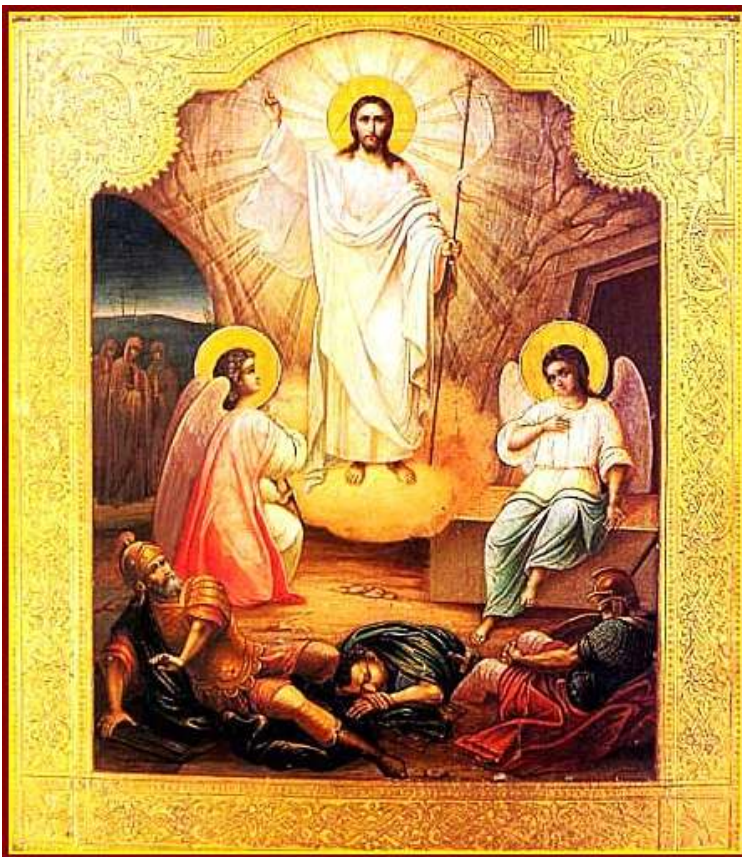


April 12, 2015: The Lord's Resurrection (Pascha, Easter)

Epistle: The Acts, 1:1-8:

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Gospel: John 1:1-17:



In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only

begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

By the grace of God we have been found worthy to receive, one again, the light of Christ's resurrection in our hearts and in our souls.

On the night of the Lord's Resurrection, as well as throughout the Pascal season, Orthodox Christians sing, time and again, the hymn of Christ's victory over death and Hades: *Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and those in the tombs bestowing life*. By so doing, they reaffirm their faith and hope in their own resurrection and victory over death and the evil forces.

As the assurance of our own resurrection, Easter is the foundation of Christianity, the "Feast of feasts" that opens the doors of Paradise and brings reconciliation between man and his Creator.

On behalf of the Church Board and the Ladies Auxiliary, I'd like to extend to all of our parishioners and supporters a Blessed Pascha, filled with joy and happiness!

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

Fr. George Bazgan

PASTORAL LETTER ON THE FEAST OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION, 2015

† NICOLAE

by the mercies of God

Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

*To our beloved clergy and Orthodox faithful,
peace and holy joy from Christ, the Risen Lord,
and from us hierarchical blessings.*

*Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!*

**Very Reverend Fathers,
Beloved Faithful,**

Christ is risen!

We give glory to God because He has enabled us once again to proclaim the Lord's Resurrection, the victory of life over death, the raising up of all from the grave through the power of the Resurrection of Christ. After the period of Great Lent, a time of spiritual struggle to join ourselves to the Lord and allow Him to work in our lives, we again proclaim the good tidings of Christ's Resurrection and our own. It is fitting that we challenge ourselves to an understanding of this news for ourselves and for our world.

Many thousands of years ago, God made man as the crown of His creation. In the Liturgy that bears his name, St. Basil the Great expresses very beautifully this act of God's love: "having made man by taking dust from the earth, and having honored him with Your own image, O God, You placed him in a garden of delight, promising him eternal life and the enjoyment of everlasting blessings in the observance of Your commandments." Man was created from physical matter and adorned with the image of the Creator. From the beginning the purpose of creation was the perfecting of man, "immortal life," life without decay, life in which the Spirit that makes all things alive could bring physical matter to the "inheritance of eternal good things," to the eternity of God. But man fell from that state, "from paradise into this world," and was returned "to the earth from which he was taken" (Liturgy of St. Basil the Great). Man lost paradise and with it the possibility of eternity, and heard the punishment: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3:19).

The history of mankind since that time has been marked by this distancing from God and adherence to the earth. The nature of man and the nature of the world suffer the same abasement: "Not satisfied with the mission of priesthood offered by the nature of God, but through the intention of becoming god cutting off the inclination of the creation toward the Creator, man found a multitude of pleasures in creation. But nature rebelled, creation became man's enemy, and refused to give us food and to reveal its mysteries to us," says the

theologian Panagiotis Nellas. The one who could have become immortal like God and have brought the entire creation to the perfection of God became subject to death, all through God's pedagogy. For death is allowed by God "so that evil would not be immortal," as the Holy Fathers say.

This history of mortal man and decaying creation is changed through the Lord's Resurrection. The angel proclaims to the myrrh-bearing women that the crucified Jesus is no longer in the place where He had lain, that His body has not returned to the earth as had happened until then with all mankind. The angel proclaims that the earth no longer has power over human nature. The body taken from the earth is now suffused with the power of God that transforms physical matter, until then opaque and mortal, into a source of light, for it reveals the glory of God. The life that ended at the grave now receives a new meaning, of eternity, for death no longer means the end, but a passing over. Christ's being raised from the tomb shows that death has been conquered.

The songs from the night of Holy Pascha proclaim this victory over death and transfiguration of physical matter: "Now all is filled with light: Heaven and earth and the lower regions. Let all creation celebrate the rising of Christ, in which it is established" (Paschal Canon, Ode 3). And St. Nikolai Velimirovich proclaims, "Christ is risen, chosen people! The earth cannot harm Him, nor can the tomb restrain Him. Let your souls arise, you who are filled with the grace of Christ! Let the image of God within you shine, cleansed of earth and saved from mortal decay" (The Faith of Chosen People). The Resurrection of Christ meant victory over death as separation of man from God, but also transfiguration, the changing of the physical matter that through its corruption bore the signs of the death of man. Through the Resurrection the physical matter of the Body of Christ is fully transfigured, deified, made eternal. Thus is opened up the horizon of the understanding of the mystery of the transfiguration of our bodies and of the physical matter of the created world which will take place in the Kingdom of God. "Christianity believes... in an eternity of physical matter, of matter unceasingly transfigured by the infinite power and richness of spiritual life and of the divine energies. Christianity admits a kind of mystical materialism, it knows holy matter. For Holy is the Body of the Lord, through the receiving of which our bodies are sanctified," says Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae (Dogmatic Theology).

Very Reverend Fathers, Beloved Faithful,

Of this transfiguration of matter all of us partake who believe in the Resurrection of Christ and are partakers in the Mysteries of the Church. At every Divine Liturgy we receive His Body and Blood, which He took on Himself as fully human, subsequently transfigured through the Resurrection. We commune with the Risen Christ, we receive as food and drink the physical matter of His Body suffused with the power of the Spirit at the Resurrection. And this communion is a foretaste of the perfect communion in the heavenly Kingdom, as we confess in the prayer after communion: "O great and most holy Pascha, O Christ; O Wisdom, Word, and Power of God, grant us to partake of You more perfectly in the unwaning day of Your kingdom." The partaking "more perfectly in the Kingdom" refers also to the perfecting of creation, of matter, in the Kingdom through the power of the Spirit of Christ. In the Resurrection the transfiguration of creation, which aspires to "deliverance from the bondage of corruption," (Rom. 8:21) is already anticipated. In the Lord's Resurrection the ultimate meanings of creation, with regard to spirit and matter, space and time, are included.

Receiving these revelations of the meaning of the Lord's Resurrection, we who believe in our transfiguration and the world's at the General Resurrection should clothe ourselves in the "armor of light" (Rom. 13:12) and become witnesses of the Lord's Resurrection and our own resurrection. The hope of the resurrection and the transformation of the world can be our beacon in these times subject to matter, to the pleasures of the world which are opposed to God, which declare the so-called freedom of man without God. We who believe in the Resurrection must show that we live already in the light and eternity of the Kingdom, that this light embraces our souls and shows us to be "the light of the world."

With these thoughts I embrace you in Christ, the Risen Lord, and wish you a happy Feast with health, peace, and joy in your families and parishes!

Your brother in prayer to God,
† NICOLAE

Chicago, the Feast of the Lord's Resurrection, 2015

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SCHEDULE

PALM SUNDAY

Blessing of Palms, Divine Liturgy 10:00 A. M.

HOLY MONDAY

Matins of the Holy Tuesday 7:00 P. M.

HOLY TUESDAY

Matins of the Holy Wednesday 7:00 P. M.

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Sacrament of the Holy Unction 7:00 P. M.

HOLY THURSDAY

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 10:00 A. M.

Service of the Holy Passion (12 Gospels) 7:00 P. M.

GOOD FRIDAY

Taking down from the Cross (Vespers) 3:00 P. M.

Lamentation Service 7:00 P. M.

GREAT SATURDAY

Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 10:00 A. M.

HOLY PASCHA (EASTER)

Resurrection Service and Divine Liturgy 12:00 (midnight)

Blessing of the Easter baskets 3:00 A. M.

The traditional Easter fellowship will follow the blessing of the Easter baskets.

EASTER SUNDAY

Vespers Service 1:00 P. M.

BRIGHT MONDAY and TUESDAY

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

BRIGHT FRIDAY

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors extends a warm appeal to all supporters of our parish, asking them **to pay their membership before Easter.**

This way we can ensure that we have the necessary funds to fulfill our financial obligations during the Summer months and for the rest of the year as well.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

PEROGY SUPPER

On Friday, **April 24, 2015,** the Ladies Auxiliary will organize a **Perogy Supper** at the Romanian Center, between **4:30 – 7:30 PM.**

GARAGE SALE

The Romanian Orthodox Church will be hosting a Garage Sale:

- Friday, May 29 2015: 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM.
- Saturday, May 30 2015: 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM.
- Sunday, May 31 2015: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM.

*This is a fundraising event with proceeds going towards the kitchen renovation.
To make this event a success, **we NEED your help!***

ITEMS NEEDED :

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING (IN GOOD CONDITION).

ADULT CLOTHING (IN GOOD CONDITION).

TOYS /ELECTRONIC GAMES/OTHER ELECTRONICS.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT.

SMALL HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES AND FURNITURE.

TOOLS.

GARDEN ITEMS.

MISCELLANEOUS (BOOKS, CHINA, DECORATIVE ITEMS, JEWELRY,
PURSES, VASES, etc.).

Donations are accepted every Sunday between 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM

(or call to make other arrangements).

NOTE: *This event requires a large number of volunteers to sort, price and advertise so please let us know if you can lend a hand.*

For further information, to make a donation or to volunteer, please contact:

- Psa. MARIA BAZGAN: 780-473-0029
- MARIANA DIACONU: 780-473-6711
- MARIETA MIEILA: 780-439-9310
- GABRIELA DINCA: 780-497-1326

Thank you very much!

On Mixed Marriages

Living in a pluralistic society, such as ours, has its share of advantages and challenges as well, especially for the young people.

When it comes to mixed marriages, the Orthodox parents and their children need to know what the position of the Church is. Based on the teaching of the Orthodox Church, mixed marriages must meet the following conditions:

1. The non-Orthodox party must be a Christian. This means that that person must have been or must be baptized (before the wedding service) in one of the other two Christian denominations: Catholic or Protestant. Of course, we would prefer that such a person be baptized in the Orthodox Church.

Therefore, an Orthodox person cannot marry a non-Christian in the Orthodox Church.

2. The wedding service must take place in an Orthodox Church and be officiated by an Orthodox priest. Just because the wedding takes place in an Orthodox church does not mean that the non-Orthodox party becomes Orthodox. This is done only as a favor to the Orthodox party.

3. The children resulted from this union must be baptized and raised/educated in the Orthodox Church.

Should an Orthodox person enter a marriage union with a non-Christian, such a person must understand that by so doing they have forfeited their right/possibility to receive Communion and be a Godparent at a Christening or a Wedding.

For further details, please talk to the priest.

Fr. George Bazgan