

**Christ is Risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and to those in the tombs
bestowing life!**

Christ is Risen!

Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church

Woodstock, Georgia

Pascha 2023

Reverend Father Matthew Dutko Pastor/Administrator
Father Deacon Steven Hanes

Phone: 404-268-6359 **Email:** fatherdutko@gmail.com

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen! Welcome to St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church! Thank you for being here to celebrate the Great Day of the Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ on this most joyous morning! If you have never been to an Orthodox Church before, you are about to participate in the Divine Liturgy. The Divine Liturgy is celebrated every Sunday of the year. Liturgy means the work of the people. That means that we all have special and holy work to do this morning, and that all of your prayers are necessary! We hope you will stay and join us as we continue the celebration of Christ's Resurrection all throughout the day. Please feel free to ask Fr. Matthew any questions you might have! May the joy, hope, and salvation found in Christ's Resurrection be with you always and may God grant you many happy and blessed years, Christ is Risen!!

St. Elizabeth Orthodox Church
2265 E. Cherokee Drive Woodstock, GA 30188
*A parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*
Ruling Hierarch: His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

The Great Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord, God & Savior Jesus Christ

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8 Gospel: John 1:1-17

All of the special hymns for today's Festal Divine Liturgy for the Resurrection of our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ can be found starting on page 193

St. Thomas Sunday - April 23, 2023

2nd Paschal Sunday

Epistle: Acts 5: 12-20 **Gospel:** John 20:19-31

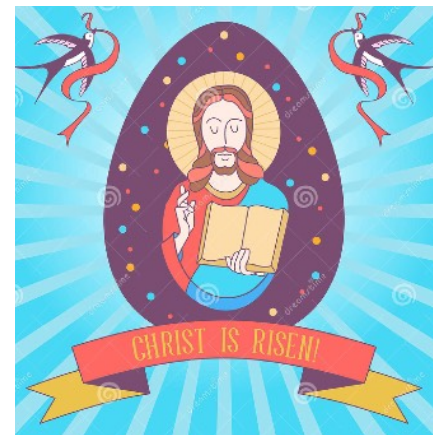
St. Thomas Sunday Tropar and Kondak—Blue Book pg 199. Everything else for the Paschal season can be found on pages 193-196





Announcements:

- Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!
- May God Grant Many Happy and Blessed Years in Health and Salvation to the Newly Illumined Servants of God Graham & Kelly along with their sponsors and families! We are all blessed to fully welcome you into our Parish Family!
- Don't forget about the Bright Friday ACRY Cookout & Meeting. Everyone is invited. We will start with Paschal Vespers at 6pm this Friday 4/21.
- After Saint Thomas Sunday, next week, I will be headed to Camp Nazareth for the week for our Diocesan Clergy Convocation.

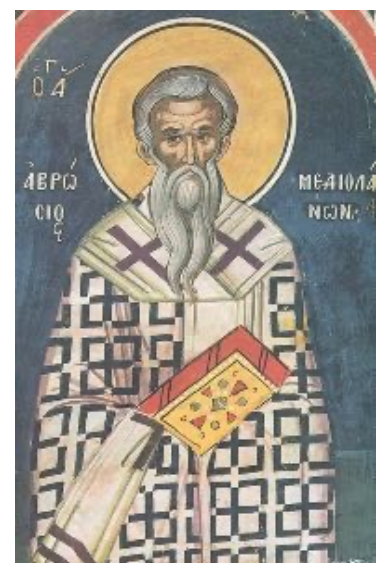


Two Week Schedule

- Today 2 pm-** Paschal Vespers
- Bright Monday 04/17 9 am-** Divine Liturgy *followed by Procession around the Church*
- Bright Tuesday 04/18 9 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Bright Wednesday 04/19 9 am-** Resurrection Matins
- 5:30 pm-** Paschal Vespers
- 6:15 pm-** Adult Class led by Dr. Tim Furnish on the Book of Acts
- Bright Friday 04/21 9 am-** Resurrection Matins
- 6 pm-** Paschal Vespers
- 7 pm-** ACRY Picnic and Meeting- *Everyone is Invited!*
- Bright Saturday 04/22 4 pm-** Great Vespers
- Sunday 04/23 10 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday 04/26 6 pm-** Adult Class led by Dr. Tim Furnish on the Book of Acts
- Saturday 04/29 4 pm-** Great Vespers
- Sunday 04/30 10 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday 05/03 5:30 pm-** Moleben followed by Adult Class led by Dr. Tim Furnish on the Book of Acts
- Saturday 05/06 4 pm-** Great Vespers
- Sunday 05/07 10 am-** Divine Liturgy
- Wednesday 05/10 5:30 pm-** Moleben & Class

"...Now since you are celebrating the holy Pascha, you should know, brethren, what the Pascha is. Pascha means the crossing-over, and so the Festival is called by this name. For it was on this day that the Children of Israel crossed over out of Egypt, and the Son of God crossed over from this world to His Father. What gain is it to celebrate unless you imitate Him Whom you worship; that is, unless you cross over from Egypt, that is, from the darkness of evildoing to the light of virtue, from the love of this world to the love of your heavenly home?"

St. Ambrose of Milan - "The Sunday of the Resurrection"





Office of the Metropolitan

*312 Garfield Street
Johnstown, PA 15906*

April 16, 2023

Protocol No. 6/2023

PASCHA ARCHPASTORAL LETTER

To the Very Reverend Protopresbyters, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers, and Faithful (young and old) of our God-Protected Diocese:

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! VOISTINNU VOSKRESE!

CHRISTOS ANESTI! ALITHOS ANESTI!

On this great and glorious Feast of Pascha — the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, our hearts are filled with tremendous joy, our souls are transformed and we bask in the Light of Truth. This year I want to share with you an excerpt from an inspiring, uplifting and brilliant homily of our Father among the Saints, Gregory of Nyssa.

“The reign of life has begun, the tyranny of death is ended. A new birth has taken place, a new life has come, a new order of existence has appeared, our very nature has been transformed! This birth is not brought about by human generation, by the will of man, or by the desire of the flesh, but by God.

If you wonder how, I will explain in clear language. Faith is the womb that conceives this new life, baptism the rebirth by which it is brought forth into the light of day. The Church is its nurse; her teachings are its milk, the bread from heaven is its food. It is brought to maturity by the practice of virtue; it is wedded to wisdom; it gives birth to hope. Its home is the kingdom; its rich inheritance the joys of Paradise; its end, not death, but the blessed and everlasting life prepared for those who are worthy.

This is the day the Lord has made — a day far different from those made when the world was first created and which are measured by the passage of time. This is the beginning of a new creation. On this day, as the prophet says, God made a new heaven and a new earth. What is this new heaven? you may ask. It is the firmament of our faith in Christ. What is this new earth? A good heart, a heart like the earth, which drinks up the rain that falls on it and yields a rich harvest.

The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

In this new creation, purity of life is the sun, the virtues are the stars, transparent goodness is in the air, and the depths of the riches of wisdom and knowledge, the sea. Sound doctrine, the divine teachings are the grass and plants that feed God's flock, the people whom He shepherds; the keeping of the commandments is the fruit borne by the trees.

On this day is created the true man, the man made in the image and likeness of God. For this day that the Lord has made is the beginning of this new world. Of this day the prophet says that it is not like other days, nor is this night like other nights. But still we have not spoken of the greatest gift it has brought us. This day destroyed the pangs of death and brought forth birth of the firstborn of the dead.

I ascend to my Father and to Your Father, to my God and to your God. O what wonderful news! He who for our sake became like us in order to make us His brothers, now presents to His true Father His own humanity in order to draw all His kindred up after Him.”

PERSONAL GREETINGS

May all the Clergy and Laity, Friends and Supporters of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America experience the love, joy and excitement of the early followers of Christ when they first saw Him following His Resurrection. Christ is Risen!

Greetings from Johnstown with much love,

+ Metropolitan Gregory

+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

To be read as the sermon in all churches of the Diocese at Resurrection Matins and the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.



The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

ST. ELIZABETH ORTHODOX CHURCH

Paschal Greeting From Fr. Matthew, Pani Kathryn, Lazarus, & Isaiah

Dear Parish Family and Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has conquered death and opened the doors of paradise!

What a joy and privilege it is to be gathered together with you all and to celebrate the Feast of Feasts - the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. On behalf of Pani, Lazarus, Isaiah, and myself, we extend our warmest greetings and prayers to you all. *How good it is when brothers dwell in unity!*

As we celebrate this glorious occasion, we also send our love and prayers to our Hierarch and Shepherd, His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory, to all the clergy and people of our God-protected Diocese, to Metropolitan Alexios and to all the Orthodox clergy and people in the greater Atlanta area, and to all those who are celebrating with us today. May the joy and hope of the Resurrection be with us all.

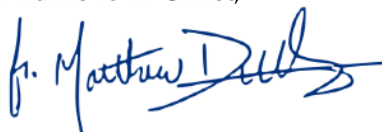
As we contemplate the profound meaning of Christ's Resurrection, we are reminded of His triumph over both sin and death. Through His victory, we are blessed with the gift of eternal life. This day marks a passage from death to life and a liberation from the shackles of sin. The joy of the Paschal Liturgy is filled with this reality, this gift from God to all of creation. Hold on to the joy of this moment for the days when the storm clouds surround us. As Christian we must always have hope, because Christ is risen!

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the life and ministry of our parish. We thank Deacon Stephen, his wife Michelle and his son James. All those who serve at the Altar, those who sing and those who read the Epistle. We thank those who continuously work to make our Church reflect the beauty of God's Kingdom, those who provided the Paschal flowers and those who arrange them for the glory of God and those who planted flowers to beautify our Church grounds. We also thank the children who bring joy to us all and the parents who continuously bring their children to the feet of Christ in His Church. We thank everyone who volunteered in the food sales, and all those who have served or are currently serving on the Parish Council or have served the Church in any way. This Pascha I am especially grateful to all of you who wrote such beautiful and inspiring articles for the bulletin. Your dedication and love for our parish family are deeply appreciated.

As we continue our journey in faith, may the joy of the Resurrection be with us always. Let us continue to grow in unity, love, and faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ.

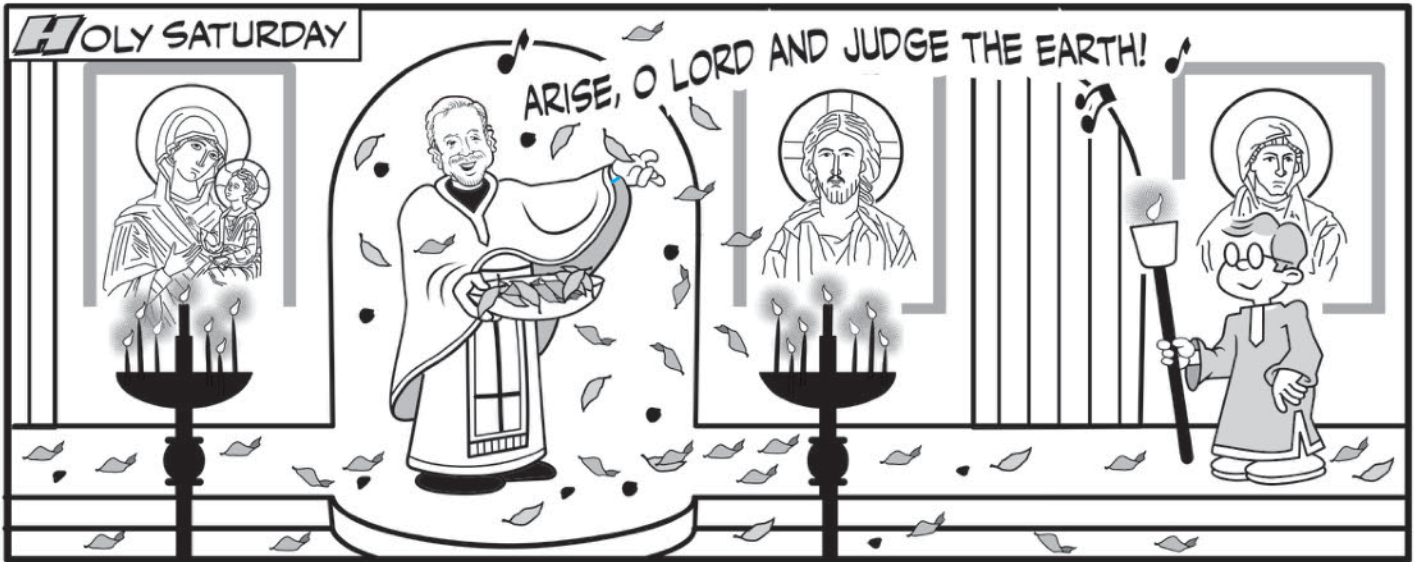
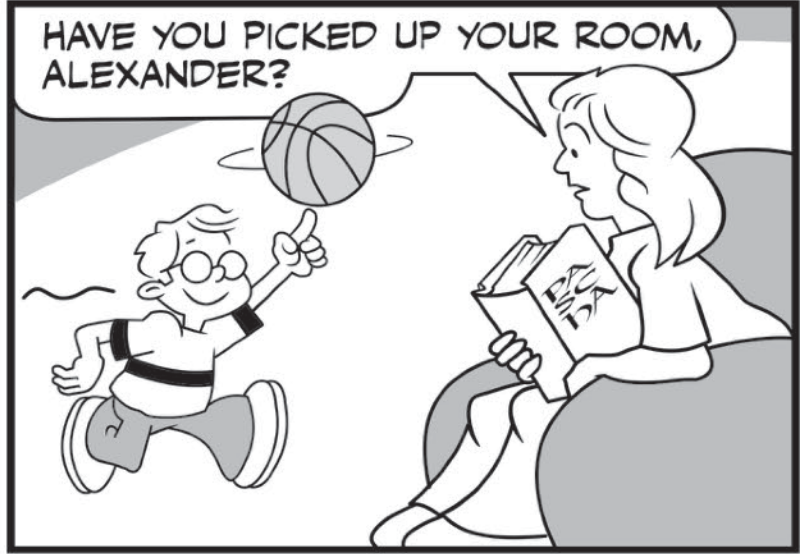
Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

With love in Christ,



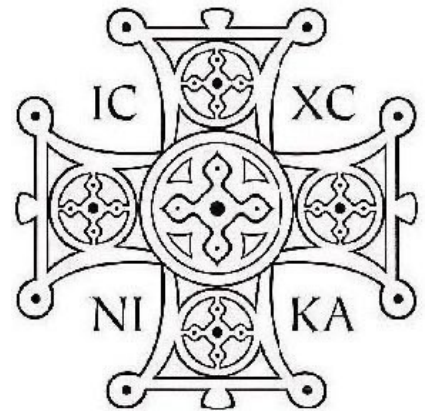
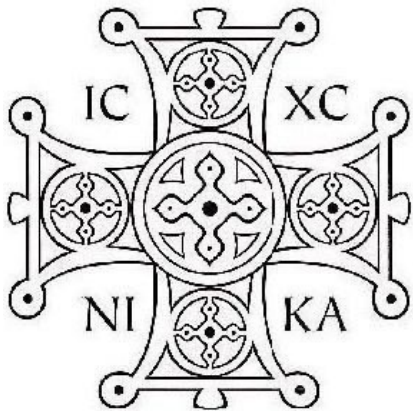
THE KIDS OF SAINT ELIZABETH

INSPIRED BY JANET AND ALEXANDER





The following pages, 09-24 in the Paschal Bulletin represent the first addition of a new Parish Family Newsletter with articles written by you, the members of the Saint Elizabeth Parish Family. I hope you all enjoy reading these as much as I did! I thank all of those who participated and encourage everyone who wasn't able to write an article to consider sending one in for the next edition!



Wayside Sacrament- by Rachel Prince

Have you ever stood in front of a beautiful mountain or sat listening to a live music performance, or perhaps stared into a loved one's eyes? In these moments, our longing for beauty and the depth of our admiration is so profound that it almost leaves us in pain. We deeply want to capture the moment, to make ourselves a part of that beauty, and yet it is elusive and fleeting, never lasting more than a moment.

We take a picture so we can look back on the beauty, but it isn't ever as moving as that time in person. We try and record audio clips from a concert on our phones, hoping to relive that special moment for years to come, and yet we cannot conjure up that same feeling. We are left longing for those moments again and again, maybe even chasing after them! That momentary encounter plants a seed of desire within us, and so we long to be in nature, to be face-to-face with those we love, to surround ourselves with beauty.

One of my favorite quotes comes from Ralph Waldo Emerson, who once said, "Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful; for beauty is God's handwriting—a wayside sacrament. Welcome it in every fair face, in every fair sky, in every fair flower, and thank God for it as a cup of blessing."

In the Church we often think of the capital "S" Sacraments like Baptism and receiving the Holy Eucharist. Just like God is limitless, so are sacraments, they are the mysterious dispensation of God's Grace to His creation. There are countless moments in life that, if we have eyes to see them, carry a sacramental quality, places and times that point beyond themselves to the reality and wonder of God. I believe we are so deeply drawn to these moments because we are made in the image of God, and so the deepest part of us is longing for heaven; for wholeness; to be home!

I recently heard someone speaking about the origin of the word *nostalgia* and thought it was beautiful! Nostalgia comes from two Greek words: *nostos*, meaning to return home, and *algos*, meaning pain. *Pain to return home*. The deep longing we feel in these nostalgic moments is an acute homesickness! Heaven is our destination, and our world is filled with signposts pointing us towards our true and lasting home.

Let us appreciate these wayside sacraments, these divine graces, as gifts from our Lord. I pray, just as Ralph Waldo Emerson says, you will never miss an opportunity to allow life's everyday graces to awaken you to a longing for home. And remember it is an aching desire that one day will be fulfilled!



MY BABA'S LOVE STORY

By Judy Sponhaltz

Growing up, I lived between our church and my grandparents' home. My Baba, Irene Warbel, loved the Lord our God. Over the years, I was so fortunate to observe her faithfulness to her church.

She came from the "Old Country" which she would say when talking about her roots in the past. She brought all her beliefs with her when she sailed to America.



Baba was always in church on Sundays, Holy Days, and Vesper services. She very seldom missed church. She would put on her Babushka and walk to church no matter what the weather. She would cross herself as she walked past the front of the church. She was always ready to clean the church and help raise money for the church by baking bread and her pierogi.

Baba firmly believed in helping those in need. She became Baba to unmarried priests. They would walk over to her house for companionship and good food!

During the depression, my dad said she provided the food she could to hungry men passing through. My grandparents were fortunate to have a small farm with beef cattle, hogs, chickens, and vegetables.

My brothers and I learned about faithfulness through the examples our Baba showed us. My Aunt Mary was our Sunday School teacher and followed her mother's lead by teaching us about our faith.

Baba would sit by the upstairs window of her home and read from her prayer book in the afternoons. She read it so many times that the pages had come loose from the binder. After reading the prayer book, she would close it up and bind it with rubber bands. Then she would tie the book with a white ribbon.

Her prayer book was buried with her when she passed at the age of 102.

She truly was a servant of God!

As I reflect on this piece, I see many people at Saint Elizabeth's Orthodox Church must have had families like mine because I see it in their worship and service to the church! **GOD BLESS YOU ALL!**

Dear Children, let us not love with word or speech, But with actions and in truth. -John 3:18 (NIV)

Walking in His Ways- by Mike Filkins

The Ten expressions for God's Word in Psalm 118 (119)

Even as God gave to Moses Ten Commandments that, if followed by God's people, would result in a right relationship with God and with their fellow man, so God has through the Psalmist given us ten words that encompass how we are to approach the Holy Scriptures so as to result in a Spirit-led, Christ-honoring life.

At what point in my life Psalm 118 (119) captivated my attention I cannot with exactness say, but since 2010 I have done various personal studies of this Psalm. This particular inquiry into the ten words reflecting the Holy Scriptures began from E.W Bullinger's "The Companion Bible" which was printed after his death in 1922.

There are two types of travelers: The first is a tourist who notices the main attractions, is content to look from a distance, and is interested in seeing as much as possible in a short amount of time. The second is an explorer who is much more curious. He stops when a new sight/insight arrests his attention. He asks himself, "what can I learn and apply to my life for my betterment as a person?" He looks intently, takes "behind the scenes" tours, and tries to understand the why's and when's of things.

I invite you to be an explorer with me today into the longest chapter in the Bible, Psalm 118. It is filled with nuggets of truth, and it would be a mistake to rush through it.

In verse one, the first word translated "the way" from Hebrew is "derek (deh'-rek)," and it appears 13 times in this Psalm. See if you can find them in the paragraphs below.

By definition, "derek", means to walk with the feet, conveying one's journey through life. From the Psalmist's use of this important word we see where one finds true fulfillment as he travels through life.

The first occurrence of the word "way" is in the first verse. The writer begins with the word "blessed" which denotes happiness or total satisfaction. What makes a person happy and fulfilled? Not power, not position, not prestige, and not prosperity. Psalm is most likely written by King Hezekiah. As king, Hezekiah is a wealthy and prominent man who is telling us that happiness does not come from a power and wealth.

Saint Gregory of Nyssa said: "The goal of the virtuous life is blessedness ... This is the summation and object of everything conceived in relation to the good." ... (The Orthodox Psalter, The Psalter According to the Seventy, with The Nine Odes, and Patristics Commentary; p. 253).

The one who is blessed is the one who is "blameless in the way." The word blameless/upright is defined by several words in English: to be entire, whole, or complete - literally, figuratively or morally. Those who are morally upright in their walk are blessed, and to them is extended the right arm of the strength of the Lord. They are the recipients of God's grace and mercy!

The second occurrence appears in the third verse, which makes it absolutely clear that those who act wickedly have not walked in God's way and do not practice His laws. The Psalmist understood human frailties as he expressed the deep longing of his soul to faithfully keep and guard His statutes in all of his life's journey. We all fall short of God's expectations for us, yet He is merciful! It is the human condition to start well, fail to be obedient, resolve to do better, only to fall short once more. The Psalmist stated that in obedience to His testimonies he found delight and rejoiced more than in the possession of all riches. This is reminiscent of Matthew 16:26 or Mark 8:36-37 "For what shall a man profit if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

In verse 26, there is a dialogue between the Psalmist and God. If King Hezekiah was the writer, then this verse could well be his recalling the events recorded in 2 Kings 20 where Hezekiah was sick. He declared his ways to God, God heard, answered, and assured him that he would be healed, would have an heir, and live another 15 years. Even though Hezekiah's heart was proud and God judged the nation of Israel, Hezekiah's desire was to be instructed in God's statutes, (God's decrees cut in stone), which probably refers to the 10 commandments.



In verse 27, he expands his desire, that God would cause him to understand “experientially” (ie: “to comprehend”) the statutes or precepts of God. Statutes and precepts will be developed further in a later article.

In verse 29, we see as a cry from the Psalmist that God would remove the way of lying or unrighteousness, and through God’s law, that He might be merciful to him. We as human beings are fragile and weak after failing to be mature and complete in our obedience. The Psalmist understood this and pleaded for God’s help and mercy. How often we wallow in sin for our failures to cry out to God for His divine help and mercy!!

Here is an important teaching: God’s mercy comes to us through His law. How is this possible? As we are obedient to the voice/prompts of the Holy Spirit, we will benefit physically as well as spiritually.

Like the Psalmist, we also have the choice to walk in the way of truth or falsehood. Let us not be self deceived and follow our own will but Him who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

(John 14:6)

In verse 32, we discover that God’s commandments are a journey that the godly “run after to obey.” That “running after” is due to the broadening of their hearts to accept and purpose to obey God’s commands. Here, the ancient Hebraic Scriptural title that is a heading for the next section of verses, is symbolized as a “door” which represents a means of “going into or out of,” or “a path or a way of life.”

Not only are God’s commands a “way of life” but God’s statutes are as well. The Psalmist’s desire is to continually seek to follow. What then is the difference between a command and a statute? Commands are equivalent to constitutional law whereas statutes are like decrees that flow from it.

Verse 37 speaks to the pitfalls of the physical eyes that confront believers every day. The Psalmist cried out to God to turn his eyes away from vanity, which is “evil and destructive, literally or morally.” It is idolatry, uselessness, and deception. (Strong’s # 7723) In today’s physical realm it might be the inappropriate use of TV, music, iPad, smart phones, internet, etc. Destructive images corrupt and destroy our sense of morality. They destroy our very soul via the eye-gate.

But even more so spiritually, there is a deep destructiveness. When we allow evil into our lives through the eyes there is a corresponding effect on our spirits. The sense of right and wrong become blurred and we enter a downward spiral into increasing evil which is damaging physically and spiritually.

This is why there is a cry in verse 37, to “turn away my eyes.” May we too desire that God keep temptation far from us. We also have a responsibility to stop our thoughts toward evil and turn to God for help so that the thoughts don’t become evil actions. An early church father, St Mark the Ascetic, taught the following downward steps in his writing on “the Spiritual Laws”:

Provocation – temptation

Coupling – mental conversation with the temptation

Assent – delightful yielding ourselves to the temptation

Activity– forceful abduction of our heart due to yielding to the temptation

Struggle – a force equal to the strength of the temptation. Here we yield to the spirit or give in to the temptation

Passion – what was hidden becomes a habit and the soul clings to it! ... to its physical and spiritual lies.

This is why verse 37 concludes with “quicken - make alive Thou me in Thy way.” Unless God is our strong Helper in our time of need, we are destined to failure!

We have in verse 59 a triple “repetition” of “thinking on God’s ways.” First, one actively brings to remembrance how God works and what He calls us to as His children. Second, he “turns his feet” to God’s testimonies. We see a purposeful returning to profitable teaching. Third, we see the word “testimonies” which by definition is a repeating of evidence. God’s words are true and one cannot refute Him.

Verse 168 concludes the verses for “way.” I have kept (guarded) Thy commandments ... testimonies, for all my ways are before Thee, O Lord.” Here is a testament to a life committed to obedience to God’s law!



Why I Choose to Wear a Head Covering in an Orthodox Church

By Evelyn Melnikoff

As society modernized, the ancient custom of women wearing head coverings in the Orthodox Church was forgotten by many. I too fell in line with the trend during the 1970s, despite being raised differently by my late grandfather, an Orthodox priest in Albania.

Recently, while looking through decades-old scrapbooks, I've found joy in reminiscing about my childhood church experiences. I see my mom and her three young daughters in our Sunday church hats. As I turn the pages, I see myself as a young wife and mother of three toddler sons heading to church with my Sunday church hat atop my head.



Then suddenly there was a change. Why are so many of my following photos hatless? I guess I joined the non-head covering group. Years later, when St. Elizabeth was just establishing itself, one of our parishioners and friends passed away. His wife was one who always followed the traditional custom of covering her head. As a show of support to the family and as a way to remember our friend, the ladies of St. Elizabeth decided we would all wear head coverings to the funeral.

This was my "AHA" moment!! Why had I drifted away from my roots? It was now time to follow what I had been taught. The ancient tradition of women wearing head coverings is still practiced in many Orthodox communities around the world. This practice has its basis in Holy Scripture, specifically 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, where St. Paul instructs women to cover their heads while praying. The purpose of this tradition is to show humility before God and serve as a visual reminder of one's faith, piety, and dedication to God.

Do I wear a hat because I find it stylish, fashionable, chic? No, no and no! I wear one because I was raised in a household that followed this ancient custom. I wear one because when I look at the Icons of the Mother of God and of Saint Elizabeth they wear them. I wear one because our angels delight in it. I wear one to be obedient to my Father in Heaven.

Was it a Miracle?

By Ray Sparks

Several years ago, I was in confession with Father Matthew. I was having some difficulty kneeling due to a painful right hip. After my confession Father Matthew produced a zip lock bag containing several small cotton balls. He gave one to me and told me they contained myrrh from "The Tender Heart" Weeping Icon of the Mother of God in Taylor, Pennsylvania. He instructed me to apply the myrrh to my hip once I reached home.

I did as he instructed and as I applied the myrrh to my right hip the pain immediately went away. As I stated this was several years ago and I cannot recall any pain from my right hip since that day.

Did I experience a miracle?

Would it be a sin if I wished for enough myrrh to fill my bathtub?



A bird of paradise flew into the fowler's net while admiring her feathers.

"How beautiful are the plumes of my tail!" She exclaimed. Suddenly the snare closed around her. Stopping so quickly shocked her and it took several moments for her to realize she could not escape.

"Oh, help! Help!" she wailed. "Someone please help me!"

Another bird of paradise heard her cries, flew over to see what was the matter and landed on a branch nearby.

"Please help me, my sister." Begged the trapped bird.

"I cannot get you out. The net is too strong for my claws to break." Said the other bird.

"Then go for help. Find the huntsman. Send him to free me." Cried the first bird.

"I will find him and tell him of your sad plight. But you must be careful for the fowler is near. Cease not from calling out to the huntsman for help." Then the second bird left her perch and flew swiftly away.

Softly the bird of paradise began to cry. "The huntsman will not get here on time. The fowler will sell me to the hat store for my feathers or to the zoo to put me on display. How foolish of me to be admiring myself and not watch where I was going. I am doomed."

"Aha! This is truly a fine catch. One of the huntsman's precious birds is now mine!" the fowler exulted. His sudden appearance startled the bird and she cried out again for help.

"Please save me, mighty huntsman!"

"Pooh! The huntsman is not near and he could not help you anyway. You now belong to me." Said the fowler as he began to carefully untangle the bird from the net.

"What will you do with me? Are you going to sell my feathers to the hatter?" she asked.

"Stop resisting and I will let you live. Your feathers will not be plucked. I will make you the most spectacular of my caged birds. You will be placed in the finest gilded cage with a golden cup to drink fine nectars. You will be served exotic fruits, nuts and seeds to your heart's content." The fowler carefully attached a leash to one of the legs of the bird of paradise.

While the fowler made these promises, the bird dreamed of the rich life it would have, but was rudely awakened to reality when the leash was attached. "But will I be allowed to fly?" she asked.

"No, for you will fly away." Answered the fowler.

"But I have to fly or I will die." Pleaded the bird.

The huntsman's dog suddenly appeared. "Release the master's bird of paradise. This is one of his favored."

"Off with you, foolish dog, or I will send an arrow through your heart." Warned the fowler.

"Do with me what you will but remember the huntsman. He rules the forest and all that is in it." The dog spoke with calm authority.

"The huntsman will never know or catch me. Be off I say or you will be sorry." The fowler reached back to his quiver and pulled out an arrow.

A loud and long trumpet sounded some distance away. The dog began to back away.

"My master is close by and calls me. Release the bird for he will be here soon." The dog turned to go.

Furiously the fowler notched the arrow in his bow, drew back and released the shaft. It flew after the dog but he was already on his way through the brush, zigzagging to avoid being shot.

The bird strained to see if the dog escaped the fowler's deadly aim, but the fowler roughly grabbed her by the throat. From his belt he pulled out a bag to put over her.

"If you struggle I will break your neck." Hissed the fowler. Hurriedly he pulled the bag around her and tied it off with a leather thong.

Continued on the Next Page



The fowler gathered his weapons and began to run in the opposite direction of the trumpet call, the sack with the bird of paradise flopping on his back. Inside the bag, the helpless bird cried for aid. While the fowler was looking back to see if he was being pursued, he ran into something, knocking him to the ground and scattering his possessions all around, including the captured bird. Looking up after his head cleared, he saw a huge man mounted on a magnificent horse. To the side of the horse was the dog. Above him, perched on a branch in a spreading oak, was another bird of paradise.



"What is in the sack, fowler?" asked the rider.

"None of your business, stranger. Move aside and let me pass. The bag and all that is in it is mine." The fowler attempted to get to his feet. Immediately the rider dismounted and put his foot on the fowler's chest.

"Unhand me, sir! You have no right to hold me. Are you a highwayman that robs innocent people of their goods and then slits their throats so they won't tell?" demanded the fowler, feigning indignation.

"I am the huntsman. These forests are mine, given to me by my father, the king. All the creatures are mine. Why are you here in my woods?" the huntsman asked, ignoring the fowler's ranting.

"I was just passing through when suddenly you knocked me down. Is this the way you treat your guests?" asked the fowler.

"You were running without watching where you were going. You did not answer my first question. What is in the sack, fowler?" the huntsman calmly waited for his answer.

"I do not know what is in the sack. I was running because your dog attacked me. I was just passing through these woods to get home when I came upon your dog and this bag. I tried to stop him from killing whatever is in the sack. I took it from him and he attacked me." The fowler pointed his finger accusingly at the dog.

"Are these your arrows?" the huntsman nodded at the quiver nearby.

"Yes." Admitted the fowler.

The huntsman called the dog over. An arrow was stuck in his hindquarters.

"I had to defend myself." Objected the fowler.

This time the huntsman had the horse put its hoof on the fowler's chest while he retrieved the sack. He untied the mouth of the sack and gently pulled out the bird of paradise.

"Your dog would have killed that magnificent bird if it had not been for my rescue." The fowler was confident his lies had thrown doubt on the dog.

"My dog is not capable of tying things onto my other creatures, fowler. This leash is yours for it is exactly like the ones on your belt. Begone, liar! Out of my forests with your traps and snares! If I catch you here again, you will be thrown into the bramble pit without question. See! Upon your chest is my brand for liars. You will be known as a liar and a thief."

The horse lifted his hoof and the fowler scrambled away, relieved that he was free. He ran as fast as he could, and did not stop until he came to the edge of the forest.

Carefully, the huntsman untied the leash from the bird's leg. Gratefully the bird nuzzled into the huntsman's breast, glad to be free and yet glad to belong to the huntsman.

"You are a beautiful creature. You do not have to admire yourself. When you take your eyes from your journey to flatter yourself, then you are not watching where you are going. You will fall. But I will come and rescue you. Now fly lovely one. Fly freely and watch your way. Be careful of the fowler's net." The huntsman released her and tossed her into the air. With a cry of gratitude, the bird of paradise winged upward, joined by her friend to soar in the sky. The huntsman then tended to the wound of his faithful dog.

What of the fowler? In his haste to get far away from the huntsman, he had no time to look at his chest. Tearing open his shirt he cried out in fear and anger at what he saw. For there on his chest was the permanent brand of the huntsman's foot.

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Lean on the Lord

by Tripp Prince

In that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will no more lean on him who struck them, but will lean on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. Isaiah 10:20 (ESV)

Though they are meant to be God's chosen and set apart people, living in perfect relationship with him and one another, the people of God throughout the Bible find themselves living under the oppression of foreign rule, a conquered people who have lost the freedom to live in the light of God's perfect love. This pattern of rebellion and return is found throughout the Old Testament Narrative, from Egypt to Assyria to Babylon, God allows his people to be subjected to foreign rule as a direct result of their failure to abide by his ways.

In many ways, these ancient stories couldn't be further removed from our modern lives and experiences of faith. We do not live as a nation under the direct guidance of God, nor do we have a divinely appointed king. Similarly, few of us spend our days worried about the threat of conquest and forced subjugation to a foreign ruler. And yet I wonder, might there be more in common than what first meets the eye?

As a conquered people, by necessity, Israel was required to "lean" on their oppressors. They were no longer free and therefore lacked the ability to provide for themselves. They did what they were told and thus survived. Though our oppressors may not be as easy to identify, we must daily ask ourselves the question: *what has conquered me?*

We rarely frame our day-to-day existence in this way, but it may be increasingly helpful to explore areas in which we are no longer free but instead slaves to outside forces or internal desires. Many of us "lean on" the global financial system, looking to it as our source of security and prosperity. Often we are conquered by our passions, whether it is a distorted sexual longing, a raging temper, or an unchecked desire for mindless entertainment. And though it takes many shapes and forms, *fear* is a particularly cruel master, for it causes us to retreat and shrink away from opportunities that call for bold courage.

Whatever may have us conquered, Isaiah's words are an invitation into a life of freedom and dependence, however paradoxical that may sound. For the Christian, freedom is never absolute autonomy but is found in a life of unwavering dependence upon the goodness of God. We lean on the Lord and, in so doing, find the path that leads to perfect peace.



Why Easter Eggs Are a Christian Tradition - Fr. Matthew Dutko

Humanity has had a long fascination with the symbol of the egg. In ancient times, before the birth of Christ, people believed that eggs symbolized new life, fertility, and rebirth. As a result, they often decorated eggs during the springtime as a way to celebrate the return of warmer weather and new growth.

But for Christians, the tradition of Easter eggs takes on a deeper meaning. The egg is seen as a symbol of the tomb in which Jesus was buried after his crucifixion. Just as the chick hatches from an egg, so too did Jesus rise from the dead on the third day.

In some Orthodox Christian traditions it is customary to bring red eggs to church on Easter. These red eggs symbolize the blood of Christ and the resurrection, and they are often dyed red using onion skins or other natural dyes. The eggs are blessed by the priest during the Paschal service and are then shared as a sign of unity and community. Eggs are also often decorated with images of crosses, flowers, and other symbols of the Christian faith.

In the Carpatho-Russian tradition along with Eastern European countries like Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, there is a specific tradition of decorating eggs called *pysanky*. *Pysanky* means "to write," and it refers to the process of using wax and dyes to create intricate designs on eggs. These designs often include symbols of the Christian faith, such as crosses, stars, birds, and can even include writing out or abbreviating the words *Christ is Risen*.

The process of creating *pysanky* eggs is very detailed and requires a lot of skill and patience. First, a pattern is drawn onto the egg using wax. Then, the egg is dipped into a dye bath, and the parts of the egg covered in wax are protected from the dye. This process is repeated multiple times, with more wax being added to the egg each time to create more complex designs.

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I can remember many Good Fridays and Holy Saturdays gathered with my family around the table creating these beautiful designs. Mine looked nothing like the ones pictured above, and I don't really love hard boiled eggs, but there is a special reminder of the love of God and family in those memories from youth that reminds me still of the joys of our Lord and His Resurrection.

Pysanky eggs are not only beautiful works of art, but they also serve as a reminder of the Christian message of new life and rebirth. Just as the wax protects the egg from the dye, so too does our faith protect us and empower us to face the challenges and sorrows of life. And just as the egg is transformed by the dye into something new and beautiful, we too have the opportunity for our lives be transformed in Christ's likeness by the power of the Resurrection.

There is also a story in Christian tradition about Mary Magdalene and Easter eggs. According to legend, Mary Magdalene brought eggs with her to Jerusalem two years after the resurrection of Jesus. She gave the eggs to the Roman Emperor Tiberius Caesar as a symbol of the resurrection of Jesus.

The Emperor was skeptical of Mary's story, and he remarked that it was just as unlikely for a man to rise from the dead as it was for the eggs she brought him to turn red. However, as he spoke, the eggs miraculously turned red, and the Emperor was convinced of the truth of Mary's message.

This story is one of the reasons that Easter eggs have become such an important part of the Paschal celebration. They serve as a reminder of the miracle of the resurrection and the power of faith.

So, when your kiddos go on an Easter egg hunt or you decorate Easter eggs, remember that these colorful eggs represent the miracle of Jesus' resurrection. As you help your kids search for them or create your own designs, think about the joy and hope that Pascha brings to us all. And when you crack open an egg to reveal the yolk inside, remember that it is a reminder of the new life that Jesus offers us by His Resurrection.



Finding the Right Holy Hospital — For Me *By Dr. Timothy Furnish*

Last year Timothy Furnish received the Mystery of Chrismation here at Saint Elizabeth's. The following is an article Tim wrote about his journey to the fullness of the faith in Christ for *The Stream*.

On May 15, 2022, I was chrismated into the Orthodox Church. And [no, NPR](#), it's not because I'm a "far-right" American looking for icons of Vladimir Putin. Or even Donald Trump. It's the result of a quarter-century of study, prayer, and hard thinking about where I can best become more like Christ before I shuffle off this mortal coil.



Raised Baptist

I have been a Christian my whole life, with the exception of a year or so failed attempt at atheism in college. I was baptized Southern Baptist, the church in which my parents raised me. I will be forever grateful to them for that, and to that denomination for teaching me the importance of Scripture and the need to stand against sinful and malicious societal trends. Like drinking (too much) alcohol. (An edict which, alas, I violated more than once as a college fraternity President.)

Mostly Lived as a Lutheran

After (Baptist) college and one miserable semester in law school, I enlisted in the Army. At some point I attended a Lutheran church, and became enamored of the liturgy and, eventually, the theology. By 1985 I had joined a Missouri Synod Lutheran church. After my discharge, I enrolled at Concordia Seminary to pursue a M.Div. and seek ordination. That didn't work out, and so I graduated with a M.A. But I remained Lutheran, although over the years drifting from the LC-MS to the ELCA depending on where I lived, then back when the latter became extremely liberal (both theologically and politically).

Strengths of Lutheranism

At its best Lutheranism [marries key Scriptural truths to scholastic reasoning](#). (Lutherans did invent *sola Scriptura*, after all). Perhaps the best example of this is the key doctrine of justification v. sanctification. [The former](#) means that sinners are declared righteous by Jesus Christ's atoning death and resurrection. [The latter](#) is the putting to work of that forgiveness in one's life — doing good works, in other words. There is even an element in Lutheranism of "Christification" — becoming more like Him in this life. (See the excellent book on that topic by Reverend Dr. Jordan Cooper, [Christification: A Lutheran Approach to Theosis](#).) But by-and-large many, if not most, (conservative) Lutheran churches and pastors highlight justification far more than sanctification — much less Christification.

Being Christian Does Not Depend on Denomination

Still, millions of people are good and faithful Christians as Lutherans or Baptists. Ditto for Protestants as a whole, be they Presbyterians, Methodists, other denominations, or some of the great numbers of folks in nondenominational churches. And this is most certainly true, as well, for legions of believers in the world's largest Christian body, the Roman Catholic church. But I felt like I had no choice but to join the oft-forgotten third branch of Christianity — Orthodoxy.

[Continued on the Next Page](#)

Finding the Right Holy Hospital — For Me - *Continued*

Why Orthodoxy?

Why? Eventually I came to realize that, for me, the practice of the presence of God demanded it. How did I get to that point? I read much Orthodox theology, started using and studying the Orthodox Study Bible, and began praying Orthodox prayers (especially those by St. Basil). That was necessary but not sufficient, as I didn't yet attend Divine Liturgy regularly. (At one point I dragged my pregnant wife to an Orthodox church — that didn't have seats. She, and God, eventually forgave me.)

Theologically, I found myself much in tune with Orthodoxy, especially on issues such as original v. ancestral sin, justification by faith *alone*, and Scripture plus Tradition. Most importantly, I was drawn to the Eastern churches' teaching on theosis or "deification": becoming as much like Christ as is possible in this life. This "has been illustrated by the example of a sword in the fire. A steel sword is thrust into a hot fire until the sword takes on a red glow. The energy of the fire interpenetrates the sword. The sword [man] never become fire [God], but it picks up the properties of fire. ... Nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ, we partake of the grace of God — His strength, His righteousness, His love — and are enabled to serve Him and glorify Him. Thus we, being human, are being deified" (*Orthodox Study Bible*, p. 1692).

Ultimately, the Heart Trumps the Head

Finally, last year I began going to Divine Liturgy regularly (while still attending the Lutheran church with my wife and, when they were home, sons). I also started meeting with the priest at the local Orthodox church, who graciously and patiently walked me through the Orthodox faith. But it is the attendance at, and participation in, the Divine Liturgy that really clinched it for me. I have never felt the presence of the Triune God as strongly and as clearly as when I am there. So, once my heart and my head were both convinced, and convicted, I really had no choice but to become Orthodox.

Some of the Sick Need a Holy Hospital

All of my church-going family, both immediate and extended, are Protestants of various kinds. God bless them. I would never question their piety, much less their salvation, in light of Romans 10:9: "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." As for me, however, I am sick with sin — and the [Orthodox Church is the hospital](#) where I seek, and find, God's holy medicine.

Plus, I really like incense.



My Journey to Orthodoxy though Islam- by John Marion

It begins when I was a student at Washington Bible College in Lanham, MD. The Bible degree included an emphasis on missions, cultural anthropology, comparative religion, and cross-cultural communication. I was required to study various Christian denominations (Western Christianity with little to no exposure to the Orthodox Church) as well as world religions. The study of Islam and history of Christian missionary work among Muslims captured my attention and propelled me into what would become a 26 year journey into the Muslim world.



My first venture brought me to the Islamic Center on Embassy Row in Washington, DC where I was quickly and firmly told to leave because I was not dressed appropriately. It was a hot summer day and I was wearing shorts which is forbidden at the mosque. I went to my car where I had a pair of pants, put them on, and promptly returned where I was warmly welcomed by the cleric and his assistants who kicked me out a few minutes earlier.

This was the first experience of many when, in addition to my academic studies, I learned about Islam from Muslim clerics and devout Muslims. My training enabled me to develop a systematic approach to learning about Islam from Muslims by asking questions. I have had many conversations at mosques and in Shia and Sunni Muslim communities in Washington, DC, New York City, London, Istanbul, Islamabad, Peshawar Pakistan, Kabul, and Mazar-i-Sherif, Afghanistan.

The things I learned over the years have allowed me the opportunity to compare and contrast the beliefs and practices of Muslims with the fundamental, Orthodox teachings of Christianity. Without any knowledge of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the missionary community to which I belonged developed answers to various objections against Christianity. I realized later in my spiritual journey that the Orthodox Church had centuries earlier developed a set of answers to these theological debates, especially in the writing of Saint John of Damascus and the Church Fathers.

Muslims told me many things about their perspective of Christian theology and culture. These included their reasons for rejecting the fundamental teachings of Christianity and their beliefs about relevant topics such as prophets, revelation, sacred writings, and angels.

So what does all this have to do with my journey to Orthodoxy?

When I first discovered Orthodoxy and thought about the beliefs and practices of the Orthodox Church, I started experiencing new things that Muslims told me about Christianity! Some of these things have theological meaning while others are more culturally relevant to an Eastern world-view.

The following is a list of a few things that have been meaningful to me in my journey to Orthodoxy through Islam. As you read this list, please be aware that my understanding of Islam comes mostly from practical experience and personal encounters with devout Muslims, including clerics.

The Four Holy Books. Muslims believe God sent many prophets to mankind. While some have been “writing prophets” only four books are still extant. These are the Torah of Moses, the Psalms of David, the Gospel of Jesus, and the Quran of Mohammed. Muslims state that the Torah, Psalms, and Gospel have all be corrupted and that only the Quran has survived as revealed by God.

One of the arguments Muslims have developed is that the Christians do not have the Gospel Book of Jesus. Christians say they have the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John but they don’t have the Gospel of Jesus. I have thought about this for many years and have explained to Muslims that the four gospels together is the good news preached by Jesus Christ. But I have always asked myself, why do the Muslims say that Jesus has a Gospel Book?

After several visits to Saint Elizabeth, I realized that the Orthodox Church has the Gospel Book of Jesus!

Look at the icon of Christ to the right of the royal doors and look up on the ceiling. Jesus is holding the Gospel Book. Look and see the priest and deacon lifting up and processing with the Gospel Book of Jesus during the Little Entrance in every Divine Liturgy.

My Journey to Orthodoxy though Islam- *Continued*



Reverence Towards Clerics and Holy Objects. In Western Christianity formal reverence is rarely or never shown toward ordained ministers and holy objects. You will probably never see an Evangelical venerating a Bible or kissing the hand of their pastor.

Muslims however will show a reverence toward their clerics and holy objects, such as the Quran or prayer beads. While they categorically reject the use of icons, they will always demonstrate their reverence of the Quran by always placing it on a high shelf or place of honor and never on the floor. They will usually kiss the Quran book when they pick it up.

When the Quran is read in the mosque, it is reverently chanted and this is also usually practiced by devout Muslims when they read the Quran in their homes. It is never read casually without intonation.

I was absolutely stunned the first time I heard the Gospel chanted on YouTube by an Arab Orthodox deacon on Easter morning liturgy. The intonation was the same as what I heard in mosques around the world. I immediately understood that Islam learned this practice from Orthodox Christianity.

Seeing the reverence Muslims demonstrate toward holy objects and clerics prepared me to have a higher level of comfort entering the Orthodox Church. An Eastern world-view is enshrined in the practices of the Church. If it had not been for my experiences in the Islamic world I don't know if I would have been as open to the things that are considered to be weird from a purely American / Western perspective, such as venerating icons.

Angels, Invisible Spirits, and Saints. My Bible college and short seminary training gave me opportunity to study about the existence of angels and demons from an academic viewpoint. Most Evangelical pastors and Bible scholars I know preach and teach about angels from an academic point of view with little or no benefit to the practical Christian life. Saints are godly Christians who have fallen asleep in the Lord, but no prayers or communication with the saints are practiced. The saints are merely remembered for their exemplary lives.

In contrast to most pastors in Evangelical churches I know, the missionaries I worked with talked freely about the invisible spirit world. Our experiences with Muslims included conversations about angels and other spirits which the Muslims call jinn. Thinking and talking about the existence of invisible spirits in this context is normal. Muslims will give special reverence toward those who are considered saints. Special honor, and to a certain extent fear, is demonstrated at gravesites of saints and cemeteries.

Our missionary community even engaged in what we called "spiritual warfare" in our prayer life. We prayed against demonic activities we believe we were experiencing. Sometimes we mentioned specific angels in our prayers. The book of Daniel mentions the archangels Gabriel and Michael who speaks of "the prince of the kingdom of Persia" which is a reference to Satan. This had particular relevance to us in the missionary community who were witnessing for Christ in the Persian world of Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Look at the icons on the walls at Saint Elizabeth. We see angels depicted in many icons. Some icons are devoted to a single angel, such as Michael, Gabriel or a guardian angel. The existence of and interaction with angels is a normal part of the Orthodox Christian experience. We honor and pray to saints of the Church in every worship service.

The belief in angels and the invisible spirit world is prominent among devout Muslims who will talk to angels several times a day. My experiences in the Islamic world prepared me to be receptive to the invisible spiritual world that we experience as Orthodox Christians.

Respect for Mary. Islam has more respect for Mary than evangelical Christianity. I always wondered why the Quran gave so much respect to Mary since my version of Christianity showed very little respect, and sometimes derision, toward Mary. Islamic theology denies the deity of Jesus. He is a great prophet, but not the Son of God. Islam teaches, however, that Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus. One of the titles of Jesus is Masi (Messiah, Christ) but no specific meaning is attached to that title other than honor and respect for Jesus as a great prophet. Mary is highly esteemed in Islam.

My Journey to Orthodoxy though Islam- *Continued*

The experiences I have had in listening to Muslims speak reverently toward Mary was in stark contrast to how my Evangelical colleagues spoke of Mary. As I began my journey into Orthodoxy, these experiences kept my heart and mind open to learning more about why Mary is so highly esteemed.

Obviously the respect Islam demonstrates toward Mary in the Quran comes from ancient Christianity. What I have learned is that Mary is the best example of any human being who has followed Christ. She became like Christ more than anyone else.

Biblical Figures. Muslims have respect for some of the prophets and saints mentioned in the Bible. Here is a story of one of my experiences talking about saints to a Muslim. This took place in the area known as Pashtunistan, the place of the Pashtuns, which straddles the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the homeland of the Taliban.

I was part of a relief effort to distribute food and blankets to refugees fleeing from the mujahideen wars in the late 1990's. We were scoping out a suitable location to bring in a massive amount of supplies. Our group was comprised of Christian missionaries from many different countries and local Afghans. During some down time I talked with one of the Afghan Muslim co-workers.

My new friend asked me about my father, which is a normal question. In this culture, the family structure and family relationships are important. I told him about my father and my mother, John and Mary. I showed him a photograph of my family and told him my son's name is John and my daughters name is Elizabeth. I explained that these are important names to me as they are names of important saints mentioned in the Bible. I knew he would know who I was talking about as I explained about the biblical figures of Mary the mother of Jesus, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist. This was a natural conversation we had about my family and he told me about his family.

Shortly after this encounter Michele and I with our two young children, John and Elizabeth, moved from Pakistan into Afghanistan to begin the next chapter of our journey. A year or two later I ran into one of the missionaries I knew in Pakistan. He told me that one of our Japanese Christian co-workers had a friendship with the same Afghan Muslim I talked to about my family.

The missionary had been talking to his Muslim friend for several years about Christ. He had shown an interest in Christianity but wasn't ready to move forward making a confession of faith Christ. I was told that after my conversation with him about my family and the saints, the Afghan guy went to his Christian friend to tell him about his experience listening to my story and that he was now ready to become a follower of Christ!

This and other experiences in the Muslim world has helped me to talk freely about saints mentioned in the Bible to non-Christians. The lives of the saints are powerful stories to share. These experiences prepared me to take the next step as an Orthodox Christian to actually talk to the saints themselves!

Of course my wife Michele has many experiences and stories too. Ask her!

My Prayer for Muslims

Some of the Afghans we knew are Christians but most are not. Some of them are named Hussain, Abdul, Zahir, and Mohammed. Two of my American colleagues, Tom and Dan, have given their lives while serving as relief workers among displaced people in northern Afghanistan. I will never forget their selfless sacrifices to the Afghan people and I will never forget many of the Muslims I have met and lived among. They have been kind and hospitable toward me and my family.

Muslims have a zeal for God but they are spiritually blind to the love of Christ. My prayer for Muslims is like the Apostle Paul's prayer for Israel, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved."



The Mysterious Gift of Tithing and Abundance- by Elaine Filkins

Many years ago my husband Mike and I were avid listeners of Larry Burkett's radio talk show, "Money Matters," where we learned about building our dream home without incurring any debts. Following his teachings, we were determined to stick to our plan and make it a reality. Chuck Thompson, a writer for their newsletter, visited our house, interviewed us, and wrote an article titled "One Step at a Time" that chronicled our experiences. Our goal was to follow a step-by-step plan and execute it diligently.

As a fan, I was thrilled when I saw an advertisement for a temporary job opening on Larry's show. I knew immediately that I had to apply for the job, and to my great delight, the temporary position turned into a permanent role that lasted almost 15 years. At first, I was in the call center, taking orders for products. Then I moved to Customer Service and then to Research and Response, answering the questions that didn't make it "on the air" with Larry.

Larry was my hero because he was so practical! Spend less than you make. Develop the discipline of saving. Plan for future expenses. If you don't get into debt, you will save yourself a lot of trouble trying to get out of debt. These were things he taught on a regular basis and principles that Mike and I really took to heart.

Larry was very dogmatic in his biblical understanding of God's instruction to tithe. Tithing, or giving a tenth of one's income to the church, has been a long-standing practice in the Orthodox Church. The early church fathers, including St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil the Great, saw tithing as a way to support the church's ministries and help those in need. This may seem radical if you haven't been exposed to this idea before and people would call into Larry's show all the time and say things like, "I can't possibly give 10% when I can't make ends meet on 100% of my income." And his patient response would be, everybody can give something. Begin with 1% and commit to increasing it year by year.

Many people, businesses, and churches have shared testimonies of taking up the challenge of tithing and experiencing God's faithfulness to His promises. It is a mystery how God can make the 90% stretch further than the 100% did before tithing, but with God all things are possible.

With only five loaves of bread and two fish, Jesus fed a crowd of over 5,000 people, and there were even leftovers! This miracle shows us that when we offer what we have to God, He can multiply it beyond what we could ever achieve on our own. Tithing can be seen as a way of offering our very best to God and experience His abundance in return. Let's consider the verse from the book of Malachi that says, "... test Me in this way, 'says the Lord,' and see if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure."

I recently read the book "Money and Salvation" by Andrew Geleris, M.D who is convinced that if Orthodox Christians faithfully tithed to their parishes, they would have plenty of money to fund all of their ministries plus extra to share with others. In chapter 11 of his book, he lists wonderful rewards that God has promised for the Faithful who practice generous living.

Financial illiteracy is another subject he addresses, and the blessing that comes from teaching people how to handle money from a biblical perspective. The joy of being able to meet one's own expenses and having a surplus to share is contagious. If we would embrace this biblical principle, Geleris says, "there would be a visible manifestation in our parishes and to our neighbors that truly 'Christ is in our midst.'"

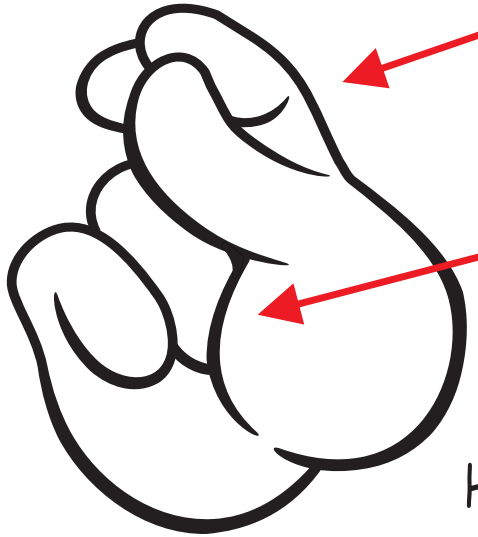
God only knows the impact this could have on our church, our community, and around the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Filkins



Making the Sign of the Cross



With your right hand, place your thumb, first finger and second finger together like this. This represents the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, One in essence and undivided.

The other two fingers are placed in the palm of your hand. They represent the two natures of Jesus Christ, both fully human and fully Divine.

Hold your hand like this and then:



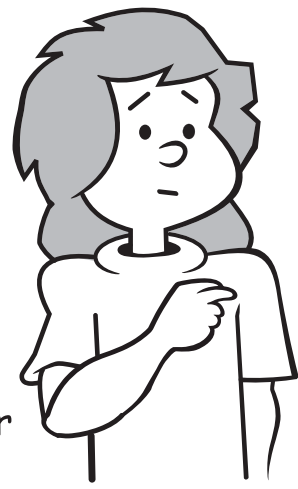
1. Touch the center of your forehead



2. Touch the center of your chest



3. Touch your right shoulder

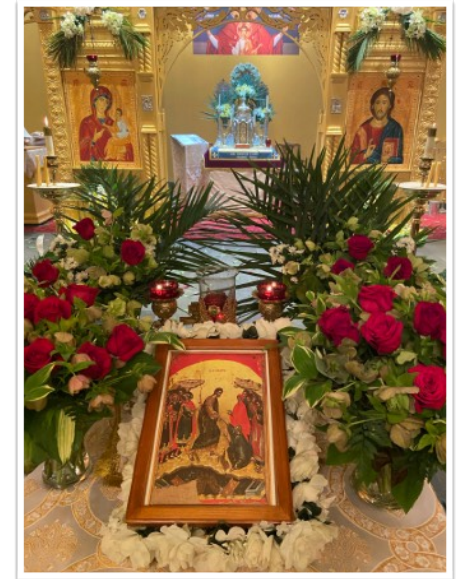
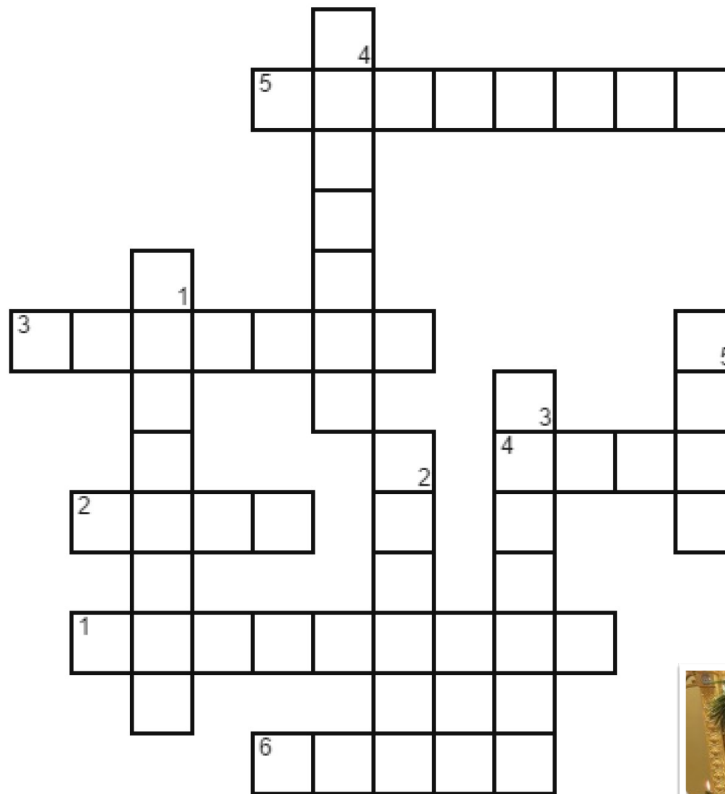


4. Touch your left shoulder

Special thanks to Johnny Sajem, our in house cartoonist who is currently working on a Divine Liturgy Book with cartoons for the children of our parish to follow along with.

What a blessing!

The Great Day



Across

1. We are the New _____.
2. Instead of finding Christ's body, they instead found an empty _____.
3. The first people to see the Risen Lord were the Myrrh _____ Women.
4. Christ is called the New _____.
5. On Easter Sunday, we read the _____ of the Gospel of John.
6. "As smoke vanishes so let them vanish, as wax _____ before a fire!"

Down

1. Pascha means the _____ from death to life.
2. "Bless God in the Churches, bless God you of _____'s wellspring!"
3. On Pascha, after Liturgy, we traditionally bless Easter _____.
4. After the Cross, and before the Resurrection, Christ was _____ those held captive in Hades.
5. Because Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices, he is also known as The _____ of God.

Prayerful Easter Flowers

In Blessed Repose grant eternal rest o Lord, to the souls of God's departed servants, in the place where the souls of the righteous dwell, where there is no pain, sorrow, or lamentation, but life everlasting!

In Memory of: Frank+, Mary+, Anastasia+, Tamara+, George+, Theodora+, Violet+, baby George+, Boris Melnikoff+, John Haddad+, Helen & Lewis Knuth+, Robert+, Patricia+, Fr. William+, Mary+, George Page+, Anna+, Beth Johnson+, James Wasserman+, Lorraine Solinko+, Robert Stirk+, Fred & Helen Milesenko+, Anna Blannar+, Peter & Wanda Blannar+ Charles Salome+, Jeanne McAuliff+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Carl+, Barry+, Helen+, Fr. Hazuda+, Fr. William, Fr. Paul+, Yvonne Sajem+, John Sajem+, Metropolitan Nicholas+, Fr. Stephen & Pani Mary Dutko+, George & Margret+, Steve+ & Catherine+, Pani Blaschak+, Pani Patsy, Fr. Tony+, Betty+, Barb+ & Harry+, Dean+, Fr. John Baranek, Fr. & Pani Polanichka, Sally, Michael, Mary, Veronica, Louise, Cleaston, Helen & Lewis, David+, Sally+, David+, Kenny+, Fr. John+, **& May the Lord God Remember in His Kingdom all of our departed loved ones!**

Lord of Powers be with us, for in times of distress we have no other help but You!

For the Health of: Metropolitan Gregory, Evelyn, & the Melnikoff Family, Athanasia Page, George Page, Barbara, Cora, Rick, Jeff, Joanna & James, Marilyn, Erica, Gary, Victor, Violet, Deacon Steven, Michelle, James, Fr. Andy, Davina & Alexandra, Fr. Matthew, Pani Kathryn, Lazarus, & the Dutko & Szapka families, Cheryl, Christina, John & Michele, David & Paulette, Nectarios, Simon, Teddy, Fr. Jim & Pani Kathy, The Korchaks, Stephanie, Anna & Drew, Micky, The Ellis Family, Judy, Ben, Graham, Kelly & Mark, **& for all the members of The St. Elizabeth Parish Family & all of our loved ones!**



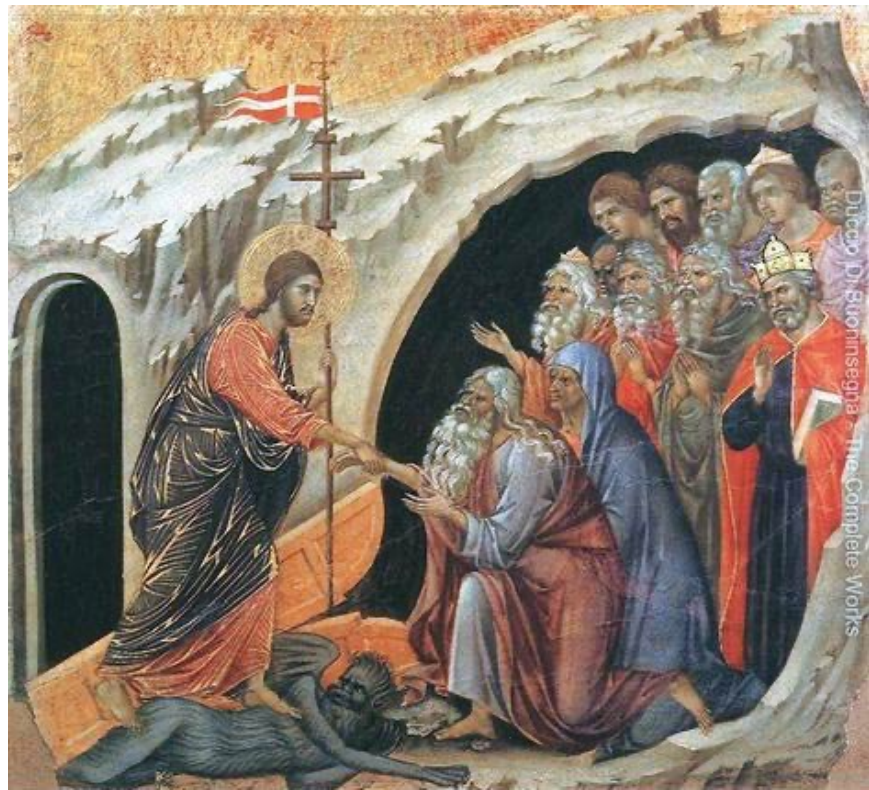
Elizabeth News



Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

From the Cave to the Tomb

As we celebrate Pascha, I've been thinking about the profound journey that our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, undertook for our salvation. Christ the Word of God, the One Who Is, left the Heavens to become one of His creations. The same Christ who was born in a humble cave and wrapped in swaddling clothes was later placed in a tomb and wrapped in a winding grave sheet. The same God who once nursed on His mother's breast was offered vinegar to drink. The same Lord who was presented with myrrh by the wise men was anointed by Joseph of Arimathea and the Myrrh-bearing Women. These events show us depth of God's steadfast love for us and His willingness to do whatever it takes to save us.



The tomb, like the manger that Christ was placed in in a cave as an infant, was a temporary resting place for our Lord before His glorious resurrection. The state of sin that we all too often find ourselves in can be temporary too if we look to Christ. If we love Him, trust Him, and serve Him with all of our hearts, souls, and minds. Just as Christ emerged from the tomb victorious, we too can rise from the graves of our own sins through our faith in Him and our hope in His most holy Resurrection. The same Christ who was born in a cave and wrapped in swaddling clothes is the same Christ who triumphed over death and sin.

Golgotha, the place of the skull, the place where Christ was Crucified, is the traditional burial place for Adam. This place of death is now a place of life. The same Word of God who once walked with Adam and Eve under the trees in the Garden of Eden was hung upon the tree of the cross for our salvation. All of this was done out of God's infinite love for us. He sent His only begotten Son to destroy death and make it possible for us to be with Him in paradise once again. Just as he offers peace, mercy, forgiveness, and salvation to the repentant thief on the Cross, he offers it to us as well when we repent and come home to our Heavenly Father.

May the same Christ who was born in a humble cave and placed in a tomb for salvation bring us closer to Him and grant us eternal life as we joyfully proclaim Christ is risen from the dead and to those in the tombs bestowing life!

The Memory of Something Good...

Over a quarter century ago, a group of Orthodox Christians gathered together to celebrate the first Divine Liturgy in the history of St. Elizabeth Orthodox Mission. On a January day over twenty five years ago, Fr. John Zyboyovski celebrated that first Liturgy for our parish family. At the Paschal Divine Liturgy the same Chalice that was used at our first Liturgy's used once again. Paschal blessings to all of the former pastors & their families, to the founders, builders, and benefactors of this church, and to our beloved diocese and Metropolitan who have supported us every step of the way. May our risen Lord grant rest to all of our departed parish family members, may their memory be eternal, Christ is risen!



“You must know that there is nothing higher and stronger and more wholesome and good for life in the future than some good memory...if one has only one good memory left in one's heart, even that may sometime be the means of saving us.” -Dostoyevsky - The Brothers Karmazov

May this day and it's memory be such a day in your life!



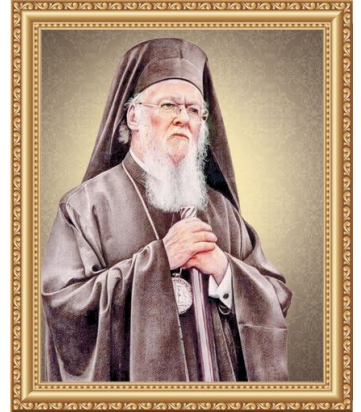
the Patriarchal Encyclical for Holy Pascha 2023

+ B A R T H O L O M E W

By God's Mercy

Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

To the Plenitude of the Church:



May the Grace, Peace, and Mercy of Christ Risen in Glory be with you All

Most honorable brother Hierarchs,

Dearly beloved children,

Having arrived with God's grace at the all-saving Resurrection of the Lord, through which the power of death was abolished and the gates of paradise were opened to the entire human race, we address to all of you our paschal greetings and heartfelt wishes, as we proclaim the cry "Christ is Risen" that gives joy to the world.

In all of its dimensions, the life of the Church is invigorated by the ineffable joy of the Resurrection. The "experience of resurrection" is witnessed in the labors of the Saints and Martyrs of our faith, as well as in the liturgical and sacramental life, the proclamation of the Gospel "to the ends of the earth", the devotion and spirituality of the faithful, their sacrificial love and Christian conduct, but also in their expectation of a world where "death will no longer exist, nor will there be mourning, wailing or suffering" (Rev. 21,4).

In and through the Resurrection, everything lies in a state of motion toward perfection in the Kingdom of God. This eschatological drive has always provided Orthodox Christians in the world with dynamism and perspective. Despite the claims of the opposite, as a result of the eschatological orientation of its life, the Church never compromised with the presence of evil in all its expressions in the world. Nor did it deny the reality of pain and death. Nor again did it ignore the ambiguity of human affairs. And finally, it never considered the struggle for a more just world as something foreign to its mission.

Still, though, the Church always knew that pain and the cross are not the ultimate reality. The experiential quintessence of the Christian life is the conviction that through the Cross and through the "narrow gate", we are led to the Resurrection. This faith is reflected in the fact that the core of church life, the Divine Eucharist, is essentially linked with the Resurrection of Christ. In the Orthodox tradition, as the late Metropolitan John of Pergamon emphasizes, the Divine Eucharist "is filled with joy and light ... because it is not grounded in the Cross and an idealization of passion, but in the Resurrection as the transcendence of the passion of the Cross"[1]. The Holy Eucharist transports us to Golgotha not so that we may remain there, but so that we may be led through the Cross to the ever-radiant glory of the Kingdom of God. The Orthodox faith is the overcoming of the utopian salvation

“without the Cross” and of the existential shipwreck of the Cross “without the Resurrection”.

Our participation in the Resurrection of Christ through the sacrament of the Church is on the one hand a tangible abolition of every utopianism and of the false paradise promising unimpeded self-indulgence, while at the same time a definitive transcendence of hopeless self-enslavement in supposed unsurpassable negativity, because the Cross of Christ gives birth to the Resurrection, to the “endless delight”, to “the enjoyment of eternal glory”. The annihilation of death through the Cross and the Resurrection of our Savior elevates our life to its divine-human essence and its heavenly destiny.

In Christ, we know and live that the present life is not our entire life and that our biological death does not constitute an end or obliteration of our existence.

The biological boundaries of life do not define its truth. After all, the sense that life is an irreversible “journey toward death” leads to existential impasses, to depression and nihilism, to indifference for what truly matters in life. Science, and financial or social progress are unable to offer an essential solution or outlet. Christians are “those who have hope” (1Thess. 4,13), who expect the coming Kingdom of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit as a final reality, as the fullness of life and knowledge, as the fulfilment of joy, not only for the coming generations but for the entire human race from the beginning to the end of the ages.

This vision of history and eternity, the resurrectional nature of Orthodox faith, ethos and culture—namely, the unquestionable fact that the great miracle of Truth is only revealed “to those who venerate the mystery in faith”—is what we are called to witness today within a civilization that rejects the Transcendent and in the context of manifold reductions of the spiritual identity of human existence.

We give glory in chant, hymn and spiritual song to the Lord who rose from the dead and shines eternal life upon all. We participate with joy in “the feast that is common to all”. And we beseech the all-powerful, all-wise and all-merciful Maker and Redeemer of all to bring peace to the world and grant all His saving gifts to humankind, so that His all-honorable and majestic name may be glorified and blessed, now and always and to the ages of ages.

Amen!

At the Phanar, Holy Pascha 2023

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople
Fervent supplicant for you all to the Risen Lord

Paschal Greetings from Around the World!

Language	Greeting	Response
Aleut:	Khristus anahgrecum!	Alhecum anahgrecum!
Aleut:	Khris-tusax agla-gikux!	Agangu-lakan agla-gikux!
Albanian:	Krishti U Ngjall!	Vertet U Ngjall!
Alutuq:	Khris-tusaq ung-uixtuq!	Pijii-nuq ung-uixtuq!
Amharic:	Kristos tenestwal!	Bergit tenestwal!
Anglo-Saxon:	Crist aras!	Crist sodhlice aras!
Arabic:	El Messieh kahm!	Hakken kahm!
Armenian:	Kristos haryav ee merelotz!	Orhnial eh harootyunuh kristosee!
Athabaskan:	Xristosi banuytashtch'ey!	Gheli banuytashtch'ey!
Bulgarian:	Hristos voskrese!	Vo istina voskrese!
Byelorussian:	Khrystos uvaskros!	Saprawdy uvaskros!
Chinese:	Helisituosi fuhuole!	Qeshi fuhuole!
Coptic:	Pchristos aftooun!	Alethos aftooun!
Czech:	Vstal z mrtvých Kristus!	Vpravdě vstal z mrtvých!
Danish:	Kristus er opstanden!	Ja, sandelig opstanden!
Dutch:	Christus is opgestaan!	Ja, hij is waarlijk opgestaan!
English:	Christ is risen!	Indeed He is risen!
Eritrean-Tigre:	Christos tensiou!	Bahake tensiou!
Esperanto:	Kristo levigis!	Vere levigis!
Estonian:	Kristus on üles tõusnud!	Ta on tõesti üles tõusnud!
Ethiopian:	Christos t'ensah em' muhtan!	Exai' ab-her eokala!
Finnish:	Kristus nousi kuolleista!	Totisesti nousi!
French:	Le Christ est réssuscité!	En verite il est réssuscité!

Language	Greeting	Response
Gaelic:	Taw creest ereen!	Taw shay ereen guhdyne!
Georgian:	Kriste aghsdga!	Cheshmaritad aghsdga!
German:	Christus ist auferstanden!	Wahrlich Er ist auferstanden!
Greek:	Christos anesti!	Alithos anesti!
Hawaiian:	Ua ala hou 'o Kristo!	Ua ala 'I 'o no 'oia!
Hebrew:	Ha Masheeha houh quam!	Be emet quam!
Hungarian:	Krisztus feltamadt!	Valoban feltamadt!
Ibo (Nigeria):	Jesu Kristi ebiliwo!	Ezia o' biliwo!
Indian (Malayalam):	Christu uyirthezhunnettu!	Theerchayayum uyirthezhunnettu!
Indonesian:	Kristus telah bangkit!	Benar dia telah bangkit!
Italian:	Cristo e' risorto!	Veramente e' risorto!
Japanese:	Harisutos Fukkatsu!	Jitsu ni Fukkatsu!
Javanese:	Kristus sampun wungu!	Tuhu sampun wungu!
Korean:	Kristo gesso!	Buhar ha sho nay!
Latin:	Christus resurrexit!	Vere resurrexit!
Latvian:	Kristus ir augsham sales!	Teyasham ir augsham sales vinsch!
Lugandan:	Kristo ajukkide!	Amajim ajukkide!
Norwegian:	Christus er oppstanden!	Sandelig han er oppstanden!
Polish:	Khristus zmartwyckwstal!	Zaprawde zmartwyckwstal!
Portuguese:	Cristo ressuscitou!	Em verdade ressuscitou!
Romanian:	Hristos a inviat!	Adevărat a înviat!
Russian:	Khristos voskrese!	Voistinu voskrese!
Sanskrit:	Kristo'pastitaha!	Satvam upastitaha!
Serbian:	Hristos vaskrse!	Vaistunu vaskrse!
Slovak:	Christos vstal z mŕtvych!	Vpravde vstal z mŕtvych!

Language	Greeting	Response
Spanish:	Cristo ha resucitado!	En verdad ha resucitado!
Swahili:	Kristo amefufukka!	Kweli amefufukka!
Swedish:	Kristus är uppstånden!	Han är sannerligen uppstånden!
Syriac:	M'shee ho dkom!	Ha koo qam!
Tlingit:	Xristos Kuxwoo-digoot!	Xegaa-kux Kuxwoo-digoot!
Turkish:	Hristos diril - di!	Hakikaten diril - di!
Ugandan:	Kristo ajukkide!	Kweli ajukkide!
Ukrainian:	Khristos voskres!	Voistinu voskres!
Welsh:	Atgyfododd Crist!	Atgyfododd yn wir!
Yupik:	Xris-tusaq Ung-uixtuq!	Iluumun Ung-uixtuq!
Zulu:	UKristu uvukile!	Ngempela uvukile!

With appreciation to www.oca.org/orthodoxy/paschal-greetings



Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Parish Family Prayer List

For the Health of: Evelyn & the Melnikoff Family, Pani Betty Jean Baranek, Fr. James Gleason, The Paccio Family, Kara, Joanna, James, Anna, Basil, Dianna, Denise, Alex, Jason, Athanasia, Ethel, Tyler, Maria, Page Family, Dean, Margaret, Metropolitan Gregory and his family, Rick, James, David, Joseph, Maria Starcova, David & Paulette Novak, Suzette, Bob, David, Marilyn & family, Mark, Fr. Dcn. Stephen, Michelle, James, Rachel, Kate, Fr. Blaschak & Family, Larry, Alexandra, Tammy, Trahan & Skiba Family, The Hood Family, the Mileshko Family, the Blanar Family, Burt, Sandy, Stephanie, Mary, Tommy, Stephen, Emilia, Simon, Alisha, & Aaron Zak, the Puziculiks Family, Fr. Andy, Davina, & Alexandra, Stan, Fr. Dcn. Charlie & Family, Justin, Charlie, Herbert and Mary Schleining, Spencer, Julie, Anna, Galina & Family, Irinia & Family, Fr. Jim & Pani Kathy Dutko, Rick, Katlain, Elenor, Teddy, Mark, Robert & Cindy, Melissa, Ben, Anthony, Rachel, Christine, Cora, Rick, Michelle, Tim, Robert, Tripp, Rachel & Family, The Kelemecz Family, Leonard, Leo, & the Oлару Family, Joanna Price, Kim, Isaiah, the Wells Family, Dave, Ashley & family, Mary, Tim, Andrew, Robert, Derrick, Michael, Eli, Ean, Ellie, Amber, Christopher, Deborah, Ethan, Rosemary, Mike, Elaiane, Roy, Lin, Dave, Sarah, George, & Edward, Stephen, Caleb, Amelia, Simon, David, the Gdovin Family, the Rodgers Family, Mike & the Kundrat Family

For the Departed: Patricia+, James+, Stephen+, Anna+, Charles+, Robert+, Loraine+. Helen+, Lewis+, Jeanne+, Vera+, George+, George+, Ernie+, Eddie+, Maria+, Carl+, Mark+, Barry+, Jospeh+, Phillip+, Jenny+, Peter+, Bryan+, Rebecca+, Fr. Paul+, Maria+, Fr. Hazuda+, George Smisko+, Helen Spanovich+, Bob+, Alma+, Bo+, Saddle+, Fr. William George+, Violet+, Fr. Kozar+, Benjamin+, John Haddad+, Fred & Helen Mileshko+, Anna+, Natalie+, Lilly+, Christine+, Anna+, Tamara+, Anastasia+, Yvonne+, John+, Betty+, Ada+, Peter+ & Wanda+, George+, Jerry+, Barb+ & Harry+, Beth+, Louise+, Nikolay+, Boris Melnikoff+, David+, Fr. Michael+, Natalie+, Helen+, Ted+, Tom+, Mike+, Madeline+, Tim+, Fr. John Baranek, Reader Stephen+, Dean+, Fr. Larry+, Kris+, Wathen+, Pani Elenor+, Fr. Michael+, Sally+, David+, Gene+, Kenny+, Ava+, Fr. Tony Joseph+ & Pani Patsy+, Anatoly+, Fr. Scott+, Steve+, Claudia+, Dave+, Fr. John Duranko, Michael+

Through the prayers of the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, St. Elizabeth, The Holy Fathers & Mothers, and all the Saints, may our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ have mercy on us and save us!

Holy Saint Elizabeth Pray for us!



Eternal Memory!

Saint Elizabeth Orthodox Church
Become a Steward

I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.
 John 15:16
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
 Fill out a Stewardship Offering Card Here!

www.stelizabethga.org

Keep Your Parish Family in Your Prayers!

Christ is Among us!



Icon of our Lord's Resurrection "Search & Find!"

Do you see **Christ's robes**? Notice how they look like they are flowing upward in the wind? This symbolizes how Christ descends into Hades to free those held captive by the sting of death.



Can you find these **golden bars**? Christ stands victoriously on top of these bars because they are the gates of death that He shatters and tears apart, opening the doors of paradise.



Can you find the **almond shape that's surrounding Christ**? It's called a *Mandorla*. The *Mandorla* becomes progressively darker as it moves toward its center, which is Christ. Those who seek God find that the more they *know* Him, the less they *comprehend* Who He is. To *know* God, to *experience* Him, is to walk in the darkness of His light, to enter into the mystery of His presence.



Can you find this **figure bound in chains** underneath the shattered gates of Hades? This figure represents death or the devil himself who has been bound in chains and conquered by Christ. This is why we sing "*Christ is risen from the dead trampling down death by death.*" The power of the devil and death have been destroyed through the life-giving death of our Savior.



Do you see these **three figures to the left of Christ**? These people vary from icon to icon, but they are prominent Old Testament figures. Abel is the shepherd holding the staff & Moses is next to him.



Can you find any **keys**? The keys symbolize that Christ has unlocked the gates of Hades and conquered sin and death.



Do you see **Christ reaching his hands out to these two figures**? Christ is pulling Adam and Eve, our first parents from their tombs. This shows us that Christ's victory redeems all mankind, even back to the beginning. It also foreshadows the general resurrection of the body before the Final Judgment.



Do you see these **three figures to the right of Christ**? Here we find King David & Solomon, Christ's ancestors in the flesh along with John the Baptist who announced Christ's coming to those on earth in his life, and to those in Hades after his death.



This is the Day the Lord Has Made. Let us Rejoice and be Glad in it!



Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!



The St. Elizabeth News



Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!