

# STS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH



GLORY BE TO  
JESUS CHRIST!  
GLORY BE  
FOREVER!

SLAVA ISUSU  
CHRISTU!  
SLAVA NA VIKI!



## SUNDAY OF THE VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

NEW CALENDAR: MARCH 12, 2017  
OLD CALENDAR: FEBRUARY 27, 2017

- ❖ We welcome all of our guests who are with us! Please come and worship with us often.
- ❖ Nut Roll pre-orders are being taken by Elizabeth Lion #973.541.0008. Walnut, Poppy Seed, and Prune are \$13 per roll. Pickup date is Saturday April 8 10am-1pm.
- ❖ There are sign-ups for the Lenten Soup sale. You only need to make 6 quarts for this one! There is also a signup for our Lenten Mission. Sign-up today! The next soup sale is March 24 between 4-6pm.
- ❖ We are looking for a Contractor that can sign off on the plans for our hall changes.
- ❖ Camp Nazareth Registration is now open. Register your kids to go today!
- ❖ There is a sign up in the back of the church for homemade chocolate lambs for pascha. This is a deanery fundraiser to help with the camp bus. Sign up today!
- ❖ A big thanks to everyone who brought food and came to the Lenten Mission. It was so beautiful worshipping together.

### Epistle Reading Schedule

3/26 Lance Michealsen  
4/2 Zach Fitzgerald  
4/9 Lance Michealsen

### Sunday Social Hour

3/26 Ann Smith  
4/2 Benyam & Roman  
4/9 Helen Angle

“Fasting is wonderful, because it tramples our sins like a dirty weed, while it cultivates and raises truth like a flower.”

— St. Basil the Great

### Sunday School Schedule:

3/26 : Toddler w/ Christyn,  
K-2 w/ Linda,  
3-5 w/ Mary Beth  
Teens w/ Pani Amy  
4/2 : Toddler w/ Leigh,  
K-2 & 3-5 w/ Pani Amy  
Teens w/ Lance

- ❖ The 2017 Diocesan Altarboy Retreat will take place from June 25-28, 2017. The Young Women's Encounter will take place the same days.
- ❖ **The next nut roll baking session will be this Tuesday, March 21, and then Tuesday March 28 at 9:30am. Please come and help out our fundraising efforts!**
- ❖ ACRY Dues are \$15. Please see Barbara Fitzgerald.
- ❖ The ACRY Youth are collecting change over the Lenten Fast to donate towards St. John the Compassionate Mission. This is a great way to give alms, which we are called to do during the fast.
- ❖ The Lenten Mission in South River on March 26th has been rescheduled on Sunday, April 2nd at 4pm.
- ❖ Next week we are taking a collection for the Patriarch of Constantinople. Be generous in your donations!

February:	
Income	\$
Disbursements	\$

American Carpatho-  
Russian Diocese of USA  
Ecumenical Patriarchate of  
Constantinople

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## WEEKLY SERVICE SCHEDULE

- ❖ Sunday, March 19, Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross: Matins 8:15am; Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am & Moleben to the Cross @ 1:30pm in 7th St. NYC.
- ❖ Monday, March 20, Akathist to the Theotokos Surety of Sinners @ 9 am
- ❖ Tuesday, March 21, Lenten Matins @ 8 am
- ❖ Wednesday, March 22, Mission Presanctified in Bayonne @ 6:30pm
- ❖ Thursday, March 23, Moleben to the Cross & 3rd Hour @ 9am
- ❖ Friday, March 24, Myrrh Streaming Icon at St Nicholas 10th St. in NYC @ 7pm
- ❖ Saturday, March 25, Soul Saturday Divine Liturgy @ 9am;
- ❖ Saturday, March 26, Great Vespers in St Gregory of Nyssa, Seaford, NY @ 5pm
- ❖ Sunday, March 27, St. Gregory Palamas: Matins @ 8:15am; Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

Please Note: If you need to speak with a priest during the week please call Fr. William at 862.432.9174. Rectory # 973.627.1462. If Fr. William is unavailable and it is an emergency please call Fr. John Theodosion his number is 973.584.0388.

### Prayer List:

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” — James 5:16 NKJV

### For those who need prayers:

Desiree Stanchina, Peter Lyasko, Esther Horchor, Ann Willis, Marilyn/Tony George, Margot, Adam, Debbie, Rosalie Nemerovich, Michael Carmona, Klava Trofimova, Inna Kudryavtseva, Joan King, Eleni Matangos, Evangelia Portelos, Jeannette Webb, Elizabeth T., Mary Elizabeth, George Matangos, Gregory Griff, Lillian, Sandi Mahtook, Sandi Reisbeck, Anna Hollis, Catherine Bowan, William O’Keefe, Ann Smith, Sonia Geiger, Tatyana and Zoe Ellis, Dolores Falk, Joann Talmadge, Estella Vreeland, Barbara Kmech, Roy Michealsen, Florine Nandrajog

## Stewardship around the Parish

- Paint trim on Shed
- Add a water spigot to the far side of hall
- Repaint Narthex
- Paint trim in-between altar wall and ceiling red in altar boy and priest sacristy
- Build bookshelves in priest sacristy
- repair/touch-up tomb

## READINGS AND SAINTS FOR THE COMING WEEK:

**Sun:** Veneration of the Holy Cross; Hebrews 4:14-5:6; Mark 8:34-9:1

**Mon:** Hieromartyr Basil; Isaiah 14:24-32; Genesis 8:21-9:7; Proverbs 11:19-12:6

**Tues:** Venerable Theophylactus; Isaiah 25:1-9; Genesis 9:8-17; Proverbs 12:8-22

**Wed:** 40 Martyrs of Sebaste; Isaiah 26:21-27:9; Genesis 9:18-10:1; Proverbs 12:23-13:9

**Thurs:** Martyr Quadratus; Isaiah 28:14-22; Genesis 10:32-11:9; Proverbs 13:20-14:6

**Fri:** Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem; Isaiah 29:13-23; Genesis 12:1-7; Proverbs 14:15-26

**Sat:** Confessor Theophanes; Hebrews 6:9-12; Mark 7:31-37

## SALVATION HISTORY: PRIESTHOOD; BY FR THOMAS HOPKO

When speaking of Abraham, we mentioned how Jesus Christ is the “priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” As the “priest for ever,” Jesus is also the completion and fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood of the Levites.

In the Old Testament, God ordered Moses to build the tabernacle with a sanctuary for worship and sacrifice.

*And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst, According to all that I show you concerning the tabernacle, and all of its furniture, so you shall make it (Ex 25.8–9).*

In the tabernacle there was a sanctuary surrounded by a court yard. Within the sanctuary was the “most holy place.” A special ark was built to hold the tables of the covenant law surrounded by two cherubim. The ark was kept in the most holy place. Above the ark of the covenant was the mercy seat from which Moses would speak to the people (Ex 25.14–22).

In the sanctuary, special tables were placed which held “plates and dishes for incense” and “flagons and bowls with which to pour libations.”

*...of pure gold you shall make them. And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me always (Ex 25.28–30).*

There also was the golden altar upon which the animal sacrifices were offered.

A lampstand of gold, with “seven lamps for it” which were lighted with pure olive oil, was placed in the sanctuary. And between the various part of the tabernacle, curtains were hung.

*And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; in skilled work shall it be made, with cherubim; and you shall hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, upon four bases of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in thither within the veil; and the veil shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy. You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table; and you shall put the table on the north side. And you shall make a screen for the door of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them. You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad; the altar shall be a square, and its height shall be three cubits. And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze (Ex 26.31–27.2).*

The priests of the tabernacle were to be the Levites, the men from the tribe of Levi.

*Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests ... (Ex 28.1)*

God commanded that special vestments be made for the priests to wear when serving in the sanctuary (Ex 28). He also ordered that special oil be blended for the anointing of all of the utensils of the tabernacle, as well as for the anointing of the priests. He also ordered special incense to be made for burning in the holy place.

*... you shall consecrate them [the furniture and utensils], that they may be holy; whatever touches them will become holy. And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they*

*may serve me as priests. And you shall say to the people of Israel, "This is my holy anointing oil throughout your generations." (Ex 30.29–31)*

*And the incense which you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves; it shall be for you holy to the Lord (Ex 30.37).*

God also provided a very detailed code concerning worship and the offering of the various sacrifices. He explained which animals should be selected and how they should be killed. He told which offerings should be made on which occasions and for what purposes. He gave instructions about offerings for peace and for praise, for thanksgiving and mercy, for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God in times of transgression. He also told which feasts should be observed, when they should be kept and how they should be celebrated, The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are filled with such specific and detailed instructions.

While passing through the desert and into the promised land, the People of God carried the tabernacle with them. They set it up in each place where they camped. Finally, after the crossing of the Jordan River and the settlement in Canaan, the city of Jerusalem was established by David the king. David's son Solomon was then commanded by God to build the temple in which the worship of God would take place and the ritual sacrifices would be offered.

*In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel . . . he began to build the house of the Lord (1 Kg 6.1).*

The house of the Lord was of the same pattern as Moses' tabernacle. It had the outer court, the inner sanctuary and the most holy place in which the ark of the covenant was kept. It had the altars for incense, libations and burnt offerings. It had the lampstands and the table for the bread of the Presence. It had all of the utensils and vestments necessary for the service of the Lord (see 1 Kg 6–8).

When Solomon finished building the temple (c. 960 BC), he conducted a great celebration of dedication.

Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim.

*There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Then Solomon said, "The Lord has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that He would dwell in thick darkness. I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever" (1 Kg 8.6, 9–13).*

Solomon then blessed the people and addressed them concerning the building of the temple which the Lord promised David that his son would build. He then offered a long prayer of dedication, asking God to be with the people and to receive their prayers offered in the temple.

*"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God, hearkening to the cry and to the prayer which Thy servant prays before Thee this day; that Thine eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which Thou hast said, 'My name shall be there,' that Thou mayest hearken to the prayer which Thy servant offers toward this place. And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; yea, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place; and when Thou hearest, forgive" (1 Kg 8.27–30).*

Thus, the temple which Solomon built to the Lord became the sole place for the formal worship and the priestly sacrifices of the People of God. The temple was destroyed during the time of Babylonian captivity, and was restored in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah only to be defiled again by foreign invaders, and finally destroyed completely by the Romans in the year 70 AD. *(to be continued...)*

## **ON STEWARDSHIP AND THE ORTHODOX LIFE: PART 85: DO NOT FRET:**

*"...Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil..." (Psalm 37[36]:5 RSV)*

The word “fret” is not a common one in our modern usage of the English language. The word means to be constantly or visibly worried or anxious. Its meaning is similar to the words of Christ: “...do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?” (Matthew 6:25 RSV)

In Psalm 37[36], we find David the Psalmist pondering how well the wicked seem to fare in this life. It is often in our modern life that we find ourselves comparing our own situations in life to others who seem to thrive on what appears to be “ill-gotten gains.” After all, we think, we play by the rules, yet we do not seem to be able to get ahead.

There is a widespread belief in something that has come to be called “the gospel of prosperity.” There are many who believe that one should give to God so that God will give back to them. It was Ben Franklin who wrote that “God helps those who help themselves.” This slogan is used by many who believe in “the gospel of prosperity” to the point that they think the quote actually came from the Bible. It did not.

In Psalm 37[36], David encourages us to “*Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will dwell in the land, and enjoy security. Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act...*” (Psalm 37[36]:3-5 RSV). God is not good to us because we first give to God. Rather, God frees us from our anxieties about earthly things, and thus allows us to give and share what we have with others.

Our problem seems to be with time. We want what we want, and we want it right now! God says through the Psalmist: *Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart* -- and that only when God Himself is ready to do so. Hearing God correctly from Psalm 37[36], we must work hard on patient waiting for God. Thus we can correct Ben Franklin with the words of Isaiah the prophet: “*God ... works for those who wait for him*” (Isaiah 64:4 RSV).

When we look at prosperity around us, let us remember two things: First, by comparison with most in this world, we are very prosperous people. Second, God offers us prosperity as a gracious gift. God owes us nothing. We owe God everything.

## OUR EXAMPLES OF HOLINESS

**The Icon of the Mother of God – “Pledge for Sinners”** (“Sporuchnitsa Greshnykh”) – is called thus because of the inscription preserved on the icon: “I am a Pledge in trust for sinners to My Son...”.

This image was first glorified by miracles at the Nikolaevsk Odrina [BedChamber] men's monastery of the former Orlovsk governance in the mid-XIX Century. The ancient icon of the Mother of God “Pledge for Sinners” because of its old condition was not afforded the proper reverence and stood in an old chaplet at the monastery gates. But in 1843 it was revealed in vision-dreams to many of the people, that through the Prescience of God, the icon was imbued with miraculous power. They solemnly conveyed the icon into the church. Believers began to throng to it in prayer for the healing of their sorrows and sicknesses. The first to receive healing was a crippled lad, the mother of whom prayed fervently before the icon. The icon was glorified in particular during the time of a cholera epidemic, when many fell deathly ill, and making their way to it, were by it restored to health.



At the monastery in honour of the wonderworking image was built a large church with three altars. On the Icon “Pledge for Sinners”, the Mother of God is depicted with the Christ-Child on Her left arm, Who with both His hands holds onto Her right hand. The heads of the Mother of God and the Christ-Child are set in crowns.

In 1848, through the zeal of the Muscovite Dimitrii Boncheskul, a copy was made of the wonderworking image and placed in his home. Soon it was glorified as a source of curative myrh, given to many for restoration of health from grievous illnesses. They carried this wonderworking copy into a

church of Saint Nicholas at Chamovnika, where then was built a chapel in honour of the Icon of the Mother of God "Pledge for Sinners". Besides 7 March, celebration of this icon is also made on 29 May.

## **THE THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT: SUNDAY OF VENERATION OF THE HOLY CROSS, FROM GOARCH.ORG**

### **Introduction**

On the Third Sunday of Great and Holy Lent, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Precious and Life-Giving Cross of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Services include a special veneration of the Cross, which prepares the faithful for the commemoration of the Crucifixion during Holy Week.

### **Historical Background**

The commemoration and ceremonies of the Third Sunday of Lent are closely parallel to the feasts of the Veneration of the Cross (September 14) and the Procession of the Cross (August 1). Not only does the Sunday of the Holy Cross prepare us for commemoration of the Crucifixion, but it also reminds us that the whole of Lent is a period when we are crucified with Christ.

As we have "crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24), and will have mortified ourselves during these forty days of the Fast, the precious and life-giving Cross is now placed before us to refresh our souls and encourage us who may be filled with a sense of bitterness, resentment, and depression. The Cross reminds us of the Passion of our Lord, and by presenting to us His example, it encourages us to follow Him in struggle and sacrifice, being refreshed, assured, and comforted. In other words, we must experience what the Lord experienced during His Passion - being humiliated in a shameful manner. The Cross teaches us that through pain and suffering we shall see the fulfillment of our hopes: the heavenly inheritance and eternal glory.

As they who walk on a long and hard way and are bowed down by fatigue find great relief and strengthening under the cool shade of a leafy tree, so do we find comfort, refreshment, and rejuvenation under the Life-giving Cross, which our Fathers "planted" on this Sunday. Thus, we are fortified and enabled to continue our Lenten journey with a light step, rested and encouraged.

Or, as before the arrival of the king, his royal standards, trophies, and emblems of victory come in procession and then the king himself appears in a triumphant parade, jubilant and rejoicing in his victory and filling those under him with joy, so does the Feast of the Cross precede the coming of our King, Jesus Christ. It warns us that He is about to proclaim His victory over death and appear to us in the glory of the Resurrection. His Life-Giving Cross is His royal scepter, and by venerating it we are filled with joy, rendering Him glory. Therefore, we become ready to welcome our King, who shall manifestly triumph over the powers of darkness.

The present feast has been placed in the middle of Great Lent for another reason. The Fast can be likened to the spring of Marah whose waters the children of Israel encountered in the wilderness. This water was undrinkable due to its bitterness but became sweet when the Holy Prophet Moses dipped the wood into its depth. Likewise, the wood of the Cross sweetens the days of the Fast, which are bitter and often grievous because of our tears. Yet Christ comforts us during our course through the desert of the Fast, guiding and leading us by His hand to the spiritual Jerusalem on high by the power of His Resurrection.

Moreover, as the Holy Cross is called the Tree of Life, it is placed in the middle of the Fast, as the ancient tree of life was placed in the middle of the garden of Eden. By this, our Holy Fathers wished to remind us of Adam's gluttony as well as the fact that through this Tree has condemnation been abolished. Therefore, if we bind ourselves to the Holy Cross, we shall never encounter death but shall inherit life eternal.

### **Icons Of The Commemoration**

The most common icon associated with the Veneration of the Cross is the same icon used on the Feast of the Veneration of the Cross on September 14. In the icon, Patriarch Macarius is standing in the pulpit elevating the Cross for all to see and venerate. On each side of the Patriarch are deacons holding

candles. The elevated Cross is surrounded and venerated by many clergy and lay people, including Saint Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine.

In the background of the icon is a domed structure that represents the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. This church was one of the churches constructed and dedicated by Emperor Constantine on the holy sites of Jerusalem.

Another icon related to this feast depicts the actual service of veneration that is conducted in the churches on the Third Sunday of Lent. In the center of the icon is the Cross. It is on a table surrounded by flowers. Above the Cross is the image of Christ in a partial mandorla representing His glory. He is blessing those who have gathered to venerate the Cross, the rulers, clergy, monastics, and laity.

As in the service of veneration, the icon shows the priest venerating the Cross as the people chant the hymn “We venerate Your Cross, O Christ, and Your holy Resurrection we glorify,” which is inscribed on the table holding the Cross.



## Orthodox Christian Commemoration of the Sunday of the Holy Cross

The Sunday of the Holy Cross is commemorated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great, which is preceded by the Matins service. A Great Vespers is conducted on Saturday evening. The hymns of the Triodion for this day are added to the usual prayers and hymns of the weekly commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ.

Scripture readings for the Sunday of Orthodoxy are: At the Orthros (Matins): The prescribed weekly Gospel reading. At the Divine Liturgy: Hebrews 4:14-5:6; Mark 8:34-9:1.

At the conclusion of the Matins (the traditional practice in association with a vigil) or of the Divine Liturgy, a special service is held. The Cross is placed on a tray surrounded by basil or daffodils and is taken in solemn procession through the church to the chanting of the Thrice Holy Hymn. The tray is placed on a table before the people, and the hymn of the Feast of the Cross is chanted. As the priest venerates the Cross, the priest then the people chant, “We venerate Your Cross, O Christ, and Your holy Resurrection we glorify.” At the conclusion of the service, the people come and venerate the cross and receive the flowers or basil from the priest.

## Hymns of the saint

### Apolytikion (First Tone)

O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance; grant victory to the faithful over their adversaries. And protect Your commonwealth, by the power of Your Cross. Listen »

### Kontakion (Grave Tone)

No longer does the flaming sword guard the gate of Eden, for a marvelous quenching is come upon it, even the Tree of the Cross. The sting has been taken from death, and the victory from Hades. And, You, my Savior, has appeared unto those in Hades saying: Enter again into Paradise.

## CROWN OF THORNS MIRACULOUSLY APPEARS ON ICON OF ST. SERAPHIM OF VYRITSA

A crown of thorns, not painted by human hands, has miraculously appeared around the Cross on an icon of St. Seraphim of Vyritsa in Severomorsk, Russia, 640 miles north of St. Petersburg, reports the Severemorsk Diocese. The icon was painted in the fall of 2016 and brought from St. Petersburg. The board was made from a pine tree that grew on the grave of St. Seraphim’s parents, Nikolai Ivanovich and Khionia Alimpeivna, at the St. Nicholas Church in the village of Spass-Ukhra in the Yaroslav region. The tree which grew up between their graves became too large and was cut down. It dried over the course of ten years, after which icon boards were made from it. This particular icon was written on one

such board last year by a nun from Diveyevo Monastery. It was decided to send the icon to Igumen Mitrophan in Varzuga, but he became the bishop of Severemorsk, so the icon was sent there.

However, by that time there was a “defect” on the icon—a bright circle had appeared on the cross on St. Seraphim’s monastic schema. The painter suggested perhaps there was a knot in the wood of the board, but the carpenter who made the board stated that there had been no knots. By the time of the icon’s arrival in Severemorsk, the circle had clearly turned into a painted crown, hanging on the Cross. The miraculous appearance of the crown of thorns hanging on the Cross of Christ is obvious to all and the joy of this wondrous grace from God is felt by all who pray before the icon. The icon was first publicly displayed on Friday, March 3 at the Presanctified Liturgy in the Severemorsk Church of Sts. Sophia, Vera, Nadezhda, and Lyubov, and will be present at all hierarchical services throughout Great Lent.



## Midpoint of the Fast!

**From the bulletin of Saint John's in Hermitage, PA. [www.stjohnacroc.org](http://www.stjohnacroc.org): (With small changes to fit our Liturgical Schedule)**

At this midpoint of the Great Fast (Lent), we can see Holy Week and Pascha on the horizon. Our Lenten spiritual preparation helps us enter Holy Week and Pascha with full, conscious, and active participation. The greatest harvest of the fruits of Holy Week and Pascha is received through attending services.

Remember that that there will be divine services on Holy Monday at 7 PM; Holy Tuesday at 7 PM; Holy Wednesday at 7 PM; Holy Thursday at 9 AM and 7 PM\*; Good Friday at 9 AM and 7 PM; Holy Saturday at 9 AM and 6 PM; and on Pascha Sunday at 9:30 AM.

Over the next few weeks, look at your schedule. Don't ask yourself “What is the least amount of services I need to attend during Holy Week?” but ask “What is the most I can do to accompany Our Lord to His Passion, Cross, and Tomb?”

Life presents many demands upon us: work, school, family. Even our physical condition makes demands. Some things are unavoidable: your employment may be less than accommodating; your doctor may have only had one appointment available on the morning of Good Friday; you don't see well at night. But for every valid reason, there are plenty of excuses that are given for lack of participation in Holy Week services.

This year, the Orthodox and Western dates of Easter coincide. Our children will be out of school on Thursday and Friday, and sporting events and practices will not be held. (And even if they are held—which is more important?) Many places of employment will also be closed, especially on Friday. Yes, we have to clean the house, cook the foods, and welcome our guests. But all of these are secondary to the mystery that unfolds within the services.

For those who can't drive at night, don't be shy: if you need a ride—just ask! Fr. William and our Church Board members will find a way to get you to church and back home.

As Orthodox Christians, we must make every effort to be in church throughout Holy Week, and most especially (but not exclusively) on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. Our doors will be open, Our Lord will be waiting—come and worship!