

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

April 6, 2014 ~ St. Mary of Egypt

place where God has a right to be because He is wanted. And when we come here, we enter into the divine realm. We should come into it with a sense of awe, not just walk into it as into a space but walk into it as a space which is already the divine Kingdom. If we were in that mood we would, when we come to the doors of the church, be, however little, like Mary of Egypt. We would stop and say, 'How can I come in?' And if we did that with our whole heart, broken-heartedly, with a sense of horror of the fact that we are so distant from God, so alien, so unfaithful to Him, then the doors would open and we would see that we are not simply in a big space surrounded with walls but we are in a space which is God's Heaven come to earth. Let us therefore learn from this experience what it means to go step by step towards the Resurrection, because in order to reach the Resurrection we must go through Calvary, we must go through the tragedy of Holy Week and make it our own, partaking with Christ and His disciples and the crowds around in the horror, the terror of it; and also experience it as a scorching fire that will burn in us all that is unworthy of God and make us clean. And perhaps one day, when the fire will have burnt everything which is not worthy of God, each of us may become an image of the burning bush, aflame with divine fire and not consumed...Amen.

—*Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom)*

## • GRATITUDE:

We thank our choir singers for the beautiful and peaceful liturgical singing which we have experienced all of Great Lent. We are all especially grateful for the singing and reading during this past week, with the extended services, the special hymns, and the long Saturday Holy Week/Pascha music rehearsal. May God bless Choir Master Nicolas and each and every one of you. We are also very grateful for the steady and reliable work of our Sacristans, Nilus, Thekla and Longinus (Leonard), who stay late, come early, and take care of the many oil lampadas, vacuuming, the candles and other countless details. We extend our thanks as well to those who serve in the Altar. Many Years to all of you!

## • TROPARION OF ST. MARY, Tone Eight:

In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up the Cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the soul, since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Mother Mary, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

## • KONTAKION OF ST. MARY, Tone Three:

Thou who once of old wast filled with all manner of fornication, art now seen today to be a bride of Christ by thy repentance. Thou didst live and emulate the life of the Angels. By the Cross, thou didst annihilate the hordes of demons; for this cause art thou a bride now in the Kingdom of the Heavens, O Mary, thou all-modest one.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS THIS WEEK

- Saturday, April 5: 10:30 AM, Extended Choir Rehearsal  
5 PM, Great Vespers / Confessions
- Sunday, April 6: 9–10 AM, Confessions  
10 AM, Divine Liturgy / 11:45 Church School  
Noon, Agape luncheon in Hall
- Tues., April 8: 8 AM, Matins
- Wed. April 9: 8 AM, Matins  
3 PM, Catechism  
5 PM, Confessions  
6:15 PM, Presanctified / Meal
- Thurs., April 10: 8 AM, Matins
- Friday, April 11: 8 AM, Matins (last Lenten Matins)

7 PM, Matins for Lazarus Saturday  
Catechism to follow

- Sat. April 12: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy for Lazarus Saturday  
2 PM, decorating and cleaning Church  
5 PM, *Vigil for Palm Sunday with the Blessing of Palms*  
(Confessions during the Service)

- TODAY'S USHERS:

Thom Stewart and Alexander Stameroff.

- CLEAN-UP AND DECORATION:

Next Saturday, April 12, about 2 PM, there will be a ***Church Cleaning Work Party*** in preparation for the Palm Sunday Vigil, Holy Week and Pascha. Inside the Church we will be cleaning windows, light fixtures, scraping wax, and decorating the Church with flowers and palms for Palm Sunday. Outside, provided there is enough help, we will start to prepare for the Paschal Potluck. Let Father Lawrence know that you will be coming to help.

- DONATIONS FOR PASCHA FLOWERS:

A donation basket will be set out after the Liturgy on Sunday to collect funds for Holy Week and Pascha flower decorations.

- HOLY WEEK SIGN UP SHEETS Now Posted:

You are invited to sign up for reading the Psalter before the Tomb on Holy Friday night thru Saturday morning, and on Saturday afternoon until 11:30 PM, the Book of the Acts of the Apostles. Also, help will be needed each day of Holy Week to work at the Candle Desk in the evenings, to clean after the Presanctified, to assist with setting up for the Holy Saturday meal, the Paschal Agape Meal in the Hall and the Potluck BBQ on Pascha afternoon.

- VISIT OF ARCHBISHOP BENJAMIN:

Bright Monday, April 21, we expect His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin to join us for the 9 AM Matins and Liturgy. Following the Liturgy, we will have an Agape Meal, along with the Senior Lunch Fellowship—Seniors

are asked to bring a dish to share (potluck style) to augment the food being prepared by Khouria Al-far. All are invited.

- A REQUEST:

When you approach the Holy Chalice to receive the Mysteries, please say your name to the priest. You will greatly assist him in giving you the Holy Mysteries if you open your mouth wide and lean your head back, not forward.

- PUTTING CHRIST FIRST FOR HOLY WEEK:

“Indeed I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as dung, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:8ff). Fr. Stephen Freeman wrote that “St. Paul seems to have lived his life in a perpetual Holy Week—pressing forward—pushing past exhaustion—and reaching for Christ in a Pascha that reaches back and captures the soul for God. Nothing to be earned, but everything to be gained.”

- CONFESSIONS:

As previously announced, Confessions will not be heard after Holy Wednesday, April 16.

- SERMON FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (excerpt)

...So easily do we enter the divine temple, forgetting so easily that the church into which we come is a small part of a world that has chosen to be alien to God, that has rejected God, lost interest in Him; and that the few believers have created for God a place of refuge—yes, the church is the fullness of Heaven, and at the same time a tragic place of refuge, the only