



The Ark



**St. Sophia
Orthodox Church**

Volume 9

Youth Quarterly

April – June 2019



St. Sophia Orthodox Church

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Our parish festal icon, The Image Not Made by Hands:
St. Sophia the Wisdom of God – Jesus Christ, seen outside
at the front of our church.



The Rainbow Song

Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink!

Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink!

It's a rainbow, it's a rainbow,

God's beautiful rainbow in the sky!

It's a rainbow, it's a rainbow,

God's beautiful Promise in the sky!

—Anon



Upcoming Feast Days/Special Parish Youth Events

April 7 – **Feast of the Annunciation** Liturgy

April 20 - **Vigil for Palm Sunday**, Litya and **blessed pussywillows dispersed**. *“Hosanna in the Highest. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord”*

April 21 - **Palm Sunday**, Liturgy and remaining **blessed pussywillows** dispersed after service (*if supplies last)

April 22, 23, 24 – **Great and Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday, Holy Wednesday**

April 25th - **Holy & Great Thursday Evening** - reading of the 12 Passion Gospels, Bring Your Lantern to Church

April 26th **Great and Holy Friday**

April 27th/28th Great and Holy Saturday then **Greatest Feast of Feasts; Pascha!** Bring Pascha Baskets Holy Saturday night to be blessed by Father John

May 21st Evening Vigil for **Mid-Feast**

May 22 **Mid-feast**, Liturgy (Our church's first Name's Day and Halfway to Pentecost)

May 26 **Parish Goldstream Park Campfire Picnic**

June 5 Vigil - **Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ** with Litya

June 6 Divine Liturgy - **Ascension** of Our Lord Jesus Christ

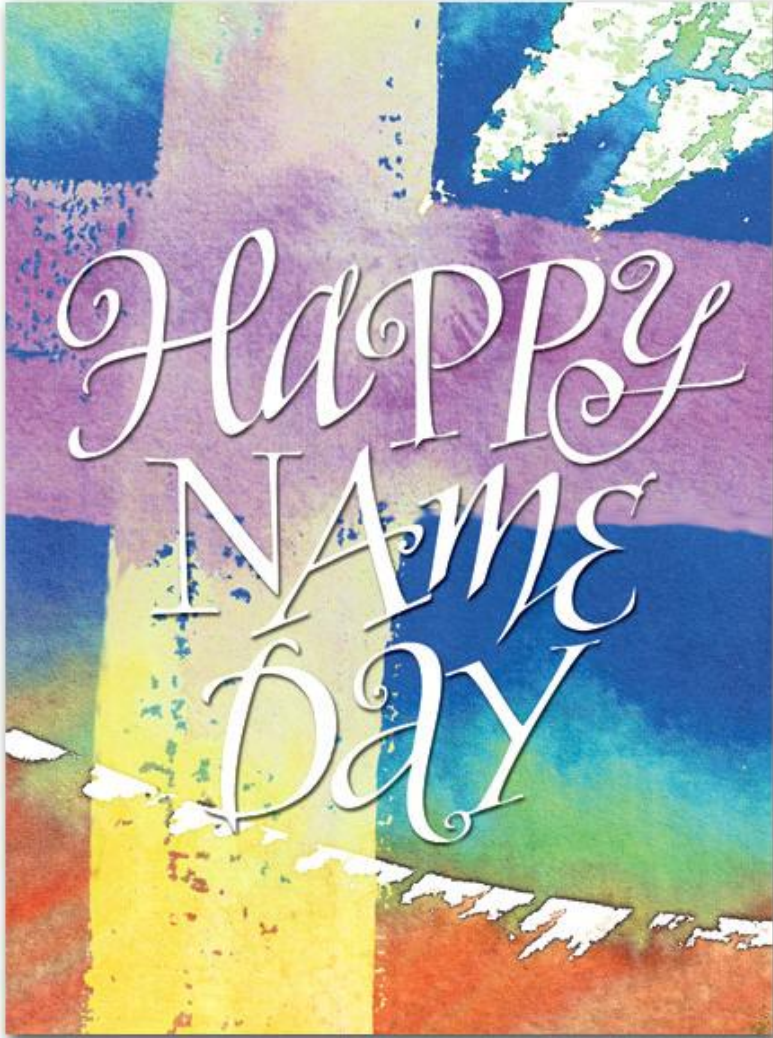
June 15 Evening Vigil with Litya, **Pentecost**

June 16 **Pentecost – Holy Spirit Day** – Bring flowers and/or greenery to hold during Liturgy

June 23 **Hot Dog, It's Sundae Sunday!** Youth Fundraiser –

Monday June 24 **Apostles Fast** begins

Parish Youth Saints' Days - Congratulations to
Liam-Patrick, Marcus, and Eleanor on your most special
day, May God Grant You Many Years!



Your Saint and Name Day

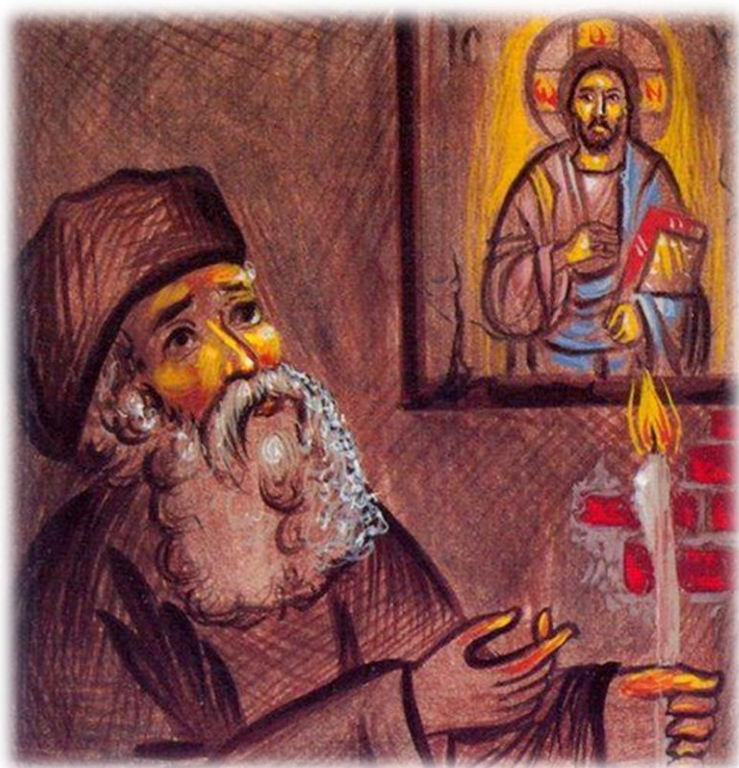
Each day of the year, the Church honours a number of Saints. The day the Church honours one's Saint is one's "Name Day," an occasion to honour the memory of the Saint whose name we bear, and to give thanks for his/her daily intercession on our behalf. Have you ever wondered how you came to be named as you are?

A good question for your parents!

Traditionally, our Saint's Days are more important than our birthday. This is the day your saint was 'born into heaven'.

On your Saint's Day try to learn a little more about your Saint, light a candle in front of your Saint's icon, place a fresh flower or small posy near it, if there is Liturgy- plan to go and have Holy Communion on this day, or the Sunday closest to it.

Do something nice for others, learn or sing the Tropar to your Saint, have a special meal or treat and get in touch with your Godparents. If you are not sure when your Saint's Day is, please check with your priest.



Great Lent

The first footsteps on our journey to Pascha begin with walking the fasting 40 day pathway of the Great Lent, and then the final leg of our journey with the 6 days of Holy Week.

Adam and Eve were cast out of Paradise

because of their sins. It is through repentance and fasting, that we will find our way home to Paradise. Let us prepare ourselves for Pascha, during this Great Lent.

“Lenten” Lunchbox Surprise Nut-Free No-Bake Energy Balls

- 1 cup quick oats *certified* GF if needed
- 1/3 cup flax meal
- 1/2 cup sunflower seed butter
- 1/4 maple syrup
- 1/8 cup raw or toasted sunflower seeds
- 1/8 cup dark, vegan mini chocolate chips



Thoroughly combine all ingredients with a mixer or by hand in a large bowl. This should become a sturdy dough. If it's too dry, add a drizzle of maple syrup or coconut oil. Use a small scoop or tablespoon to roll the dough into balls. Oil your hands, or wear foodsafe gloves for easy cleanup. Makes 1 dozen. Transfer to a small storage container and keep in the fridge.- *These were made, served, and devoured at the 2018 Parish Summer Camp!*

The Annunciation



The **Announcement** of ‘Good News’ was made by the Archangel Gabriel to the Holy Virgin Mary... that she would have a child, Who would become our Saviour.

This came as most unusual news, but she said “*Let it be according to Thy Word.*”

The *Nativity* of that Babe would come in 9 months time, on December 25th.

The infant is the Christ Child. That day has become known as Christmas. The Virgin Mary is known as The Most Holy **Theotokos** (the **one who bore (gave birth) to God**).

The Annunciation is very, very special. It is said that just as it does on Pascha, the Sun dances with Great Joy, because the entire universe is preparing for the Birth of Jesus Christ on Earth.

This special day is recognized as a Feast Day in our Church, with a special Liturgy dedicated to The Annunciation. As it is special within the life of Mary, the Mother of God, the clergy wear blue vestments and the faithful sometimes try to wear something blue, which symbolizes The Theotokos. (This tradition of a bride wearing a little something coloured blue to her wedding, originates with the tradition of the Virgin Mary’s robes in iconography.)

Byzantine icons of Mary show her with red outer garments and blue ones on the inside.



This signifies her original human nature (the red) and her heavenly nature (the blue). The blue she wears in icons also represent the heavens and the kingdom of God not on this earth. The Annunciation is a set Feast, and always falls on March 25th (Old Calendar); April 7th (Civil calendar).

The Magnificat

This is a beautiful hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God by the Virgin Mary. We sing this at the evening Vigil Service. From St. Luke 1:46-55

And Mary said,

*“My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden:
for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me
blessed.*

*For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and
holy is his name.*

*And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation
to generation.*

*He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered
the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*

*He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and
exalted them of low degree.*

*He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich
he hath sent empty away.*

*He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his
mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his
seed forever.”*

Have you heard of God's Plan? A beginning and end and purpose to all things.

Ever since the creation and fall, God has been preparing us for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and the time and generation of a people who would be ready to receive Jesus and follow Him.

He also knew when there would be a maiden so pure, and so obedient to Him, that only she could become the mother of the Saviour.

The Life of the Theotokos

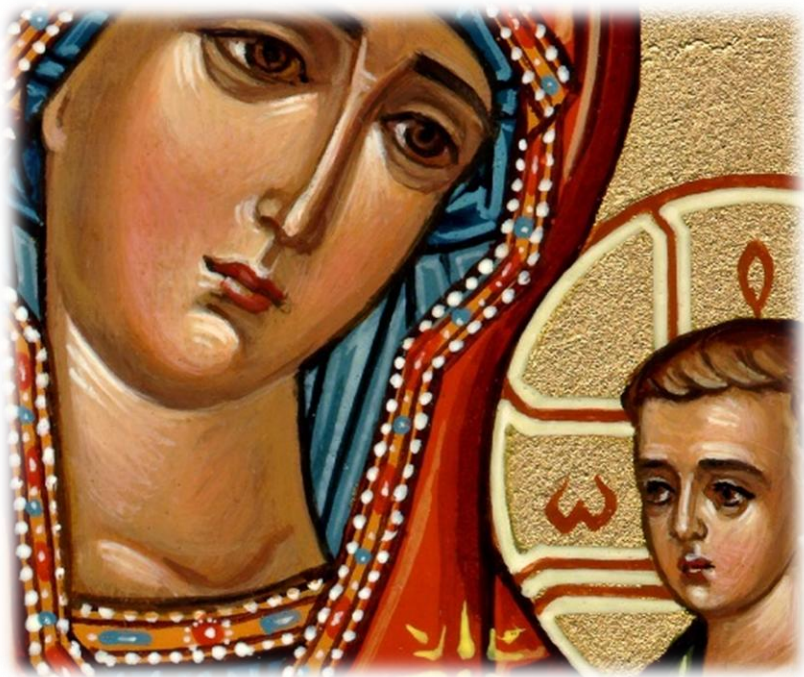
The Holy Virgin Mary was a pure and perfect servant of God. In fulfillment of her parents' promise to God, due to her own

extraordinary birth, at three

years of age, she was taken to the temple and dedicated to God. She lived in God's house and served Him, praying constantly.

When Mary was twelve years old and could no longer remain in the temple, because of the law of that time, she wanted to continue to serve God. She desired to give her whole self to God; but there were not yet any convents and so she could not become a nun.

The young maiden went to the priest and told him what her soul desired. The old priest was very pleased to hear of Mary's love for God. He prayed to God and God revealed to him what to do. Mary had a close relative, who was an older man named Joseph. Joseph's wife had died, leaving him to raise his younger son alone. (James the "brother" of



the Lord) It was arranged: Mary would become Joseph's "betrothed by law" and he would protect her. In this way she could live her whole life as a virgin, serving God. So Mary became betrothed (engaged) to Joseph and was by law, as betrothed, allowed to live in his house.

More Exciting News!

The angel told Mary of another miraculous birth: "Your cousin Elizabeth, an old woman who has never had any children, is now pregnant. God has healed her so that she and her husband can have a child." This child was to be St. John the Baptist.

In complete faith and humility, Mary very simply accepted God's will. "I am God's servant," she said. "Let it be as you say."

At that, the Archangel Gabriel departed. Later, he appeared to Joseph also and told him about the special Child which Mary was to bear.

Mary was filled with joy. As soon as possible she went to the town where her cousin Elizabeth lived, in the province of Judea.



As Mary entered her house, Elizabeth rushed to meet her. At that moment, the babe, John, who was in Elizabeth's womb, heard Mary's voice, and leapt for joy. Elizabeth said, "How is it that the Mother of my Lord has come to visit me?"

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then returned to Nazareth, where Joseph cared for the Holy Virgin with great respect and awe.

Palm Sunday



A day to remember Jesus, seated on the foal of a donkey, triumphantly riding into the city of Jerusalem. The crowds had gathered for the Passover and had

come to meet Him. People spread their outer garments on the ground, and children held Palm Branches and sang praises “Hosanna in the Highest, Blessed is He, Who Comes in the Name of the Lord.”

This day is celebrated as one of the Great Feasts, with Holy Week follows immediately after it. At the Saturday Evening Service, blessed branches of pussywillows are distributed to the faithful, who clasp them in honour of The Heavenly King at Vigil and at Palm Sunday Liturgy.

Palm Sunday is the end of the Lenten Fast, and is celebrated and marked as a Fish Day on the Church calendar. The fasting resumes for the final week, called Holy Week, which dedicated to following the same footsteps as Jesus did to His Crucifixion.

Families care for their branches of Pussy willows keeping them in a special place in the Icon corner as a reminder of Palm Sunday, and Christ’s Triumphant Entry, for the remainder of the year. The final stages of preparation for Pascha have now begun.

“Hosanna,” in the Hebrew language means “Let us praise and thank God.”



Seek and Find

A M X A N A P O S T L E S L T
Q Q A N O C U Z P P R G M G B
H A U N I Y H I E T M C S P F
H D P U S T A G P F Y Q R G A
X P X N N O G D A A Q E E B K
P Q X C E S Q V N T S K W O U
E H M I C Y N X S U Y C W D L
L L H A S D P O R Q S W H D I
S L K T A A C R Y C T M I A C
Z H I I K E E W W F B Z L L H
D R K O T C N E D O Q E H A A
A C N N T M G S V G I R S R P
X M E I U C W F H W Y Z A R Y
D P O L C V F D M K O K B V Z
D N S W O L L I W Y S S U P D



ANNUNCIATION
APOSTLES
ASCENSION
EGGS
KULICH
PALM SUNDAY
PASCHA
PENTECOST
PUSSYWILLOWS
RESURRECTION

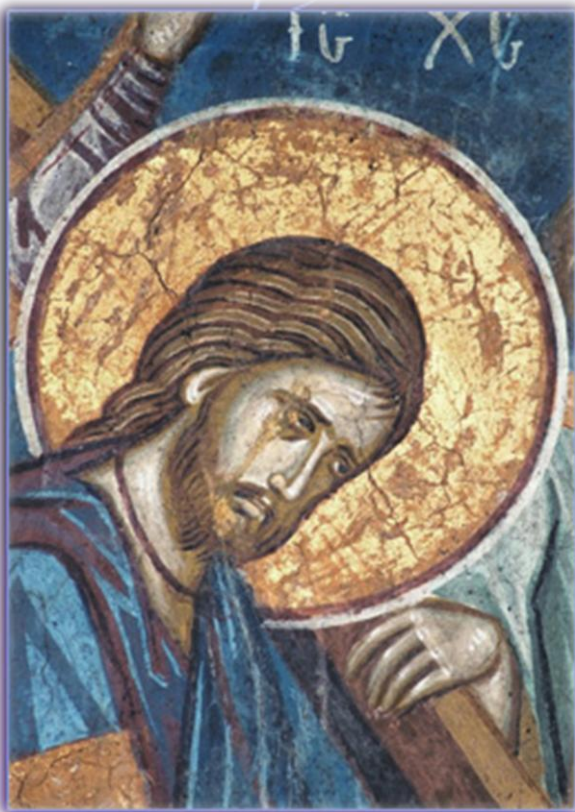
Great and Holy Friday - The Saddest Day of the Entire Year

Today, we try to completely fast, and not to eat or drink anything for the whole day, and come back to Church for the afternoon service.

We express our sorrow over Christ's death on the cross. We see the winding sheet, representing the tomb where Christ lays. We prostrate before it, kissing the wounds on Jesus' feet, hands and forehead. The service contains hymns of sadness for both Christ's death and our own sins.

The faithful usually wear black, just as we would for the funeral of a very dear relative or friend who has died.

The Winding Sheet, decorated fittingly with greenery, flowers, and white lilies.



Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?

Because of God's great love for us, He did something so special for each one of us. It is almost too amazing to even try and think about it!

When we love someone very much, we help them as much as we can- without thinking how hard it might be for ourselves to do this. Through Adam and Eve, the

first created man and woman, sin entered the world, and now we all sin.

There are big sins and little sins, but everyone sins, and any sin separates us from God.

Jesus, the Son of God, willingly took all the sins of everyone *ever* born, which means, you, me, the whole world, and took all these sins upon Himself; because sin separates us from God.

When Jesus died and was buried, all our sins died and were buried too. We also remember this at our Baptism.

We are now forgiven because of what Jesus did for us on the cross! Jesus loves us so much!

And, even if you were the ONLY person living in the whole world, Jesus still would have done this - just for you! Just for one person, because He knows each one of us and loves us all so much!

And, because He is the Son of God- He arose *victorious*, from the dead! “Trampling down death, by death!”

This is why we no longer fear death, for death is a new beginning, a new and Eternal Life with God.

Great and Holy Saturday

The Church day begins with Vespers and the reading of the Fifteen Lessons from the Old Testament. As a result, Divine Liturgy starts later than usual.

The book, *Law of God* states “The Great Lesson contains all the foreshadowings and prophecies of the salvation of mankind through the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Soon after the readings, there is a ‘change of day’ representing the moment the Myrrhbearing Women arrive



at the tomb to see the risen Christ. The vestments are changed from dark to light, and the deacon, now in White, comes to the centre of the Church, in front of the winding sheet (the tomb); to read the Gospel, proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ.

After the Liturgy, there is a Blessing of Bread and wine, and we usually gather together for nourishment and then those who are older than 7 prepare for Confession. We won't see each other again, until very late that night!

Pascha- the Resurrection of Christ is the BIGGEST feast day of all!

We see in His icons/and on prosphora, the Greek initials "IC XC NIKA"- which means Jesus (IC); Christ (XC); Victor (NIKA- Conqueror)!

The Cross is a symbol of Christ's *triumphant* victory and power over death! Every feeling of happiness, joy and love is Magnified Exceedingly;

we are given a strength we did not know existed before.

Standing, praying, singing, being awake seems much



more possible at Pascha and stays with us for all of Bright Week. Joyfully exclaiming and singing Christ is Risen, breaking our long fast by sharing treats from our Pascha Basket, having our Kulich blessed, cracking decorated - hard boiled eggs with our friends until all hours of the morning are just a few of the memories in the making, on Pascha.

Christ's Descent into Hades Icon



This icon is frequently referred to as the *Anastasis* or *Resurrection* Icon. It is an icon of Pascha.

The golden bars by Christ's feet are the gates of Hades, which

He has broken and torn apart.

At Pascha, a tradition includes the cracking of our blessed Pascha eggs together. This represents how Christ shattered the gates of Hades.

There are keys floating in the abyss below, which symbolizes that he has entered and conquered both death and Hades. Some icons have a skeletal figure who is chained up: that's *Death*. He has been bound and killed by Christ (all throughout Paschatide until the Ascension, we greet each other and sing "Christ has trampled down death by death").

The two figures whom Christ has grasped and is pulling out of Hades are Adam and Eve, symbolizing that his Victory redeems all mankind, even back to the beginning.

This resurrection scene is taking place in the past, present, and future. To his left, we see three Old Testament saints: Kings David and Solomon, two of his ancestors according to his fleshly nature. We also see, closest to him John the Baptist, who was his forerunner in both life and death.

On the right, we have the New Testament, including the apostles who are alive. *The purpose is to show that Christ's redemption transcends time and space.* This is an act that happened in the past, is happening right now, and

will happen in the future. Christ is always in the state of redeeming and setting us free.

The blue shape around Christ is called the *Mandorla* (which is Italian for *almond*, which describes its shape). The Mandorla is the uncreated, eternal light of Christ.

In the writings of the Eastern Orthodox mystics, God is often prayerfully experienced as Light. This is not simply a pretty bright light. It is the same Light which filled the apostles with wonder when they witnessed His Transfiguration. It is the Light which Christ Himself described as the power of the Kingdom of God (Mark 9:1, Matt 16:28, Luke 9:27). It is also the Light that is seen when one purifies their heart and mind (Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.).



Those who seek God will find that the more they *know* Him, the less they *comprehend* Him. To *know* God, to *experience* Him, is to walk from the darkness of sin, into His Light, to enter into the mystery of His Presence.

To answer the question, use the number below each line to find its matching letter in the boxes.

What word describes what happens to Jesus in Acts 1:9?

6163581511719

R ¹	G ²	C ³	H ⁴	E ⁵
A ⁶	O ⁷	N ⁸	W ⁹	B ¹⁰
I ¹¹	V ¹²	T ¹³	D ¹⁴	S ¹⁵
S ¹⁶	R ¹⁷	O ¹⁸	N ¹⁹	U ²⁰

The Feast Day of Christ’s Ascension

This Feast always falls on the 40th day after Pascha, and 10 days before the Feast of Pentecost (50 days after Pascha).

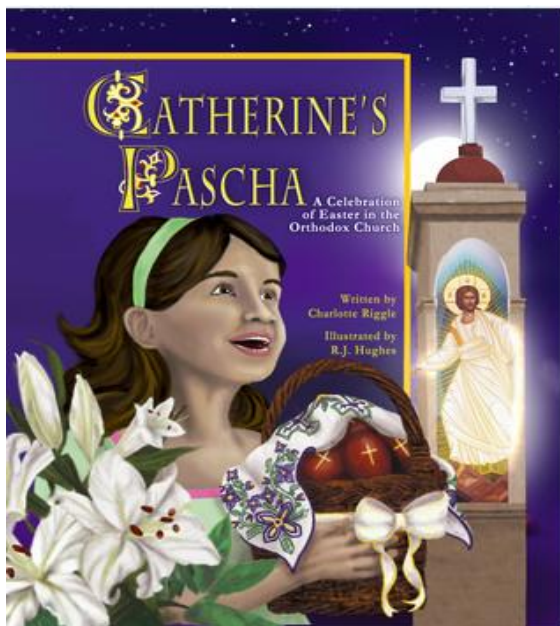
During the 40 days after the Resurrection, the Lord appeared to the holy apostles from time to time and always in a miraculous and mysterious manner... Christ arose forever, unto eternity. He arose in a body of glory, immortal and incorruptible... a spiritual body.

He had suffered, was dead and buried, and now rose to a higher mode of existence. By His Resurrection He trampled down and destroyed death, and raised with Himself the whole race of Adam.

Christ has risen, and He ascends to the Father, yet He does not “go away,” but abides with the faithful forever. He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mark 16:19).

For He raises the very earth with Him to heaven, and even higher than any heaven. God’s power, in the phrase of Saint John Chrysostom, “manifests itself not only in the Resurrection, but in something much stronger.” For “He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.” (St. Mark 16:19) - *Excerpted from www.oca.org*

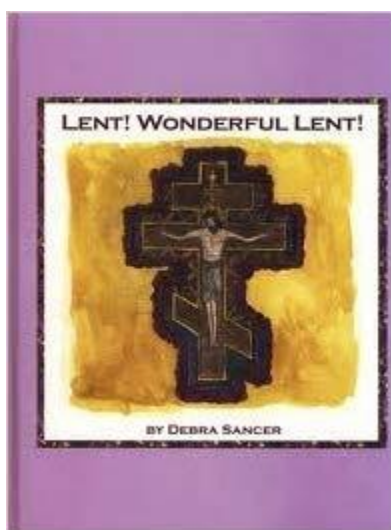
From the Parish Library



CATHERINE'S PASCHA: A celebration of Easter in the Orthodox Church By Charlotte Riggle

It's Pascha, and Catherine is determined to stay awake all night. Can she do it? Will she remember how to say "Christ is risen!" in

Russian? Will their parents let them play with burning candles, smash hard-boiled eggs, and eat sweets until the sun rises on Pascha? This little book has a deep heart and enormous vision, simple enough to engage young readers and profound enough to inspire their parents.



Lent! Wonderful Lent!

***by Debra Sancer, illustrated
by Amy Stokes***

A beautiful full colour illustrated book for children 7 -11 age range, explaining the meaning and traditions of Great Lent and Pascha



Pentecost

50 days after Great and Holy Pascha, we celebrate another wonderful feast: the feast of Pentecost. This important feast commemorates the fulfillment of Christ's promise to his disciples: the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them. The apostles were then able to go out into Jerusalem and speak to all the people there about Christ: even though they did not speak the people's languages! Because of that, this day is often called "the birthday of the Church."...

- <https://orthodoxchristianparenting.wordpress.com/2014/06/06/teaching-children-about-the-feast-of-pentecost-2/>

Pentecost

The Earth's Name's Day

The Earth Has a
Name's Day too!

The birch trees
under our window
murmured of the coming of the Holy Trinity.

Sitting under their canopy, merging with the waves of their
glittering leaves, I close my eyes tightly and imagined a
path of shimmering light, just like on a river at sunrise;
and along this path, in the form of three angels in white
raiment, walks the Holy Trinity.

On the eve of the holiday my mother said, "Tomorrow is
the earth's name's day!"

"How is that?" I asked.

"Because tomorrow, my son, is Holy Trinity Day.
Tomorrow, the Holy Spirit walks upon the earth, and
decorates the earth with the most beautiful field flowers
and thick green grass. That is why on Trinity Day the earth
always looks so bedecked and merry, like a name's day
celebrant!"



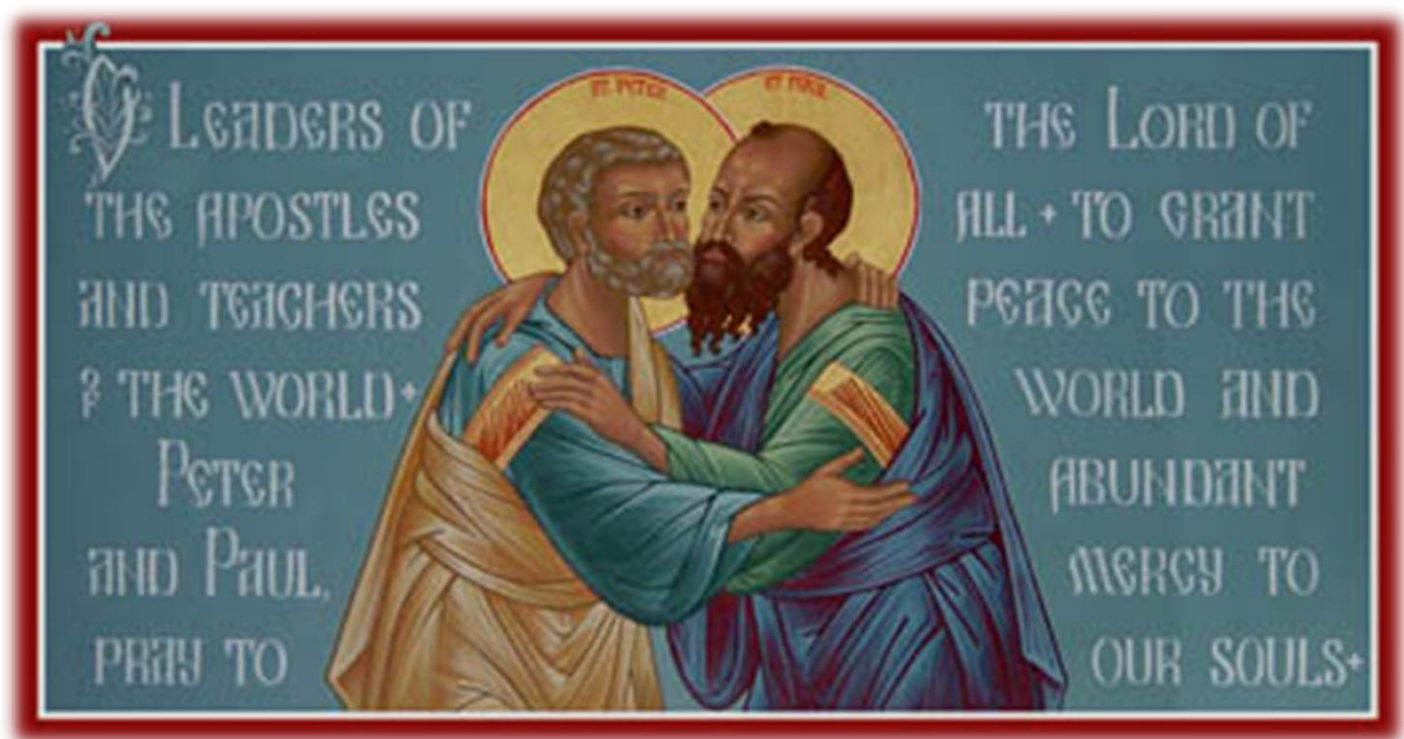
"The earth's
name's day!"
These
extraordinary
words
sounded so
wonderful,
that my
whole heart
was
illuminated...



In the early morning, the arrival of the Holy Trinity at our village came in the form of the rising sun's rays, which filled our little room with a delicate radiance.

Mother lit the lampada in front of the icons murmuring, "O most Holy Trinity, save us...." Over the earth, which was celebrating its name's day, the sun spilled its rays in thick and fragrant waves. The church crowned the earth's name's day with wondrous words, hymns and long mysterious prayers, during which we stood on our knees, and the floor was covered with flowers and fresh grass.

I picked up blades of grass from the floor, rubbed them between my palms and, breathing in their fragrant smell, I sensed with all my heart: how wonderful it is to be alive on the earth's name's day -From the book by Nikiforov-Volgin, "The Earth's Name's Day"



Apostles' Fast

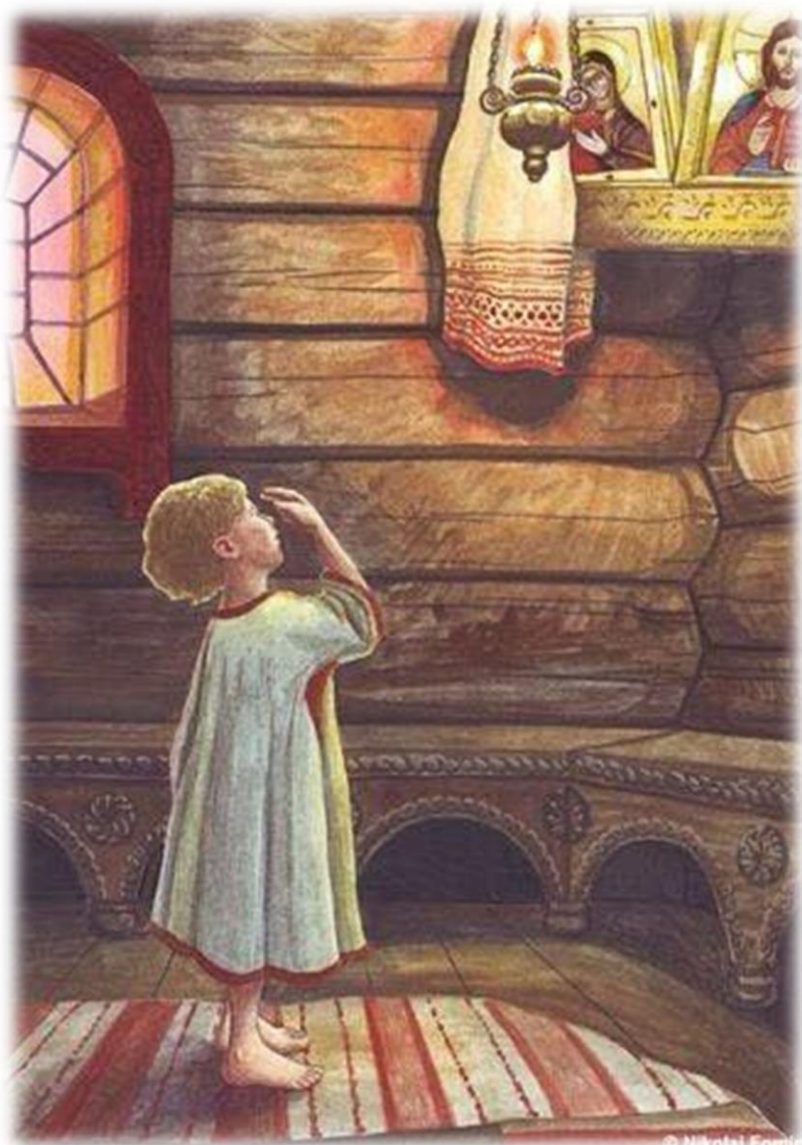
The Apostles Fast begins the second Monday after Pentecost, this year on June 24th. The fast finishes with the Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, July 12th (June 29th old calendar).

An Apostle is a follower of Christ; someone who has great love for God and teaches people about Holy Tradition and the Gospel. During this fast, we learn more about these

Holy Men, their mission, their struggles, and their faith to spread the Teachings of Christ.

“The Church glorifies Peter's steadfastness and Paul's wisdom, and sees in them an image of ones who have sinned and corrected themselves. In the Apostle Peter—as one who denied the Lord and then repented

Editor's Note: you may recall this from the scriptures the Apostle Peter denied Christ three times and the rooster crowed; and the Apostle Paul, who initially resisted the preaching of the Lord, and then believed.” www.pravoslavie.ru



In as much as we are able, we are asked to make God-pleasing choices in our daily lives. We remember our prayers, give thanks, and “follow the Lord’s first and greatest commandment – ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

And, secondly - ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

In our parish, on the *Sunday of All Saints*, the day before the *Apostles Fast* begins; we have a youth-hosted fundraiser for our church, called *Sundae Sunday*.



The Youth of the Parish serve Hot Dogs, Cappuccino and Ice Cream to our clergy, parents and friends.

Beginning the fast, we shift our focus more

on prayer, study and serving one another, with a glimmer of hope, shown by the lives of the Holy Apostles.

“O Holy Prophets, Apostles and Saints, pray to God for us Sinners

Practical Tip

If you are helping tend the church candles...

Please **do this only when the choir is singing the Lord Have Mercy responses** to the clergy's petitions to God.

Thank you!



Jesus Christ, Our Salvation Through Holy Baptism

When we arise out of the baptismal waters, we are completely reborn in spirit. God also gives us a guardian angel to stay with us our whole life!

During our earthly life, we will sail through many calm and stormy oceans within the **Ark of the Church**. Many Orthodox churches are built in the shape of an ark.

God spared Noah, his family, and the world's countless pairs of creatures (miraculously sent to him by God) from the great flood, which covered the whole earth.

The rainbow is a covenant which means a promise, or reminder. It is a promise God will never destroy the earth by flood again.

God gave a sign of that love, in the rainbow.

After the flood waters disappeared, Noah stepped onto dry land, built an altar, and immediately made a thanksgiving offering to God.

Like Noah and his family, let us remember to give thanks for salvation, in The Ark of the Church.

Let us also, live our lives as a gift from God!

Noah's Ark

Centuries after Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden; people chose to forget about God and became wicked. Only one man and his family in the whole world remained good! His name was Noah.

One day God said to Noah: "The earth is wicked and I shall wash away all with a flood of waters. Every living thing will perish, except your family and those with you, for you have obeyed My laws." Then God told Noah to build a huge covered boat, called an ark. People laughed at Noah and his sons when they began to build this boat in the middle of dry land, but Noah still did what God told him. God sent Noah two of every kind of creature that lived on earth.

At last all was ready, and food was stored away for many months ahead within the ark.

Noah and his family entered the ark. The Lord shut them in. In seven days the rain began to fall. It rained forty days and forty nights without stopping. Even the mountains were covered with water. Nothing remained alive on the earth.



Seven months after the beginning of the flood, Noah's ark came to rest on a mountain top. Noah opened the window of his ark to let a dove fly. The dove could find no place to rest, so it returned to the ark. Noah waited another seven days and let the dove out again. When it returned, it carried a green olive leaf in its beak. After another week the dove flew away and never came back.



God told Noah to leave the ark and release all the creatures that were with him. Noah and his family thanked God for keeping them safe. Suddenly a beautiful rainbow appeared in the sky.

God said, "This is the sign of My promise that never again shall there be a flood great enough to destroy all living things on the earth."

The rainbow is God's beautiful Promise in the sky!