

APRIL 2024

ST INNOCENT

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH MACON GA
APRIL 2024 NEWSLETTER AND CALENDAR



The Cross and Resurrection The Sunday of the Cross

*By Vassilios
Papavassiliou
Meditations for Great
Lent, REFLECTIONS ON
THE TRIODION.*

Having passed beyond the middle point in this holy season of the Fast, with joy let us go forward to the part that still remains, anointing our souls with the oil of almsgiving. So may we be counted worthy to venerate the divine Passion of Christ our God, and to attain His dread and holy Resurrection. (Third troparion of Vespers, fourth Sunday of Lent)

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT is dedicated to the Cross. The reason for this is given to us in the Synaxarion for the day:

“On this third Sunday of the Great Fast we celebrate the Veneration of the precious and life-giving Cross. Since during the forty days of the Fast we are also in a way crucified, mortified to the passions, contrite, abased and despondent, the precious and life-giving Cross is offered to us as refreshment and confirmation, calling to mind the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and comforting us.... Just as those who have traveled a long hard road, weighed down by the labors of their journey, in finding a shady tree, take their ease for a moment and continue their journey rejuvenated, so now in this time of the Fast, this sorrowful and laborious journey, the Holy Fathers have planted the life-giving Cross before us, for our relief and refreshment, to encourage and make easier the labors that lie ahead.”

It is clear, then, that the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross is directly connected to our Lenten effort. If we have taken Lent seriously so far, by now we are probably feeling the strain of this effort. Our fasting is perhaps becoming harder to maintain, our acts of charity are perhaps dwindling or growing cold, sloth may be persuading us to stay at home rather than attend the evening Lenten services. We may be missing the worldly things in our lives that we may have chosen to cut back on or cut out altogether during Lent. And so the Cross is placed before us to remind us of the suffering Christ endured for us.

Furthermore, this day reminds us not only of the Cross but also of the Resurrection—the ultimate goal of our ascetic struggle and of the Lenten season—Pascha. The theme-hymns, or hirmoi, for this day all make reference to the Resurrection, and the canon for the day is chanted according to exactly the same melody as the canon of Pascha.

Thus the Church reminds us, not only in words but even through melody, that Lent is the necessary journey to Pascha, and we cannot reach the joy of the Resurrection without going through the Cross. And so we hear in the Gospel reading for this day the words of our Lord: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matt. 16:24).

The Cross and Resurrection are not to be seen in isolation. From the moment we see the Cross, we see also the impending Resurrection. Thus the Cross is a symbol not of sorrow, but of joyful expectation. As we say at every Sunday Matins service:

“Having seen the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. We worship Your Cross, O Christ, and we praise and glorify Your holy Resurrection. For You are our God; we know no other but You; we name You by name. Come, all the faithful, let us worship the holy Resurrection of Christ; for behold, through the Cross, joy has come into all the world. Ever blessing the Lord, we sing His Resurrection. For having endured the Cross for us, by death He has destroyed death.” (Prayer after the reading of the Sunday Matins Gospel)

Having thus been encouraged and inspired by the memory and veneration of the Cross on which Christ suffered for our sakes, we are persuaded to continue our own Lenten effort, to carry on bearing our cross for His sake, and to walk with our Lord to Calvary, that we may truly participate in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. Only then, having followed Christ throughout the Lenten journey into Holy Week, will we truly be able to participate in the joy of His life-giving Resurrection.

News and Announcements

- April 7th at 5 pm PanOrthodox Vespers with Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church followed by light Lenten refreshments.
- SIOC Ladies' Book Club will meet on Monday, April 15, at 7 PM at Nicole Thomae's house.
- Family Church School is on Sunday the 14th.
- The Parish Council meets on Wednesday, April 18th, at 7 pm.
- On Saturday, April 20th there is a Zoom Lenten Retreat with Fr. Seraphim from Mull Monastery.
- On Sunday, April 21st, after the Divine Liturgy, Fr. Theophan will hear youth Confessions.
- On Sunday, April 21st we are having a Altar server practice in preparation for Pascha.

Lenten Charity

This Lent we are taking donations to Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) Your sacrificial offering works toward making disciples of all nations by supporting mission programs and volunteers that proclaim the fullness of the Gospel, empower indigenous clergy, and make Church ministries around the world possible.

Many Years!

Birthdays in April

1 Diana Gratigny

2 Mili Haynes

3 Olga Collins

4 Jessica Ennis

6 Wyatt Pittman

9 Dumitru Turner

11 Brady Hough

11 Stephen Marble

20 Steven Davis

27 Jeremy Plummer

28 Daniela Galdau

29 Gheorghe Codreanu

30 Sam Werner

Anniversaries

23 Igor & Olha Osobov/Tsarkovsk

The Holy Mystery of Confession

One of the most important aspects of our Lenten journey is partaking of the the Sacrament of Confession. We are coming upon the season of repentance; therefore, every Orthodox Christian should prepare to confess during Great Lent.

Fr. Theophan is available to hear confessions:

- Before or after the weekday Lenten services
- On Sunday mornings between 9:20-9:40
- By appointment

Please plan on making your confession before Holy Week. If you struggle to identify your sins, you can make an appointment during office hours with Fr. Theophan.

Lenten Book Study

Journey to Reality: Sacramental Life in a Secular Age

by Zachary Porcu

Zoom Links on Realm

Most books aimed at introducing Orthodoxy to the non-Orthodox begin by explaining basic points of doctrine and practice that differ from what the average reader may be familiar with. But for the average American, this approach doesn't go deep enough. In order to be able to fully understand Orthodox doctrine and practice, we have to unlearn an entire secular worldview and become participants in a sacramental worldview instead—a worldview that embraces reality as it truly is. Dr. Zachary Porcu provides a guide to this process that is easily accessible both to Western Christians and to those who lack any grounding in the Christian Faith.

Holy Week Service Schedule 2024

Saturday, April 27

10 AM Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy

11:30 AM Pancake Breakfast/Fun for kids

6 PM Palm Sunday Vigil with the blessing of the Palms

Sunday, April 28

9:30 AM - Chrismations

10 AM - Divine Liturgy Palm Sunday

1:15 PM - Bridegroom Matins

Monday & Tuesday, April 29-30

6 PM - Bridegroom Matins

Wednesday, May 1

6 PM - The Mystery of Holy Unction

Thursday, May 2

10 AM - Last Supper Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil

6:00 PM - Matins with the 12 Passion Readings

Friday, May 3

10 AM - Royal Hours

12 PM - Decorating the Bier

3 PM - Vespers with the placing of the Shroud

6 PM - Matins with the Lamentations at the tomb

Saturday, May 4

10 AM - Harrowing of Hades Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil

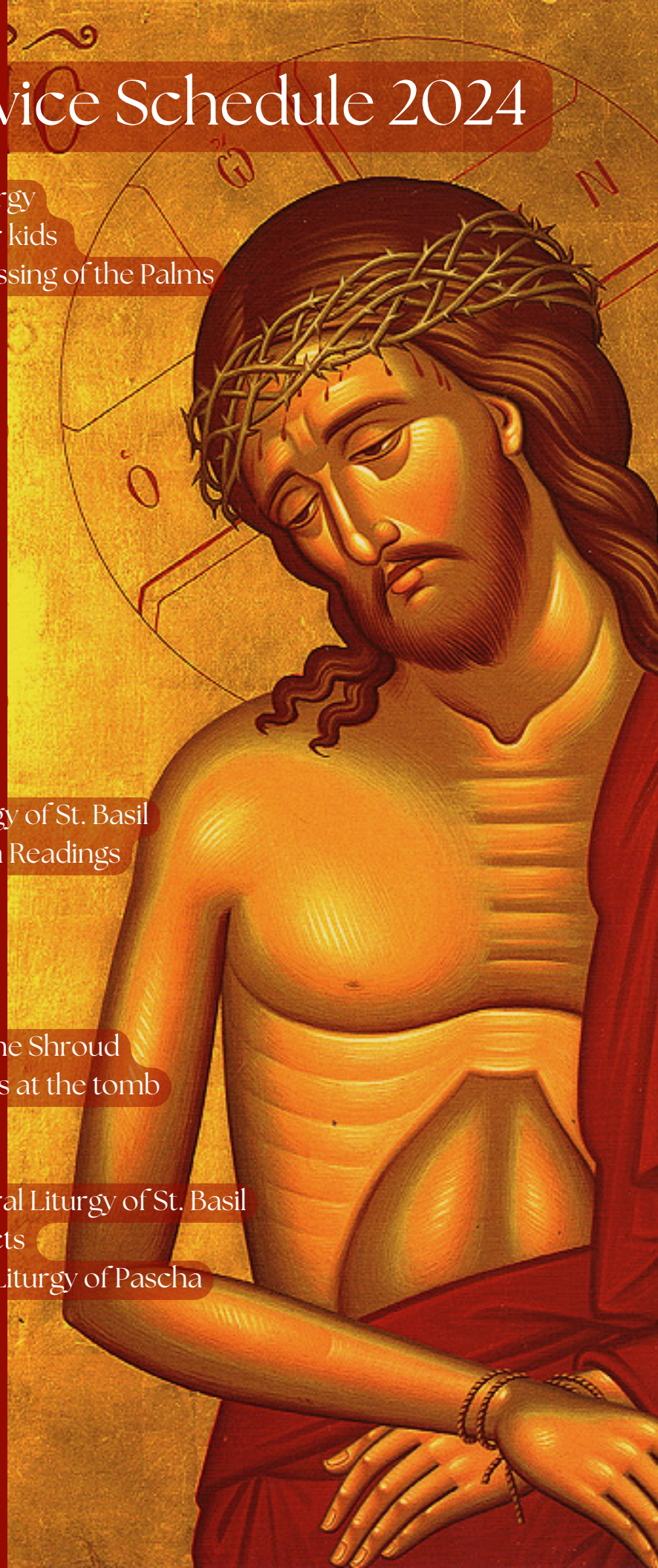
11 PM - Reading from the Book of Acts

11:30 PM - Nocturns, Matins, Divine Liturgy of Pascha

Sunday, May 5

1 PM - Agape Vespers

2 PM - Pascha Party



Holy Week Explained

Lazarus Saturday

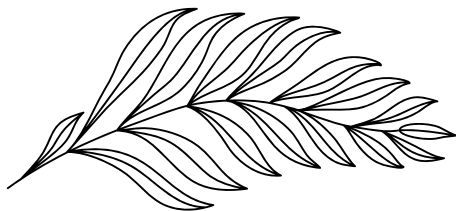
Lazarus Saturday is a paschal celebration. It is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrectional service of Sunday is celebrated on another day. At the liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the Church glorifies Christ as “the Resurrection and the Life,” who, by raising Lazarus, has confirmed the universal resurrection of mankind even before His suffering and death. Lazarus Saturday also marks the end of Great Lent and the beginning of Holy Week.

Pancakes and Palms

After celebrating Lazarus Saturday Divine Liturgy, everyone is invited to join us for pancakes and palms. The children and teens in Church school will remain to help bundle palms and pussy-willows and make palm crosses. Meanwhile, adults are requested to assist in cleaning the church in preparation for Holy Week. Once the church is cleaned, we will decorate it for Palm Sunday.

The Feast of the Triumphal Entry

The feast of Christ’s Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday, is one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. The services of this Sunday follow directly from those of Lazarus Saturday. The church building continues to be vested in resurrectional splendor, filled with hymns that continually repeat the Hosanna offered to Christ as the Messiah-King who comes in the name of God the Father for the salvation of the world. The worshipping people hold palms and branches throughout the festal Liturgy.



Sunday, Monday, Tuesday

Bridegroom Matins

Bridegroom Matins is a service specific to the first four evenings of Holy Week (though it is often omitted on Holy Wednesday in favor of the service of Holy Unction) and commemorates the last days in the earthly life of the Lord. The services are called the “Bridegroom” services because the general theme of each of these days is the end of the world and the judgment of Christ.

The Mystery of Holy Unction

The mystery of Holy Unction provides both physical and spiritual healing with holy oil blessed by the Holy Spirit. It is most commonly celebrated during Holy Week on Holy Wednesday evening, but private services are also common. Everyone in the parish in good ecclesiastical standing may be anointed with the holy oil for the healing of spiritual and bodily ills. As this is one of the sacraments of the Orthodox Church, it may be administered only to Orthodox Christians.

Holy Thursday Matins with 12 Passion Readings

Good Friday celebrates the holy, saving, and awesome Passion of Christ. To take away our sins, Christ willingly endured spitting, scourging, buffeting, scorn, mocking, and purple robe; the reed, sponge, vinegar, nails, spear, and above all, the Cross and Death. The confession from the cross of the penitent thief, crucified with Christ, is celebrated. This service is long, but its content is dramatic and deeply moving for the devout Christian. Participation in the prayers and the historical sequence of the events, as related in the Gospels and hymns, provides a vivid foundation for the great events yet to come.

Holy Week Explained

Holy Friday Royal Hours

These services include hymns, psalms, and readings from the Old and New Testaments. This service is great for those who were not able to make it to the 12 passion reading the evening before.

Holy Friday Decorating the Bier

All of our ladies, both young and of age, are welcome to come and help decorate the bier (the tomb of Christ)

Holy Friday Vespers w/ placing of the shroud

The Vespers, celebrated in the Church on Holy Friday afternoon, brings to mind all of the final events of the life of Christ. The trial, the sentence, the scourging and mocking, the crucifixion, the death, the taking down of His body from the Cross, and the burial. As the hymnography indicates, these events remain ever-present in the Church; they constitute the today of its life.

Holy Friday Matins with Lamentations at the Tomb

On Good Friday evening the Orthodox Church celebrates the Matins Service for Holy and Great Saturday. In many ways, this service resembles a funeral for our Lord. At this service, the Church contemplates the mystery of the Lord's descent into Hades, the place of the dead. Death, our ultimate enemy, is defeated from within. "He (Christ) gave Himself as a ransom to death in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending into Hades through the Cross . . . He loosed the bonds of death" (Liturgy of Saint Basil). At the Matins service, in place of the regular psalm reading the entire Psalm

119 is read with a verse praising the dead Saviour chanted between each of its lines. This particular psalm is the verbal icon of Jesus, the righteous man whose life is in the hands of God and who, therefore, cannot remain dead.



Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy

On Holy Saturday itself, Vespers are served with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great. This service already belongs to Passover Sunday. Following the evening entrance which is made with the Book of the Gospels, fifteen readings from the Old Testament scriptures are read, all of which relate to God's work of creation and salvation which has been summed up and fulfilled in the coming of the predicted Messiah.

One can and must say that of all services of the Church that are inspiring, meaningful, revealing, this one: the Vespers and Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great and Holy Saturday is truly the liturgical climax of the Church. If one opens one's heart and mind to it and accepts its meaning and its light, the very truth of Orthodoxy is given by it, the taste and the joy of that new life which shines forth from the grave.



ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH
7301 Rivoli Road - Macon, Georgia 31210



APRIL 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Mar 31 St. Innocent / St. Gregory Palamas 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:30pm Readers Class	1 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	2 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	3 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	4 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i>	5 <i>(Iconography Installation)</i> 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	6 4:00pm Catechism 6:00pm Vigil for the Ven. Cross
7 Ven. Cross 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:30pm Readers Class 5:00pm Pan-Orthodox Vespers at HCGOC	8	9 7:00pm Zoom Book Study	10 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	11	12 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	13 4:00pm Catechism 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
14 St. John Climacus 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20pm Church School	15	16 7:00pm Zoom Book Study	17 6:00pm The Great Canon with the Life of St. Mary	18	19 6:00pm Akathist to the Theotokos	20 6:00pm Great Vespers 7:00pm Zoom Lenten Retreat
21 St. Mary of Egypt 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20am Youth Confessions 12:20pm Altar Server Practice	22	23 7:00pm Zoom Book Study	24 5:45pm 9th Hour 6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy	25	26 6:00pm Lazarus Saturday Matins	27 10:00 am Lazarus Saturday Liturgy 11:30 am Pancakes & Palms party 6:00pm Vigil for Palm Sunday
28 PALM SUNDAY 9:30am Chrismations 10:00am Festal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 1:15pm Bridegroom Matins	29 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins	30 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins	May 1 6:00pm Holy Unction	May 2 10:00am Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 6:00pm Matins with 12 Passion readings	May 3 10:00am Royal Hours 12:00pm Decorating the Bier (young ladies) 3:00pm Holy Friday Vespers 6:00pm Holy Saturday Matins	May 4 10:00am Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy 11:30pm Pascha Midnight Office



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MAY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Apr 28 PALM SUNDAY 9:30am Chrismations 10:00am Festal Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 1:15pm Bridegroom Matins	Apr 29 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins	Apr 30 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins	1 6:00pm Holy Unction	2 10:00am Vesperal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 6:00pm Matins with 12 Passion readings	3 10:00am Royal Hours 12:00pm Decorating the Bier (young ladies) 3:00pm Holy Friday Vespers 6:00pm Holy Saturday Matins	4 10:00am Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy 11:30pm Pascha Midnight Office
5 Great and Holy Paschal 12:00am Paschal Matins 1:15am Paschal Divine Liturgy 3:00am Blessing of the Baskets 1:00pm Agape Vespers 2:00pm Pascha Party Picnic	6	7 6:00pm Paschal Vespers	8 St. John the Theologian 9:00am Paschal Liturgy	9 6:00pm Paschal Vespers	10 9:00am Paschal Divine Liturgy	11 Ss. Cyril and Methodius 5:00pm Great Vespers 6:00pm Firepit & Fellowship
12 St. Thomas Sunday/Mother's Day 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Panikhida 12:30pm Food and Fellowship	13	14	15 6:00pm Readers Vespers	16	17	18 10-2pm Wedding 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
19 The Myrrhbearing Women 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:20pm Church School	20	21 Ss. Constantine & Helen	22 6:00pm Daily Vespers	23 9:00am Divine Liturgy	24	25 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession
26 The Paralytic 9:40am 3rd and 6th Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 11:45am Food and Fellowship 12:30pm Catechism	27	28 6:00pm Vespers for Mid-feast	29 9:00am Divine Liturgy for Mid- feast	30	31	Jun 1 6:00pm Great Vespers 6:45pm Sacrament of Confession