

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH OF SAINT ELIZABETH THE NEW-MARTYR

Volume XXI

Number 34

20 April / 3 May 2020

THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA (*Tone 2*)

Commemoration of the Myrrh-Bearing Women & the Righteous Joseph

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES THISWEEK

3RD SUNDAY OF PASCHA: Myrrh-Bearers

Saturday, 2 May (119 April, n.s)

6:00 PM Vigil Service;
Confessions

Sunday, 3 May (20 April, n.s)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

GREAT-MARTYR GEORGE

Tuesday, 5 May (122 April, n.s)

6:00 PM Vigil Service;
Confessions

Wednesday, 6 May (23 April, n.s)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

4TH SUNDAY OF PASCHA: Myrrh-Bearers

Saturday, 9 May (26 April, n.s)

6:00 PM Vigil Service;
Confessions

Sunday, 10 May (27 April, n.s)

9:10 AM Third and Sixth Hours
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

At the direction of His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion, we are to observe the restrictions of the civil authority which require us to have a gathering of no more than ten (10) persons who are able to space themselves six (6) feet apart. Parishioners are asked to take turns attending the services offered in church. Those unable to go to church are asked to pray at home.

FASTING DAYS Week of 3 May

Day of Week	Date	Commemoration and Type of Fast
<i>Wednesday</i>	6 May (23 April, o.s.)	Great Martyr George Fast: fish, wine, & oil permitted
<i>Friday</i>	8 May (25 April, o.s.)	Apostle and Evangelist Mark Fast: fish, wine, & oil permitted

SCRIPTURE READINGS Week of 3 May

THIRD WEEK OF PASCHA		
<i>Su</i>	Third Sunday of Pascha: the Myrrh-bearing Women	
	<i>3rd Resurrectional Matins Gospel: Mark §71 (16:9-20)</i>	
	Acts §16 (6:1-7)	Mark §69 (15:43-16:8)
<i>M</i>	Acts §17 (6:8-7:5a, 47-60)	John §13 (4:46b-54)
<i>Tu</i>	Acts §18 (8:5-17)	John §20 (6:27-33)
<i>W</i>	Acts §19 (8:18-25)	John §21 (6:35-39)
<i>Th</i>	Acts §20 (8:26-39)	John §22 (6:40-44)
<i>F</i>	Acts §21 (8:40-9:19a)	John §23 (6:48-54)
<i>Sa</i>	Acts §22 (9:19-31)	John §52 (15:17-16:2)
FOURTH WEEK OF PASCHA		
<i>Su</i>	Fourth Sunday of Pascha: The Paralytic	
	<i>4th Resurrectional Matins Gospel: Luke §112 (24:1-12)</i>	
	Acts §23 (9:32-42)	John §14 (5:1-15)

THIS WEEK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The fast days this week are Wednesday and Friday. Fasting on both these days is mitigated due to the celebration of Pascha, wine and oil being permitted.

Kneeling and prostrations are not permitted in either church services or during or private prayers from Pascha until Kneeling Vespers on Pentecost. This Apostolic tradition has been preserved by Orthodox Christians over the centuries. Kneeling is incompatible with the resurrectional joy we experience during the Fifty Days. Bows from the waist (*metanias*) replace prostrations throughout this period.

We continue to use the paschal greeting, *Christ is risen!* and the response, *Truly, He is risen!*, when greeting other Orthodox Christians until the Apodosis (Leave-taking) of the Feast. This greeting is not only for Pascha and Bright Week, but for the whole Paschal Season.

We continue also to sing the paschal troparion at all church services and our prayers at home during the forty days of Pascha. We should begin our morning and evening prayers by singing *Christ is risen...* thrice. The paschal troparion may also appropriately replace the Lord's Prayer before meals until the Leave-taking of Pascha.

COVID-19 and PARISH LIFE

Parishioners who would like to go to Confession may do so over the telephone, and so should contact Father David by email or text in order to set up at a mutually acceptable time. At the appointed time, dress as though going to church, stand or kneel in an icon corner that provides the necessary privacy, and call Father on the telephone. He will listen to the Confession, give counsel, and absolve you.

Parishioners desiring to receive Holy Communion should contact Father David who will arrange a time and place to make this possible.

Parishioners who are ill should contact Fr David. A Moleben for the Sick can be served in the rectory. The Mystery of Confession can be received over the telephone, as described above. The reception of Unction and Holy Communion can be arranged in a manner in keeping with the safety restrictions of the civil and medical authorities.

We are unable to ‘live stream’ the services at St Elizabeth’s during the state of emergency because there is no internet service in our church building. But there are some very good Orthodox Service ‘live streams’ that follow the Church (Julian) Calendar. We urge you to consult the list of live-stream services available from parishes and monasteries in our Diocese:

https://eadiocese.org/news_200404_1

For those who would like to do Reader’s Services at home rather than watch the services on livestream, Archpriest John Whiteford has prepared Reader’s Services for Thomas Sunday and Radonitsa on his Blog that you can download, print out, and use. You can find them at:

<https://fatherjohn.blogspot.com/2020/04/reader-services-st-thomas-sunday-and.html>

Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

St Mark 15:43-16:8

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices so that they might come and anoint him.

Today’s Sunday is called the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women. The Myrrh-Bearers are those women who, in spite of the fear spread by the enemies of Christ, dared to go to Golgotha before Sunday’s dawning, to anoint Christ’s body with myrrh. Because of their ardent love and faith, they were the first to hear the glad news of Christ’s resurrection and to become the evangelists to the disciples who were terrified and hiding at a friend’s house. The disciples were timid! The myrrh-bearing women were brave. In that situation, the women proved to be incomparably greater than the men.

God, as we all know, created Adam as the first human being. He created him ‘according to His image and likeness’ and put him in paradise. But the all-wise and all-kind God didn’t want to leave Adam that way. When he slept, God

took one of his ribs and fashioned the first woman, Eve. When Adam awoke, he was amazed. Of all creation Eve appeared in Adam’s eyes to be the most beautiful.

God fashioned man and woman in such a way that the one fulfilled what was lacking in the other. That which man had, the woman did not have; that which the woman had, the man did not have. A man has certain abilities and talents, and a woman has others. With their union, the one complete the other, and a human being is brought to perfection.

There is a story that when a certain young man married, he was filled with such joy and happiness that he wrote to his teacher, the famous Koraes, and told him: ‘Teacher, I am no longer alone. I married and became two’. Koraes supposedly answered him: ‘No, my boy, you didn’t become two, you became whole’.

A man and a woman are like two half people who, when they are joined, form a whole person; they are like two hemispheres which, when joined, make a whole sphere. Man is more mind and woman is more heart, and in that holy union of marriage they complement each other.

It is impossible for a viable community made up only of men to exist, just as it is impossible for a community made up of only women. The attraction God planted in the hearts of men and women is what brings the two races close to each other; it joins them, and from that joining, the new generation results. Only in exceptional cases can men or women who are overwhelmed by divine love conquer, by the grace of God, the natural attraction of man toward woman and woman toward man; only a few can succeed in living a kind of angelic life in a human body and present an image of that heavenly life we anticipate in which the genders will cease and all will live like angels in the Kingdom of Heaven. For these people, the hymn might be said: ‘To the hermits life is blessed, because it is possessed by divine love’.

Man and woman. Both are exceptional creations of God, with abilities and gifts to fulfill the high mission given to them by God – that is, to continue life by child-bearing. God elevates man and woman and makes them co-workers in the making of new people.

Man and woman. Equal members in the human community. What does this mean? Let’s remember St. Cosmas Aitolos who, speaking on the subject said: ‘Look and see how God created woman. He didn’t take a piece from the head of the man because He didn’t want her to be superior to him. But He didn’t take a piece from man’s foot, because He didn’t want her to be a slave to him. He took one of man’s ribs, which is over his heart, to show that woman is dear to him – equal and beloved.’

God created one man and one woman. This means that God is against polygamy of man and woman. If God wanted them to have many wives, as the Koran teaches and the flesh-worshippers of our age practice – even though they are called Christians – God would have had to fashion one man and many women. If God wanted woman to have many husbands, then He would have made few women and many men.

Christianity is against polygamy. One man for one woman is proper, and one woman for one man. One marriage is blessed, and only after special dispensation does the Church allow a second and a third marriage. Even then, there are penances for those who marry a second and a third time.

Unfortunately, though Holy Writ orders these rules on marriage, the opposite takes place in societies that are governed by the Spirit of God. At one time man became woman's tyrant, and woman found herself in a miserable condition; she was treated like an animal and even worse than an animal. At other times, the woman was the tyrant, and under her tyranny, men became degenerated beings, slaves and pack animals, led around by these corrupted women.

The Bible condemns both extremes. The Bible wants man to be an affectionate husband and father, who behaves with love and courtesy toward his wife and children, not as a dictator. The Bible also wants the woman to be at the height of her mission, a precious companion to her husband, a loving mother, the queen of her house who is dedicated to bringing up her children. The Bible wants the woman to be a myrrh-bearer, like the myrrh-bearers of today's scripture reading. A woman like that can offer a great service to the world. Such a woman surpasses man in heroic achievements of faith and virtue. A woman like that appears to the world like an angel who spread the myrrh of love.

Myrrh-bearing women! How few of them there are in this contemporary society of ours, which is rotted by unbelief and corruption. If only those few and pious women who hear or read this homily could be all women.

This chapter was taken from the book 'DROPS FROM THE LIVING WATER' by Bishop Augoustinos N. Kantiotis. Translation by the Rev. Fr Asterios Gerostergios.

FROM THE PROLOGUE FROM OCHRID By Bishop Nikolai (Velimirovic)

23 April / 6 May

1. The Holy Great-Martyr George

This glorious and victorious saint was born in Cappadocia, the son of wealthy and virtuous parents. His father suffered for Christ, and his mother then moved to Palestine. When George grew up he entered the military, where he attained, in his twentieth year, the rank of tribune, and as such he was in the service of the Emperor Diocletian. When Diocletian began his terrible persecution of Christians, George came before him and courageously confessed that he was a Christian. The emperor had him thrown into prison and ordered that his feet be placed in stocks and that a heavy stone be placed on his chest. After that, the emperor commanded that George be tied to a wheel, under which was a board with large nails, and he was to be rotated until his whole body became as one bloody wound. After that, they buried him in a pit with only his head showing above the

ground, and there they left him for three days and three nights. Then George was given a deadly poison to drink by a magician. But through all of these sufferings, George continuously prayed to God, and God healed him instantly and saved him from death, to the great astonishment of the people. When he also resurrected a dead man through his prayers, many accepted the Christian Faith. Among these were Alexandra, the wife of the Emperor Diocletian; the chief pagan priest; the farmer Glycerius; and Valerius, Donatus and Therinus. Finally the emperor commanded that George and his own wife Alexandra be beheaded. Blessed Alexandra died on the scaffold before being beheaded, and St. George was beheaded in the year 303 A.D. The miracles which have occurred over the grave of St. George are countless. Numerous are his appearances, both in dreams and openly, to those who, from that time to today, have invoked him and implored his help. Inflamed with love for Christ the Lord, it was not difficult for this saintly George, for the sake of this love, to leave all: rank, wealth, imperial honor, his friends and the entire world. For this love, the Lord rewarded him with a wealth of unfading glory in heaven and on earth, and with eternal life in His kingdom. In addition, the Lord bestowed upon him the power and authority to assist all those in afflictions and difficulties who honor him and call upon his name.

HYMN OF PRAISE SAINT GEORGE THE GREAT MARTYR

Saint George, on a tall horse,
Saved the maiden from the dragon.
On his lance was the sign of the Cross:
The holy weapon, invincible.
With this weapon, he slew the dragon,
And returned the maiden alive and well to her father.
With his goodness he indebted God Himself;
With a wreath of glory God repaid him.
Saint George, with a hero's heart,
Distributed all his wealth to the poor,
And rejected the honor and glory of the world
For the sake of the name of Christ the Victor.
Sufferings he embraced, and to sufferings consented.
His body was crushed for the sake of his soul's salvation.
With his goodness he indebted God Himself;
With a wreath of glory God repaid him.
George the Saint and Victory-bearer
Walks even now with a cruciform spear.
Justice he defends, injustice he punishes.
Whoever invokes him with faith and tears,
Whoever prays to him with a repentant soul--
To his aid flies George the Saint.
With his goodness George indebted God Himself;
With a wreath of glory God repaid him.

