep the testimonies of God, and to live in them, it is plain that they remain unwavering and rigid. For Moses, too, the beholder of God, says so in the following words: *To them there is nothing to add, and from them there is nothing to remove* (Deut. 12:32). And the divine Apostle Peter, exulting in them, cries: *which things the angels would like to peep into* (1 Pet. 1:12). And Paul says: *Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you any gospel besides that which ye have received, let him be anathema* (Gal. 1:8). Seeing that these things are so and are attested to us,



and rejoicing at them *as one that findeth great spoil* (Ps. 119:162), **we welcome and embrace the divine Canons, and we corroborate the entire and rigid fiat of them that have been set forth by the renowned Apostles, who were and are trumpets of the Spirit, and those both of the six holy Ecumenical Councils and of the ones assembled regionally far the purpose of setting forth such edicts and of those of our holy Fathers. For all those men, having been guided by the light dawning out of the same Spirit, prescribed rules that are to our best interest.** Accordingly, we too anathematize whomsoever they consign to anathema; and we too depose whomsoever they consign to deposition; and we too excommunicate whomsoever they consign to excommunication; and we

likewise subject to a penance anyone whom they make liable to a penance. For *Let your conduct be free from avarice; being content with such things as are at hand* (Heb. 13:5), explicitly cries the divine apostle Paul, who ascended into the third heaven and heard unspeakable words (2 Cor. 12:2-4).”

And St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain adds two comments in his notes to his commentary on this canon:

“Note here how respectable and reverend the divine Canons are. For this holy Council, by calling them ‘testimonies’ and ‘justifications,’ and the like, dignifies these very same divine Canons with those title and names with which the divinely inspired and holy Bible is dignified.”

And:

“That is why Photius, in Title I, ch. 2, says that the third ordinance of Title II of the Novels invests the Canons of the seven Councils and their dogmas with the same authoritativeness as the divine Scriptures” (*Rudder*, p. 428f).

[1] *The Byzantine Fathers of the Fifth Century* http://www.holytrinitymission.org/books/english/fathers_florovsky_2.htm

[2] http://orthodoxinfo.com/ecumenism/encyc_1895.aspx

[3] (D. Cummings, trans., *The Rudder of the Orthodox Catholic Church: The Compilation of the Holy Canons Saints Nicodemus and Agapius* (West Brookfield, MA: The Orthodox Christian Educational Society, 1983), p. 157).

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 3:00pm Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 6:00pm	2 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm	3 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm	4 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
5 Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt Matins 8:00am Divine Liturgy 9:00am	6	7	8	9	10	11 Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
12 Palm Sunday Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	13 Great and Holy Monday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 3:00pm Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	14 Great and Holy Tuesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 3:00pm Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	15 Great and Holy Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 3:00pm Holy Unction 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins 8:00pm	16 Great and Holy Thursday Divine Vesperal Liturgy (St. Basil the Great w/ Vespers) 10:00am Holy Passion Gospel Matins 6:00pm	17 Great and Holy Friday Great Vespers 3:00pm Lamentations Service 6:00pm	18 Great and Holy Saturday Divine Vesperal Liturgy (St. Basil the Great w/ Vespers) 9:00am Resurrection Service 11:00pm Paschal Divine Liturgy 12:00pm
19 Sunday of Pascha Agape Vespers 11:00am	20 Bright Monday Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Vespers 6:00pm	21 Bright Tuesday Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	22 Bright Wednesday	23 Bright Thursday St. George the Great Martyr	24 Bright Friday Life-Giving Fount of the Theotokos Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	25 Bright Saturday St. Mark the Evangelist
26 Thomas Sunday Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	27	28	29	30 St. James the Apostle		