ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX CHURCH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

The Joy Of Orthodox Pasha

It is the day of resurrection!
Let us be illumined for the feast!
Pascha! The Pascha of the Lord!
From death unto life,
And from earth unto heaven
Has Christ our God led us!
Singing the song of victory:
Christ is risen from the dead!

(First Ode of the Easter Canon).

The Great and Holy Feast of Pascha

On the Great and Holy Feast of Pascha, Orthodox Christians celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This feast of feasts is the most significant day in the life of the Church. It is a celebration of the defeat of death, as neither death itself nor the power of the grave could hold our Savior captive. In this victory that came through the Cross, Christ broke the bondage of sin, and through faith offers us restoration, transformation, and eternal life.

HOLIDAYS & SAINTS DAYS

April 1

Ven. Mary of Egypt

April 20

Lazarus Saturday

April 21

PALM SUNDAY

April 21-27

HOLY WEEK

April 23

Holy Greatmartyr, Victorybearer and Wonderworker George

April 25

Holy Apostle and Evangelist Mark

April 28

GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

LAZARUS SATURDAY

Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday together hold a unique position in the church year as days of joy and triumph interposed between the penitence of Great Lent and the mourning of Holy Week.

Lazarus Saturday is the day when, traditionally, hermits would leave their retreats in the wilderness to return to the monastery for the Holy Week services.

In many places in the **Russian Church**, the vestments and church hangings on this day and on Palm Sunday are green, denoting the renewal of life. In the **Greek Church**, it is customary on Lazarus Saturday to plait elaborate crosses out of palm leaves, which will be used on Palm Sunday.

Greece and Cyprus

Baking lazarakia to eat on Lazarus Saturday is a tradition practiced in Greece and Cyprus. It is said to have originated in Cyprus, and it is significant that St. Lazarus was their first bishop. The bread is a mildly sweet Lenten bread made with sweet-smelling spices that looks like Lazarus bound up in grave clothes.

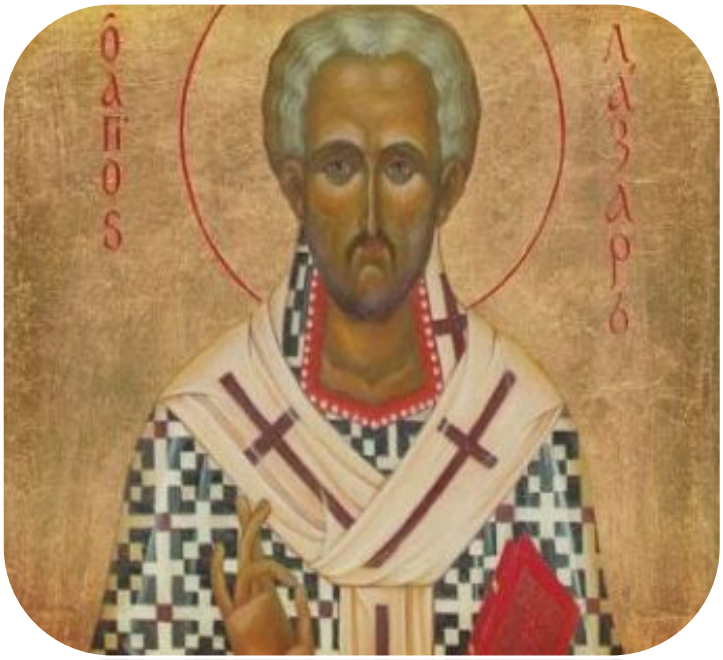
Serbia and Bulgaria

The feast of Vrbica (Врбица) or Lazareva Subota (Лазарева Субота), Bulgarian: Lazarovden (Лазаровден) is commemorated by Serbian Orthodox and Bulgarian Orthodox tradition. Due to a general lack of palm trees, pussy willow branches are blessed, and distributed to the faithful. Small bells are often tied to the branches. Other features include:

Burning a fire against vermin and snakes

Picking flowers and herbs that are put in water to either drink or swim in Lazarice ritual, a procession, parade of six maids.

What Happened To Lazarus After His Resurrection?



Lazarus was a close friend of Christ, from Bethany, about three kilometers east of Jerusalem. He lived there with his sisters Mary and Martha, and they often gave hospitality to Jesus (Luke 10:38-40; John 12:1-3).

John the Evangelist informs us (John 11) how one day Jesus was notified of the death of Lazarus. Four days later He arrived in Bethany, not only to bring comfort to Lazarus' grieving sisters, but to show the power of God and perform His greatest miracle by raising him from the dead, in anticipation of His own resurrection.

The resurrection of Lazarus brought short-lived great admiration and fame to Jesus, as evidenced by his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, but it also provoked great anger among the teachers of the Law. Now they wanted both Jesus and Lazarus dead. Lazarus escaped, but Jesus did not. But what happened to Lazarus?

Continued on page 5

Palm Sunday: Victory Of The Heart

Jesus enters into Jerusalem, and the cheering crowds greet him like a king entering the city after a military victory—the first-century equivalent of a "ticker tape parade." The crowds have heard about Jesus, about his powerful teaching and his miracles, specifically raising Lazarus from the dead. They cry out "Hosanna in the highest," a shout of praise and a plea for salvation. "Save us, Lord!" For years, for generations, these people have languished under the heavy boot of Roman occupation and oppression. They are weary of high taxes, soldiers in their streets, and the constant threat of violence. The people are tired and weary and hungry, and they want freedom.

Do you ever feel this way?

Today, in some parts of the world, Christians struggle under the heavy yoke of political oppression and military occupation. In some places, Christians are in the middle of military conflict and civil war. But, even people who enjoy great political freedom can feel this sense of soul crushing oppression. We can be oppressed by strained relationships among family and friends. We can be oppressed by the anxiety and stress of economic uncertainty. We can be oppressed by the agony of addiction. We can be oppressed by the pain and grief of illness and death. And wherever there is oppression, there is a powerful desire for freedom. We may not face oppression from the Roman Empire, but standing with our palm branches today, singing "Hosanna in the highest," we stand shoulder to shoulder with our first-century brothers and sisters, longing for freedom. But how do we get that freedom? How do we find liberation from our physical, emotional, and spiritual oppression?

The obvious answer is to go out and fight for it. This was what the crowds in Jerusalem wanted from Jesus as he traveled on that "red carpet" of palm branches and the clothes off their backs (Mark 11:8). In their eyes, Jesus was the perfect leader for a righteous rebellion. Surely God's Anointed One could raise up an army and restore the Kingdom of Israel. After all, if Jesus had the power to raise Lazarus from the dead, he would be invincible in the face of Roman legions. If Jesus was truly God's anointed one, then he would be invincible in battle. The crowds wanted the kind of freedom that you win with the spear, the chariot, and the sword.

But to win this kind of freedom you need wealth, strength, and power. They sound awfully good, don't they? With money, a strong body, and political influence, freedom is yours for the taking. Or is it? Ancient Israel had great power, but fell to the Babylonians. In Jesus' time the Roman Empire had great power, but over the centuries that empire fell to other nations. As one nation rises, other nations fight to gain supremacy. The same is true for people. Today one person might be wealthy, strong, and have all the power in the world. But one who gains worldly power quickly becomes a target for everyone who wants a place at the top of the food chain.

And so, strength, wealth, and power come with a terrible price. They come with a price of fear, isolation, and

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anxiety. The more you possess of this world, the more this world will try to take away. So we prepare for battle, we harden our defenses and sharpen our attacks. Whether we attack others with swords or words, with bullets or in business, we strike others where they are weakest, where we can do the greatest amount of damage and gain the greatest advantage. The crowd was hungry for power, and they hoped that Jesus would lead them to victory in an epic battle that would change their world.

On a certain level, the crowd was right. They were at the threshold of a great battle that would change everything—a battle that would grant freedom to the oppressed, and vanquish the foe. However, the army that Jesus came to fight was not flesh and blood; it was, as St. Paul says, a battle against the "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12) However, this battle had begun long before Jesus entered into Jerusalem.

After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, he went out into the wilderness and fasted for forty days. After that long fast, the tempter comes and tempts Jesus.

"You are hungry? If you are the Son of God, command those stones to become loaves of bread," says the evil one. This is not merely a temptation about food. Satan is tempting Jesus with wealth. If Jesus were to turn stones into bread, he would never go hungry. And if one were to possess an unlimited supply of bread, he could have virtually unlimited wealth. But Jesus launches a counterattack and replies, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" (Matt 4:4)

Then the tempter takes Jesus to the holy city, sets him on the top of the Temple, and says, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" (Matt 4:6) Satan tempts Jesus with strength, with physical invincibility. "If you are really the Son of God, then you can do anything you like, even jump off a cliff, and you'll be fine." According to this demonic logic, not only could Jesus perform superhuman feats, but he also would be physically invulnerable. He could literally live forever, doing anything he pleased in this world. The spiritual battle becomes more intense, and Christ replies, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" (Matt 4:7)

Finally, Satan takes Jesus up to the top of a high mountain, shows him all of the kingdoms of the world, points out all the glory of all those kingdoms, and he says, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." (Matt 4:9) It is the ultimate offer of power. What would it be like to rule over the entire world, over all its kingdoms and all its peoples, and have access to all its wealth and all its pleasures? At some level, Jesus must have known that all of this could be his: perfect strength, infinite wealth, and limitless power. Yet, he strikes a powerful blow against the powers of wickedness in his reply: "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'" (Matt 4:10)

On Palm Sunday, we have fasted forty days, we are hungry, and if ever we face temptation from Satan, it is now. We face the temptation to gratify ourselves with worldly delights. We face the temptation to demand our liberty from everything and everyone that oppresses us. We face the temptation to fight for strength, and wealth, and power. This is the spiritual warfare that constantly rages on all sides, and today on Palm Sunday the battle is particularly violent.

As Jesus enters Jerusalem, he faces these temptations as never before—all of those people cheering, crying out "Hosanna!", just begging him to be their worldly general, their commander, and their emperor. Yet, Christ refuses to be the earthly king that the people demand. Instead he will be revealed as a kind of king that the world has never seen, a perfect king, a heavenly king, a humble king, crowned with thorns, robed in the purple of mockery, and enthroned on the Cross. Though Christ enters Jerusalem and is enveloped in a firestorm of temptation, he keeps his eyes on the Cross. This is the victory of Palm Sunday.

And today Jesus Christ enters into the Jerusalem of our hearts to lead us to victory. Today, Christ fills us with his power, his strength, and his resolve to overcome the temptation to worldly power. For "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt 20:28)

Today we cry out "Hosanna in the highest!" for Christ vanquishes the powers of evil, and through his perfect sacrifice on the Cross we are liberated from the oppressive desire for worldly power. Christ leads us to the unexpected victory in which the King lays down his own life for the salvation of all. In dying, the true majesty and power of the Lord is perfectly revealed and the powers of hell are vanquished. Following Christ, we lay down our lives as he did: for our brothers and sisters, our neighbor, and even our enemy. Today we cry out "Hosanna in the highest!" as we follow our Lord to his voluntary passion and death on the Cross.

Source: Synaxis: A Blog St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

What Happened To Lazarus? (Continued)

According to St. Epiphanios of Cyprus (367-403), Lazarus was thirty years old when he rose from the dead, and then went on to live another 30 years following his resurrection. Another tradition says that Lazarus fled the anger of the Jews and took refuge at Kition in Cyprus around 33 A.D.

While in Cyprus, Lazarus met the apostles Paul and Barnabas, as they were traveling from Salamis to Paphos, and they ordained him the first Bishop of Kition. He shepherded the Church of Kition with great care and love for eighteen years until the end of his life.

There are traditions which say he was sullen and never smiled after his resurrection, and this was due to what he saw while his soul was in Hades for four days. Some say he never once laughed, except one time when he saw a man steal a clay vessel, and he uttered the following saying: "One earth steals another".

Other Traditions About Lazarus

Another tradition connects him with Aliki in Larnaca (today's Kition). In Aliki at that time was a large vineyard. As the Saint was walking by he saw an old woman filling her basket with grapes. Tired and thirsty, the Saint asked the old woman for a few grapes. However, she looked at him with disdain and said:

"Go to hell, man. Can you not see that the vine is dried up like salt, and you are asking me for grapes?"

"If you see it dried up like salt, then let it become salt," responded Lazarus.

In this way the entire vineyard became a salt marsh.

Workers who collect salt in this area today confirm this tradition. They claim to find when they dig there roots and trunks of vines. It is said that in the middle of the salt lake today there is a well of fresh water, known as "the well of the old woman".

The Synaxarion of Constantinople, speaking of this tradition, says that two brothers, who broke ties for its possession, claimed the lake. To end the dispute, the Saint by his prayers dried up the lake and it remained salty.

Another tradition says that the Theotokos came to Kition with John the Evangelist in order to meet Lazarus. St. John gave him clerical vestments and cuffs, and then they went to Mount Athos.

The Second Death of Lazarus

St. Lazarus ended his second earthly life at Cyprus in 63 A.D. The faithful wept and buried him with honors in a sarcophagus made of Cypriot marble, on which they wrote in Hebrew:

"Lazarus of the four days and the friend of Christ."

Above the sarcophagus there was built a beautiful church, which was renovated in 1750.

The transfer of the relic of St. Lazarus from Kition to Constantinople, which took place in 890 by order of Emperor Leo VI the Wise is celebrated on October 17th. Emperor Leo wrote the idiomelon for the Vespers of St. Lazarus.

The Relic of St. Lazarus in Constantinople

The transfer of the relic of St. Lazarus is detailed for us in two panegyric homilies delivered by Bishop Arethas of Ceasarea (850-after 932). After extolling the arrival of this great treasure to Constantinople in his first homily, he describes in the second the procession formed with the presence of the Emperor when the relic arrived from Chrysoupolis to Hagia Sophia. In exchange for this transfer, Leo VI sent money and artisans to Cyprus, where he built a magnificent church to honor St. Lazarus, which is maintained until today in Larnaca. Furthermore, he built a monastery in Constantinople dedicated to St. Lazarus, in which he placed the sacred relic. To this same monastery was later transferred the relic of St. Mary Magdalene from Ephesus. It later became a custom for the Emperor of New Rome to worship at the monastery on the Saturday of Lazarus.

Not too many years ago (specifically November 23, 1972) the superintendent of the Department of Antiquities, who worked towards the restoration of the church in Larnaca, found a sarcophagus with bones beneath the pillar supporting the plate of the Holy Altar. The bones were in a wooden box, placed in the sarcophagus, which in turn had carved on it the word "friend".

This finding seems to confirm the tradition that Leo VI did not take the entire relic of St. Lazarus to Constantinople, but left a portion behind. Authentic testimony and evidence for this fact is the location where the bones were found: under the Holy Altar.

Moreover, Arethas does not mention an incorrupt relic, but "bones" and "powder". Also, a Russian source at the library of Oxford reports that a Russian monk came from Pskov Monastery in the 16th century to Larnaca, and he venerated the bones of St. Lazarus, taking a small piece for himself as well. This piece is preserved till this day in the Chapel of Saint Lazarus at Pskov Monastery. Based on this account, we can affirm that the relic of St. Lazarus was venerated in Larnaca in the 16th century. A later account is not known, so for some reason, probably for protection, the Kitians hid the relic beneath the Holy Altar until it was discovered in 1972.

Source: *Mystagogy Resource Center*

Overview Of Holy Week In The Orthodox Church

Holy Week in the Orthodox Church (for Greeks, Russians, Georgians, Romanians, and any other nationalities that are Orthodox Christian) takes place in the week after Great Lent and just before Pascha, or Orthodox Easter. The last day of lent is the Saturday of Lazarus, which celebrates when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Holy Week officially begins with Palm Sunday and follows the last week of Christ's life before His death and resurrection. Here's an overview of the days of Holy Week and what they represent.

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week. This is the day where we celebrate when Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. People tossed palm fronds in his path and hailed him as the Messiah. To celebrate, Orthodox Christians attend the Sunday Divine Liturgy serve as they usually do. However, there is a special service at the end that commemorates this moment.

Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday

During the Holy Monday services, the parable of the Ten Virgins is commemorated. Once Jesus entered Jerusalem, he proceeded to give his disciples their final instructions. The services on Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday share similarities because of this. It is during these two days where we remember these teachings. Often, the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts will also occur during these two days.

Holy Wednesday

During Holy Wednesday, Orthodox Christians can receive the Sacrament of Holy Unction. However, this wasn't always the case. The Holy Sacrament has only been part of the Holy Wednesday services for the last two centuries or so. However, receiving this sacrament is fitting because the service honors the moment when Mary Magdalene anointed His feet with oil and myrrh just before His arrest.

Holy Thursday

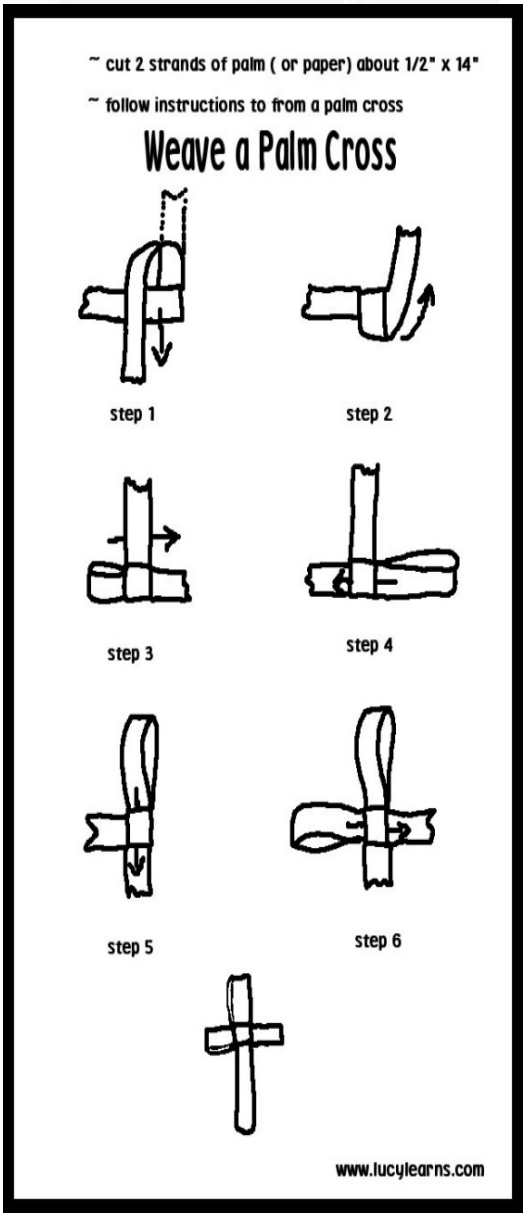
In the Bible, this is the day when Jesus and His disciples partook of the Last Supper. It is during this Supper when Jesus gave them bread and wine, which had been mystically changed to His body and blood. This is where our practice of Holy Communion was established. The service itself is the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great and also represents the last moments of Christ's life.

Good Friday

There are typically two services during Good Friday. The earlier service commemorates the last moments of Christ's life. His body is then removed from the cross and placed in the altar. Flower girls shower His body with rose petals. During the evening service, the Lamentations of Lazarus are sung and Christ's body is removed from the altar and placed in the tomb.

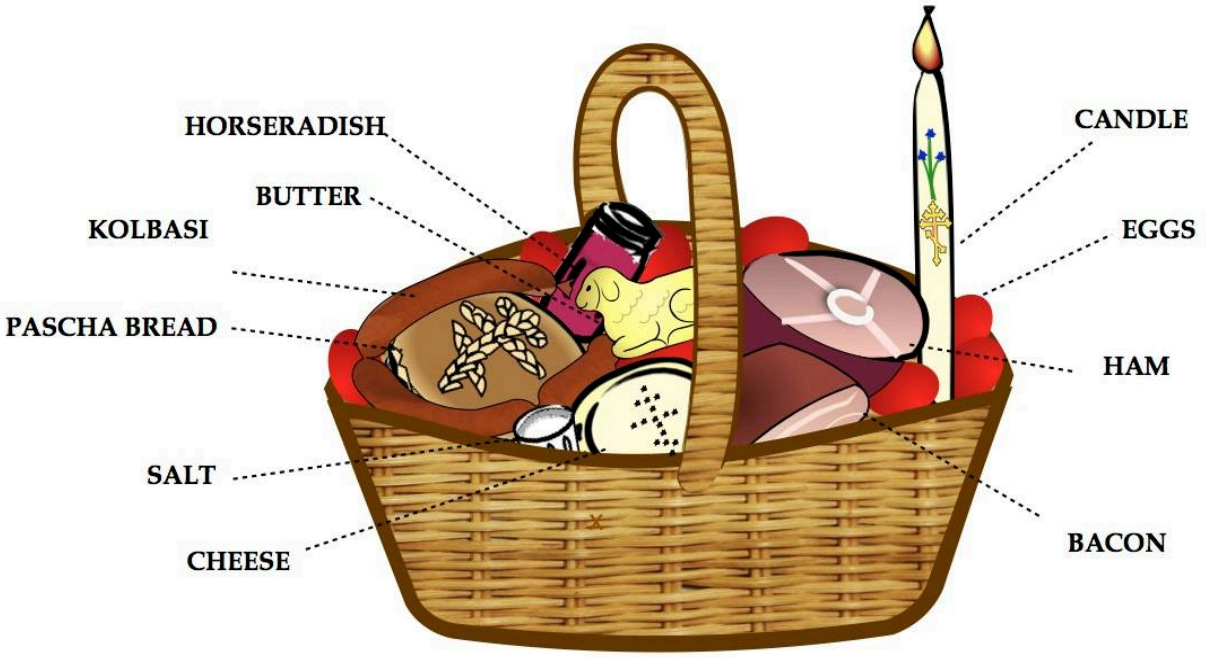
Holy Saturday

During the Great and Holy Saturday service, the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is performed as well as the vespers. During the evening service, people gather inside and outside the church holding unlit candles while the Liturgy is underway. Just before midnight, the church goes dark. At midnight, the priest lights the first candle and people take turns lighting each other's candles. This is the moment when we celebrate Christ's resurrection! The congregation then sings the traditional hymn; Christ is Risen, Hristos Voskrese or Christos Anesti. *Source:* https://www.greekboston.com/easter/holy-week/



How to Put Together a Traditional Easter Basket

"Text adapted from an article by Fr. Basil Kraynyak, GCU Messenger, April, 1979" Illustrated by Fr. Jonathan Bannon

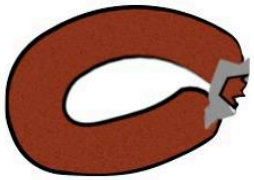


PASCHA - The Easter Bread (Pron. Pa-ska.) A sweet yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself who is our True Bread. Usually round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross (+) of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait given it a crowned effect or Greek

CHEESE - (Rusyn: Hrudka or Sirec) A custard type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. Also creamed cheese is placed in a small dish and both are decorated with symbols (see Pascha) out of cloves or pepper balls.

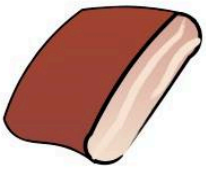
HAM - (Rusyn: Šunka - pron. shoon-ka.) The Flesh meat popular with the Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of Easter. Some may prefer Lamb or Veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats so the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.

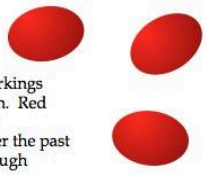
BUTTER - (Rusyn: Maslo pron. ma-slo.) This favorite dairy product is often shaped into a figure of a Lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. This reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.



SAUSAGE (Rusyn: Kolbasi-pron. kol-bus-i.) A spicy, garlic sausage of pork products indicative of God's flavor and generosity.

BACON - (Rusyn: Slanina pron. sla-ni-na) A piece of uncooked bacon cured with spices. Symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.





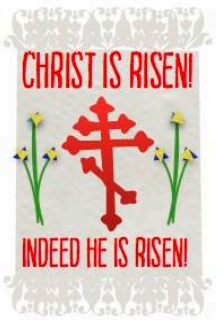
EGGS (Rusyn: Pisanki pron. pi-sun-ki)
Hardboiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax, indicative of new life and resurrection. Red eggs are also traditional date back to a story with St. Mary Magdalene. Having been dyed with onion skins saved over the past year, red shows the color of life and victory that came through Christ's blood.

SALT - (Rusyn: Sol' pron. sol') A condiment necessary for flavor reminding the Christian of his duty to others.

HORSERADISH (Rusyn: Chrin pron. khrin)
Horseradish mixed with grated red beets (optional) symbolizes the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.

These articles are placed in a wicker basket. A decorated candle is placed inside and is lit at the time of the blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" is placed over the food when brought to the Church.

In some places a large Easter Bread (Pascha) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing area, a sweet wine may be brought



10 Things For Holy Week *by Rev. Theophan Whitfield*

To help us prepare — to help us take up and drink from the Lord's same cup — I wanted to share a list of 10 things to do during Holy Week. These are ten recommendations for how to be baptized with the same baptism with which our Lord is baptized.

(1) Go to as many services as you can. We offer a large number. Usually, at least two each day. And if you can't go to every service, set aside time to read prayerfully through those you cannot attend. It is through worship that we return and unite ourselves to Christ. The services of Holy Week are not just memory exercises. Holy Week is a single unbroken Liturgy that over ten days invites us to participate in the saving love of Jesus Christ, not to just remember some events from long ago. The love which Jesus shows is real, it is now, and we are invited through worship to receive it.

Does it seem unreasonable to attend Church so much in a single week? Of course it does! But Christ's love for us is extreme and intense. And so we return that love during Holy Week in a way that is beyond reason!

(2) Intensify your fasting. Each person is called to fast as he or she is able. Some are able to fast more, some less. During Holy week, each of us should increase the intensity of the fast. Think about how you have followed the fast up to this point. During Holy Week, continue what you do, and then do a little bit more. Do you fast just a few days a week? Increase the number of your fasting days. Are you fasting from meat only? Consider fasting from dairy as well. Consider eating smaller meals each time. For some, it may be possible to eat only two small meals a day rather than three. Holy Week is a time in which we should increase our hunger for Christ, and physical hunger is one way to do so. Physical hunger reminds us that we need what God offers, and fasting helps us to focus on the love of Christ. Fasting is hard, but remember the good gift which waits for us at the Paschal Liturgy of the Resurrection — the good gift of Christ Himself!

(3) Create silence. Disconnect entirely from your cell phone, email, internet usage and especially social media. (If any of this is needed for work or school, designate a window of usage of no more than a few hours.) Do not watch TV, or listen to the radio. Cancel all lessons, sports, and social activities. It's only for one week. The world will still be there after Pascha. When we create silence in this way, we give ourselves the space and opportunity to be drawn by Christ more deeply into His words and actions during Holy Week. We remove some of the man-made barriers that separate us from "drinking from his cup"(Mark 10:38). And if we do not create silence, then the noise of this world will easily overwhelm the "still small voice" through which the Holy Spirit speaks (1 Kings 19:12). To hear the voice of Christ, we have to silence the relentless cascade of screed and distraction we otherwise allow the world to pump full force into our hearts and minds.

(4) Create prayer. Turn on some church music. In particular, listen to the hymns of Holy Week. And learn something about each hymn you hear: On what day do we sing this hymn? During which service? What is the place and purpose of this hymn? The hymns of Passion Week create holy echoes that help to connect our worship with the rest of daily life. Singing "Behold the Bridegroom" at the services which begin Holy Week is good, but hearing and singing the same hymn while driving, walking, or cleaning the house is even better. Doing so, we allow the prayer of the Church to become the prayer of everyday life.

(5) Be still. Set aside time each day to sit quietly in front of an icon of Christ, about 20-30 minutes. Light a candle, say a short prayer, and then simply wait in silence for the Lord to speak a word, or to bestow a deeper sense of His presence. Being silent is a way of saying to God, "I am here. And I wait on no other than You. Visit me in my smallness." Stillness during Holy Week is a good practice for the experience of Great and Holy Friday and Saturday. The most eloquent word ever spoken is the silence of our dead Savior while hanging on the cross, and while lying in the tomb. His silence says everything. The stillness of His death is the great action that redeems and sanctifies all the world. His silence on the cross shouts down hell. His stillness in the tomb explodes the realm of the dead and bestows life on all. When we practice stillness and silence during Holy Week, we are preparing to unite our silence to Christ's. We are preparing to die with our Savior … so that we too might be raised to new life!

(6) Always be with Christ (as Fr +Tom Hopko reminds us). Occupy your mind as often as you can with a short prayer. If you do not already have the habit of praying the Jesus Prayer, Holy Week is a great time to begin: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." This prayer increases our awareness of the nearness of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It reminds us that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God. Christ is always with us, and through continual prayer, we work to do the same — to always be with our Lord who loves and strengthens us.

(7) Read a Gospel. Set aside time each day to read several chapters from either Matthew, Mark, or Luke. (We save John for after Pascha!) And remember that in the Gospels, we do not find words about Christ, we find words from Christ. Each verse of Holy Scripture is a word spoken directly to you by the raised and glorified Lord. Each word is a word for now, each word is a new word that you have never received before. Enjoy the gift! Jesus wants to give it to you!

(8) Seek forgiveness and healing. Chances are, each of us has at least a small handful of relationships in need of healing. During Holy Week, work for that healing. Admit your mistakes, and forgive the mistakes made by others. Offer yourself in love to at least one other person from whom you are estranged. Make a phone call, send a letter or email — you have a blessing to use email in this one case! — or schedule a coffee date. Remember how much you love this person, and remember that we were created to live in peace and joy with one another. Christ's love for us is ENORMOUS compare to pettiness we so often hold on to. And if you have been deeply harmed by another person, seek help! Reach out to someone — your spouse, another family member or friend, your priest — and ask for guidance. Search through prayer, fasting, and honest communication for a way forward. As they say, holding onto anger (or hatred, or resentment, or vengefulness) is like swallowing poison and expecting someone else to die. Seek release from what possesses. Enjoy the lightness of a relationship that has been healed and restored.

(9) Call someone who is sick or lonely. Visit them if you can. Share yourself with someone who needs you. Our parishes, and our neighborhoods, are filled with people who are dying of loneliness and isolation. Extend yourself and give them the gift of human presence. One of the great themes of Holy Week is abandonment — how our Lord was abandoned by just about everyone, including it seems by His own Father. As we seek to unite ourselves to Christ through prayer and worship during Holy Week, may we not at the same time abandon those who need us. To be united to Christ, we must at the same time strengthen our solidarity with all those around us. We are part of the mystical body of Christ, and we are called to a life of unity and communion with one another.

(10) Think about Bright Week and beyond! With Pascha comes the true light that enlightens the whole world and each person in it. As we unite ourselves to Christ, the radiance of the Resurrection changes everything. The week after Pascha is truly a Bright Week — the Resurrection colors all with brilliance and beauty. Nothing should ever be the same. Let this Holy Week be a launching pad into the rest of life. Having united ourselves to Christ in both death and resurrection — Holy Week — we should get ready to proclaim the good news in all that we do. May we remember that every Sunday is a "little Pascha" and that each time we gather to celebrate the Liturgy we proclaim Christ's death and we confess His resurrection. And if every Sunday is a little Pascha, then every week is a little Holy Week. Each day of the year is a day on which we give thanks for the Holy Mysteries we last received, and look forward to being received by Christ once again at the life-giving chalice. Holy Week and Pascha occur once a year, but they are the rule, not the exception. Holy Week and Pascha are the models for every week of the year. Jesus Christ touches all of time through the Cross, and all of time collapses into the eternal now of His divine love. May we live all of life in the light of the Resurrection!

Source: http://www.pravmir.com/ten-things-for-holy-week/

Day of Easter *by Dionysios Solomos*

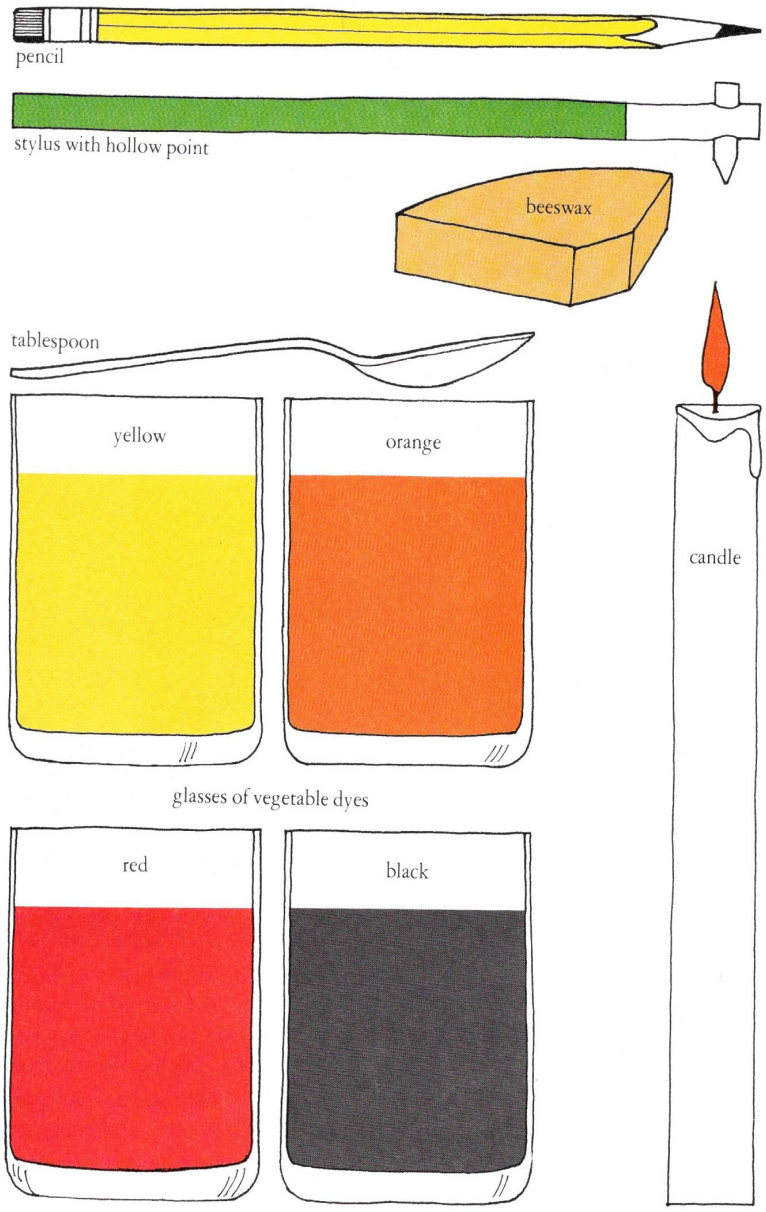
The last cool star of dawn was
foretelling the brightest sunshine;
no cloud, no drift of mist was travelling
across any part of the sky.
Coming from there, the breeze
blew so sweetly across the face,
so gently, that it seemed
to whisper to the depths of the heart:
'Life is sweet and death is darkness.'

'Christ is Risen!' Young and old, maidens,
everyone, little and great, prepare!
Inside the laurel-covered churches,
gather in the light of joy!
Open your arms and with them offer peace,
that the icons of the saints may see.
Embrace and kiss each other sweetly, lip on lip,
let friend and foe proclaim, 'Christ is Risen!'

Laurels are placed on every tomb,
beautiful babes are held in mothers' arms,
the choristers sing sweetly
as they come before the icons.
Bright is the silver, bright is the gold,
under the light of the Easter candles.
Each face alights before the holy candles,
that Christians bear in hand.

Decorating Eggs the Ukrainian Way

Easter eggs decorated with intricate and colorful designs have been a Ukrainian art form for centuries. The tools and techniques demonstrated here can be used to produce traditional Ukrainian motifs or your own improvisations. In either case the basic principle is simple: using the equipment shown below *(see page 206)*, a raw white egg is dipped into successively darker colors of dye, while areas to be protected against a dye at any stage are covered with beeswax.



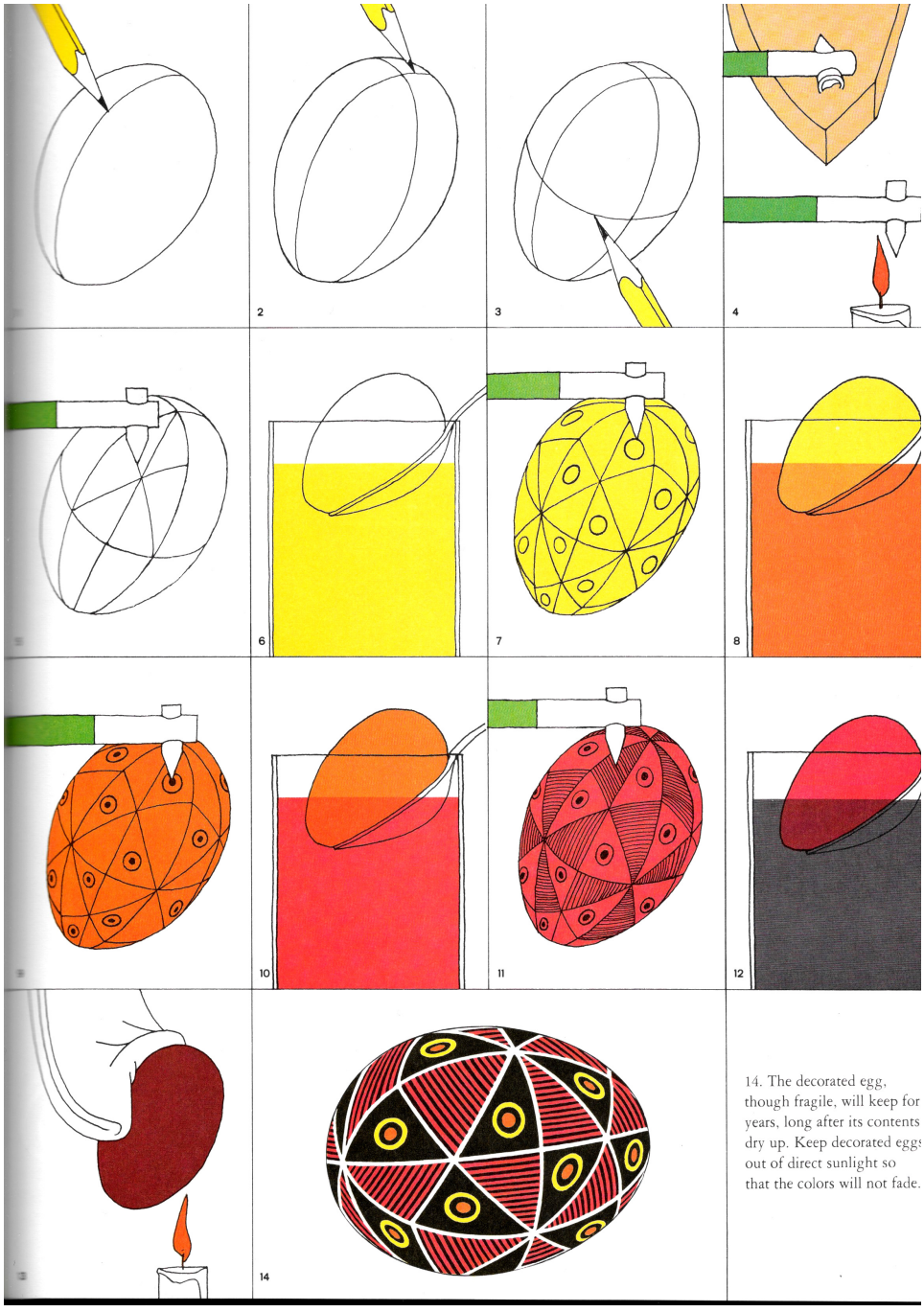
The Unconquerable Feast Of Easter

For more than 1000 years Easter has been the principal feast day of the Russian calendar, and the Orthodox Easter continues to be celebrated whenever there are Russians to celebrate it, from Smolensk to San Francisco. In churches there is stirring incantation and ritual; at home, equally stirring feasts that progress from appetizers to roasts to rich cakes. In some respects, the rites predate Christianity itself. When Prince Vladimir of Kiev baptized Russia in the 10th century, he overlaid Easter upon an older festival that marked the end of bleak winter. "The goodness hidden in the hearts of the holy shall be revealed in their risen bodies just as bare trees put out their leaves in spring." Promises an old sermon, and Easter still gains part of its power from this joyful analogy.

The special Easter cakes called *kulich* and *paskha*, along with the famous dyed Easter eggs, become an essential part of the Russian Orthodox celebration. *Kulich*, a tall cylindrical yeast cake filled with raisins and nuts and often iced before taken to the church is waiting in every Easter basket for its blessing. The classic Russian Easter meal begins with vodka and *zakuska* (appetizers) and ends with *kulich* and *paskha* (cheese butter); in between come cold hams baked in rye dough, the spicy sausage, cold baked ducks, a potato-based salad *Olivier*, a cold suckling pig, and of course, Easter eggs.

And we select an Easter egg with careful attention to the toughness of the pointed end, for we are going to crack eggs together, and by a process of elimination determine who has the strongest one. Finally a victor with an iron-shelled egg and a clever technique emerges – and then, inevitably, a little boy or a girl suddenly defeats him.

Decorating Eggs The Ukrainian Way



1. Holding the pencil steady in one hand and rotating the egg in the other, draw a light pencil line completely around the egg lengthwise.
2. Starting again at the top of the egg, draw another line crossing the first at right angles, thus dividing the egg into quarters.
3. Now draw a third, horizontal line around the middle of the egg.
4. Load the stylus by scraping the open end across the beeswax, and hold the point briefly over a candle flame. Test the flow of wax from the stylus point on a piece of paper, then draw the stylus over the penciled lines on the egg.
5. With the stylus, draw new lines bisecting the open areas and dividing each area into six triangles.
6. Place the egg in a spoon and dip it into the yellow vegetable dye.
7. Draw small circles in alternate triangles with the wax-loaded stylus.
8. The waxed circles will remain yellow when the egg is dipped into orange dye.
9. Pat dry again, hen place a dot of wax in the center of each circle.
10. Dip into the red dye, and pat dry.
11. Next draw fine diagonal lines in each of the remaining triangles.
12. Immerse in the black dye.
13. To make the color gleam on the decorated egg, melt off the protective coats of wax by holding the egg over the flame, rotating and wiping it gently with a facial tissue.

14. The decorated egg, though fragile, will keep for years, long after its contents dry up. Keep decorated eggs out of direct sunlight so that the colors will not fade.

Source: Papashvili, Helen and George. Russian Cooking. New York. 1969.

Christ is Risen!
Truly He is Risen!

The great and holy myrrh-bearer ***Mary Magdalene****, equal of the apostles, was a disciple of Jesus named Mary from Magdala, a town in Galilee. She was present at the crucifixion and burial of Christ, and was first to see Him risen from the dead.* (Mathew 27:55-61, Mark 16:1-10)

Miracle of the Red Egg

According to a pious tradition of the Church, Saint Mary Magdalene, following the death and resurrection of Jesus, attended a banquet given by Emperor Tiberius. There she met the Emperor, and while holding a plain egg in her hand, she exclaimed ***"Christ is risen!"*** Caesar laughed, and said that Christ rising from the dead was as likely as the egg in her hand turning red while she held it. Before he finished speaking, the egg in her hand turned a bright red, and she continued proclaiming the Gospel to the entire imperial house.

Crack your eggs together to celebrate the shattering of Hades by the victorious Christ!