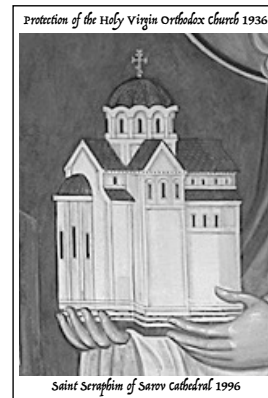


ANNOUNCEMENTS

Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, Palm Sunday

SUNDAY, April 12, 2020



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Streaming prayers on FACEBOOK on all the days and times listed below

<https://www.facebook.com/stseraphimofsarovsr/>

- Sat., April 11: 8 AM, Morning Prayers with hymns from Lazarus Saturday
5 PM, Vespers for Palm Sunday/Blessing of Palms
- Sun., April 12: 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy (doors locked)
Noon, *Online Zoom Agape Meal*
- Holy Mon., April 13: 8 AM, Hymns of Bridegroom Matins
6 PM, Hymns of Vespers
Holy Tuesday and Wednesday same as Monday
- Holy Thurs., April 16: 11:30 AM, Vesperal Liturgy of the Mystical Supper ~ institution of the Holy Eucharist (doors locked)
6 PM, Matins of Holy Friday ~ Reading of Twelve Passion Gospels
- Holy Fri., April 17: Great & Holy Friday: *Strict Fast Day*
3 PM, Great Vespers with bringing out of Shroud (*Epitaphios*)
6 PM, Matins of Holy Saturday
- Holy Sat., April 18: Strict Fast Day
1 PM, Vesperal hymns and readings
10 PM, Nocturn Service
10:30 PM: PASCHAL Matins and Liturgy (doors locked)
- PASCHA, April 19: 1 PM, Paschal Hours and Gospel
- Bright Mon., April 20: 5 PM, Paschal Hours
- Bright Tues. April 21: 8 AM, Paschal Hours
5 PM, Paschal Hours (Same schedule for Wed.–Sat.)

“Behold, the Bridegroom cometh at midnight and blessed is he whom He shall find watching, but unworthy is he whom He shall find heedless. Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep, lest thou be given up and shut out from the Kingdom. But, rouse thyself crying: Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O God. Through the Theotokos, have mercy on us.” (Hymn of Mon–Wed.)

- PALM SUNDAY:

On Saturday evening palm branches will be blessed at the end of the Vespers service (5 PM). **The palms will be set outside on a table at 6 PM and remain out all day Sunday.** All are invited to come to the church parking lot, and without violating norms of social distancing, take one or two branches for each home.

PASCHA—PLEASE READ

SO THAT PASCHA would not just come and go without some festivities here at the church, some of our members will be setting up a sound system in the parking lot, and a large screen to project the video —“Drive-In” style — of the Paschal Service going on in the Church. You are asked to remain in, or on, your car. Certainly, keep to the norms of social distancing (what a phrase, and I hope to never hear it again after all this). The Parish Hall will remain locked and the bathrooms will be unavailable for use (our apologies).

We will begin the **Nocturn on Saturday, April 18 at 10 PM** (we will go back to 11:30 PM next year) followed by an abbreviated Paschal Matins and Liturgy. Best guess for completion is just a bit after midnight.

When the Liturgy is over, I will be happy to walk to each car and bless the **Paschal Baskets**, which you can set on top of or on the hood of your car. Such is Pascha 2020. Christ is risen. —*Fr Lawrence*

- LAZARUS SATURDAY:

...the joy which permeates these services stresses one central theme: the forthcoming victory of Christ over Hades. *Hades* is the Biblical term for Death in its universal power, for that unescapable darkness and destruction that swallows all life and poisons with its shadow the whole world. But now—with Lazarus' resurrection—“death begins to tremble.” For there the decisive duel between Life and Death begins and it gives us the key to the entire liturgical mystery of Pascha. In the early church Lazarus Saturday was called “announcement of Pascha,” it announces and anticipates, indeed, the wonderful light and peace of the next Saturday—the Great and Holy Saturday, the day of the Lifegiving Tomb.

Let us first of all understand that Lazarus, the friend of Jesus, personifies the whole mankind and also each man, and Bethany, the home of Lazarus the Man, is the symbol of the whole world as a home of man. For each man was created friend of God and called to this Divine friendship: the knowledge of God, the communion with Him, the sharing of life with Him. “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4) And yet this Friend whom God loves, whom in love He has created, i.e. called to life, is destroyed and annihilated by a power which God has not created: death. God encounters in His own world a power which destroys His work and annihilates His design. The world is but lamentation and sorrow, tears and death. How is this possible? How did this happen? These are the questions implied in John's slow and detailed narrative of Jesus' coming to the grave of His friend. And once there, “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35) Why does He weep if He knows that in a moment He will call Lazarus back to life? Byzantine hymnographers fail to grasp the true meaning of these tears. They ascribe them to His human nature, whereas the power of resurrection belongs to God in Him. But the Orthodox Church teaches that all actions of Christ are “theandric,” i.e., both Divine and human, are actions of the one and same God-Man. But then His very tears are Divine. Jesus weeps because He contemplates the triumph of death and destruction in the world created by God.

“It stinketh” say the Jews trying to prevent Jesus from approaching the corpse, and this awful warning applies to the whole world, to all life. God is Life and the Giver of Life. He called man into the Divine reality of Life and behold “it stinketh” ...The world was created to reflect and proclaim the glory of God and “it stinketh.”

At the grave of Lazarus God encounters Death, the reality of anti-life, of destruction and despair. He meets His Enemy, who has taken away from Him His World and become its prince. And we who follow Jesus as He approaches the grave, enter with Him into that hour of His, which He announced so often as the climax and the fulfillment of his whole work. The Cross, its necessity and universal meaning are announced in the shortest verse

of the Gospel: “and Jesus wept.” The power of Resurrection is not a divine “power in itself,” but power of love, or rather love as power. God is Love and Love is life, Love creates Life...It is Love that weeps at the grave and it is Love that restores life. This is the meaning of the Divine tears of Jesus. In them love is at work again—recreating, redeeming, restoring the darkened life of man: “Lazarus, come forth!” And this is why Lazarus Saturday is the beginning of both: the Cross, as the Supreme sacrifice of love, the Resurrection, as the ultimate triumph of love.

- PALM SUNDAY:

We forget so often that the Kingdom of God has already been inaugurated and that on the day of our baptism we were made citizens of it, have promised to put our loyalty to it above all other loyalties. We must always remember that for a few hours, Christ was indeed King on earth, in this world of ours. For a few hours only and in one city. But, as in Lazarus we have recognized the image of each man,

in this one city [Jerusalem] we acknowledge the mystical center of the world and indeed of the whole creation. For such is the Biblical meaning of Jerusalem, the focal point of the whole history of salvation and redemption, the holy city of God's advent. Therefore, the Kingdom inaugurated in Jerusalem is a universal Kingdom, embracing in its perspective all men and the totality of creation.... For a few hours—yet these were the decisive time, the ultimate hour of Jesus, the hour of fulfillment by God of all His promises, of all His decisions. It came at the end of the entire process of preparation, revealed in the Bible, it was the end of all that



From the *Simpsons* TV show

God did for men. And thus, this short hour of Christ's earthly triumph acquires an eternal meaning. It introduces the reality of the Kingdom into our time, into all hours, makes this Kingdom the meaning of time and its ultimate goal. The Kingdom was revealed in this world and from that hour; its presence judges and transforms human history... And when at the most solemn moment of our Liturgical celebration, we receive from the priest a palm branch, we renew our oath to our King, we confess His Kingdom as the ultimate meaning and content of our life. We confess that everything in our life and in the world belongs to Christ and nothing can be taken away from its sole real Owner, that there is no area of life in which He is not to rule, to save and to redeem. We proclaim the universal and total responsibility of the Church for human history and uphold her universal mission. The branches in our hands signify, therefore, our readiness and willingness to follow Him on this sacrificial way, our acceptance of sacrifice and self-denial as the only royal way to the Kingdom. And finally, these branches, this celebration, proclaim our faith in the final victory of Christ. His Kingdom is yet hidden and the world ignores it. It lives it as if the decisive event had not taken place, as if God had not died on the Cross and Man in Him was not risen from the dead. But we, Christians, believe in the coming of the Kingdom in which God will be all in all and Christ the only King.

In our liturgical celebrations, we remember events of the past. But the whole meaning and power of Liturgy is that it transforms remembrance into reality. On Palm Sunday this reality is our own involvement, our responsibility to, the Kingdom of God. Christ does not enter into Jerusalem anymore, He did it once and for all. And He does not need any “symbols,” for He did not die on the Cross that we may eternally “symbolize” His life. He wants from us a real acceptance of the Kingdom which He brought to us... And if we are not ready to stand by the solemn oath, which we renew every year on Palm Sunday, if we do not mean to make the Kingdom of God the measure of our whole life, meaningless is our commemoration and vain the branches we take home from the Church. —Fr. Alexander Schmemmann