

Message from Fr. Michael...

Dearly Beloved Faithful awaiting the glorious resurrection celebration of our Lord:

Today, we commemorate the feast of Palm Sunday. We recall how our Lord, the Prince of Peace, the Messiah, came into the city of Jerusalem riding the colt of a donkey. He did not triumphantly come in on a warrior's maverick or steed. Entering while sitting on a donkey relaying the message of love and peace. He did not come seeking battle. He came to bring His abundant love to us! He showed us His Divine humility. Today we see that the Lord has come triumphantly into our hearts. The Palm Sunday feast of today, brings us joy. It is our celebration as we embark on the final stretch of our Lenten journey towards the long awaited Pascha. Although our mood of joy changes to one approaching sorrow this evening as we venture forth on the road following our Lord to His saving Passions to the great sacrifice of His laying down His life for us and for our salvation through His Crucifixion. Today's feast of Palm Sunday has been celebrated in our Church since the earliest days of Christianity. Interestingly, palms were used in religious celebrations in ancient times of the Old Testament. Did you know that palm trees were not even present, during the time of our Lord, around the city of Jerusalem. This implies that people had to bring palms from other geographic areas for such religious celebrations, One such celebration was the Feast of Tabernacles which was celebrated in the temple in Jerusalem. Palm branches were used as a symbol of the majesty of God as the true king of the Israelites. The news of the events surrounding the Lord's earthly ministry traveled like wildfire throughout this territory. Yesterday, we celebrated the Saturday of Lazarus. This miracle was a glimpse offered, hinting at the glorious resurrection of our Lord which will be celebrated next Sunday. The prophecy of Zachariah was fulfilled when the Lord entered into Jerusalem on a donkey. During that time, many throughout Israel traveled to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. Amidst this, the Lord entered not to save Israel from the oppression of the Roman Empire, but instead, from the curse of spiritual death. The Lord accomplishes this through his own death and resurrection for all of our sake.

Uniquely, Orthodox faithful celebrate these events not only as they occurred in the past, but as they again occur today. We become witnesses of this triumphant event that is revealed to us again before our very eyes. As the Lord enters our hearts, we recognize that this is our own personal Jerusalem. Beloved brothers and sisters, we must make room in our hearts for the coming of the Lord. We must not let any other King come into our hearts. We must not be our own king! At times, we tend to fill our hearts with ourselves rather than with the Lord. We must allow the Lord to enter our hearts. We must do so enthusiastically with open arms and open hearts. We must surrender to the will of God. We must surrender our life to the one who gave us life, our Creator, God. We must give up the things of this world and lay up treasures for ourselves in heaven. Peace, joy, and love come when we have surrendered ourselves to God. Let us glorify the true King, our Lord and master. When we have done so, then we would be in total communion with the Lord. Prayer, fasting, self-reflection, meditation, frequent Confession, reading the Bible, and frequently partaking of Holy Communion will allow us to have a special bond with the Lord. When people say that they can not attend church due to their obligations, or do not have the time to pray or fast, it is primarily due to their having become slaves to their own materialistic and worldly lives. If we do not give God the attention He deserves, then why should God give us any attention? Fortunately, God always has time for us. Our merciful God is always sending us reminders and wakeup calls. We must stop and heed to His call. Our God loves us! When we receive the palm branches at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy, today, let us bring them home and place these palm crosses in a place where we will be frequently reminded of what our Lord has done for us...the sacrifice He made for us! We are to let these palms remind us that Christ is our King. Only He is the king of our hearts. When we come to this realization, then we will have true peace and joy.

It is the Lord that we hope to spend eternity with! All those things that are material and worldly are temporary. Only the treasures we lay up in heaven are those which we will see after we have passed from this life. It is with heartfelt love and every prayer that I offer you pastoral blessings for a wonderful inspiring upcoming Holy Week and a glorious radiant Paschal celebration. With humility and contrition of heart, I remain

Your fervent supplicant,

+Fr. Michael

Saints and Feasts Commemorated

Palm Sunday

On Sunday, five days before the Passover of the Law, the Lord came from Bethany to Jerusalem. Sending two of His disciples to bring Him a foal of an ass, He sat thereon and entered into the city. When the multitude there heard that Jesus was coming, they straightway took up the branches of palm trees in their hands, and went forth to meet Him. Others spread their garments on the ground, and yet others cut branches from the trees and strewed them in the way that Jesus was to pass; and all of them together, especially the children, went before and after Him, crying out: "Hosanna: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel" (John 12:13). This is the radiant and glorious festival of our Lord's entry into Jerusalem that we celebrate today.



The branches of the palm trees symbolize Christ's victory over the devil and death. The word Hosanna means "Save, I pray," or "Save, now." The foal of an ass, and Jesus' sitting thereon, and the fact that this animal was untamed and considered unclean according to the Law, signified the former uncleanness and wildness of the nations, and their subjection thereafter to the holy Law of the Gospel.

The Holy Nine Martyrs of Cyzicus

These holy Martyrs, who were from various regions, suffered martyrdom together when they were beheaded in Cyzicus, a city in Asia Minor on the southern coast of the Sea of Marmara.

John the Martyr of Romania

FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Demetrios Pappastratis (father of George Pappastratis), Angelo Romas Persa Nizamis, Mitry Ganim, Ted Simon, and Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord

Tsoureki Fundraiser

Tsourekia (Paschal breads) procured from Holy Protection Monastery were donated by Harry and Katy Gianakouros. These loaves are available for purchase and all proceeds will go to our church. We thank you, in advance, for your generosity.



GREEK FOOD - CASH BAR - DESSERTS - RAFFLES

AHEPA LEONIDAS CHAPTER 77 PRESENTS:

GREEK NIGHT

PROCEEDS BENEFIT OUR WINTER COAT DRIVE WITH BROOME COUNTY SCHOOLS

MAY 11TH, 2024
7:00 PM - 12:00 AM

THE RIVERDALE BANQUET HALL
2901 WATSON BLVD, ENDWELL, NY
FOR TICKETS: Call Alex Kermidas (607-427-1149)


PRICE:
\$50/person
\$40/student
Table of 10 for \$450



SCAN ME

Bring a NEW childrens jacket and receive entry to basket raffles!

ENTERTAINMENT BY : HARRY ATHANASIOU & THE ASTERIA GREEK BAND



ATTENTION ALL YOUTH VOLUNTEERS AND WORKERS: Please note that if you have not yet completed the Archdiocese Youth Safety training program online and the background check you are in noncompliance with the Archdiocese requirement. It is MANDATORY that this be completed immediately. Anyone who does not complete the program and the background check will be prevented from participating in any youth programs and youth activities in our parish. This includes Greek dancing program, Sunday school, and Greek school. YOU MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN THESE PROGRAMS UNTIL THIS REQUIREMENT IS COMPLETED. This is a requirement that ALL churches are required to follow with no exceptions!

Holy Week Schedule for the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation for 2024

Saturday of Lazarus, April 27, 2024: (Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Binghamton) Divine Liturgy 10 am

Palm Sunday, April 28, 2024: Orthros 9 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am

Palm Sunday evening, April 28, 2024: Service of the Nymphios/Bridegroom matins 5:00 pm

Holy Monday, April 29, 2024: Service of the Nymphios/Bridegroom matins 7:30 pm

Holy Tuesday, April 30, 2024: Service of the Nymphios/Bridegroom matins 6:00 pm

Holy Wednesday, May 1st, 2024: Service of the Sacrament of Holy Unction 6:00 pm

Holy Thursday morning, May 2nd, 2024: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 9:30 am

Holy Thursday evening, May 2nd, 2024: Service of the Holy Passions of our Lord 12 Gospels 6:00 pm

Holy Friday morning, May 3rd, 2024: Service of the Royal Hours 9:00 am (All are invited to assist in the flower decoration of the Epitaphios at the conclusion of this service)

Holy Friday afternoon, May 3rd, 2024: Service of Great Vespers of the Apokathelosis (The un-nailing of our Lord from the cross) 3 pm

Holy Friday evening, May 3rd, 2024: Service of the Lamentations matins 6:00 pm

Holy Saturday morning, May 4th, 2024: Vespereal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great (The First Resurrection of our Lord raising Adam and Eve from the dead) 9:30 am

Holy Saturday night, May 4th, 2024: Matins of the Pascha 11:00 pm 'O Come and Receive The Unwaning Light' 11:45 pm Divine Liturgy of Pascha 12 midnight

Agape Great Vespers of Pascha (Easter Sunday) May 5, 2024 at 10:30 am

Wisdom of the Fathers

But observe the wisdom of the Evangelist, how he is not ashamed to parade their former ignorance. That it was written they knew, that it was written of Him they knew not. For it would have offended them if He being a King were about to suffer such things, and be so betrayed.

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 66 on John 12, 2. B#58, p.245., 4th Century

Besides, they could not at once have taken in the knowledge of the Kingdom of which He spake; for another Evangelist saith, that they thought the words were spoken of a kingdom of this world. (Matt. xx. 21.)

St. John Chrysostom

Homily 66 on John 12, 2. B#58, p.245., 4th Century

Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us.