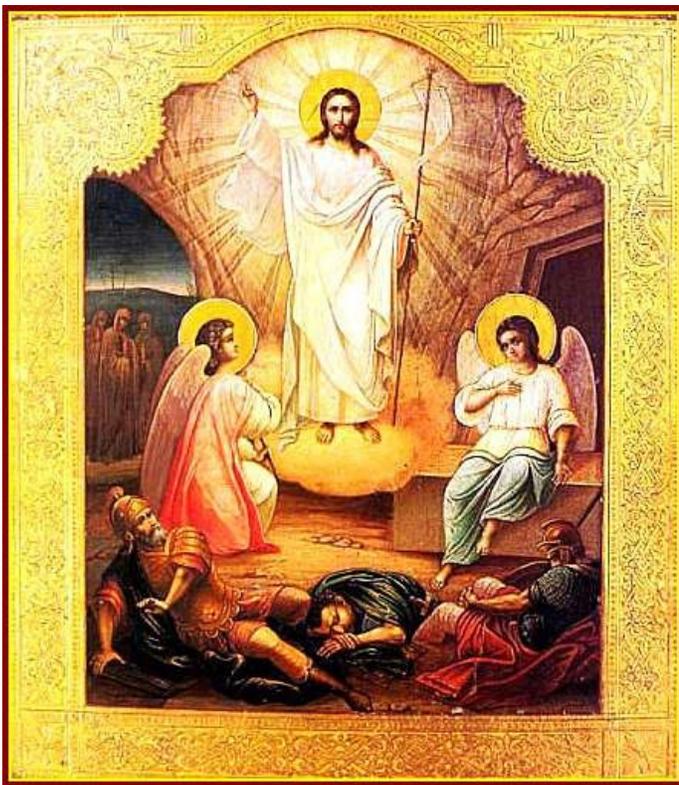


May 1, 2016: The Lord's Resurrection (Pascha, Easter)

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, 2016

† 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.*

Let all of you then enter into the joy of our Lord... The Table is richly laden.

All of you, fare sumptuously on it; enjoy the banquet of faith!

(St. John Chrysostom, Homily on the Lord's Resurrection)

**Very Reverend Fathers,
Beloved Faithful,**

Christ is risen!

The Day of Resurrection offers us, once again, the joy of proclaiming to one another that our life does not end on this earth, for we who believe in His Resurrection will rise and rejoice with Christ. We have finished seven weeks of spiritual struggle to "cleanse our senses" and to enter into the spiritual banquet of the Feast of the Resurrection; now it is fitting that we should reflect on the meaning of the Lord's Resurrection.

What is the banquet of which St. John Chrysostom speaks in his homily? What is the connection between the Lord's Resurrection and "the banquet of faith?" The meaning of the banquet, a celebration and special event in a family or in the world, is revealed to us in Holy Scripture. For the Patriarch Abraham hosted the three youths at the Oak of Mamre, and through them the Holy Trinity was revealed to him and he learned he would become the father of the chosen people (Gen. 8). Christ participated at the wedding banquet in Cana of Galilee, and performed there His first miracle and blessed the Sacrament of Marriage (John 2:1-11). Invited to a meal in the home of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, Christ spoke of "the good part" of serving God (Luke 10:38-42). There he also received the offering of ointment from the sinful woman, foretelling His own burial (John 12:1-8). He entered the house of Zacchaeus the Tax Collector, not for food and drink, but to proclaim salvation (Luke 19:1-10). If the Pharisees accused Him of eating with tax collectors and sinners, Christ did so in order to show them that the healing of the soul is fulfilled through the joy of man's communion with God.

Before His Passion, Christ desired "to eat this Passover" together with His disciples. The Jewish Passover was actually a banquet in memory of the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage, a supper at

which family members feasted on the Paschal lamb prepared in a special ritual. At the Mystical Supper, the final banquet of the disciples with their Teacher, Christ spoke of the fulfillment of the Supper: *“I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God”* (Luke 22:15-16). At this Mystical Supper, Christ Himself is the sacrificial Lamb: *“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’”* (Matt. 26:26-28). In the hands of Christ, the bread and the wine, as real food, now became a spiritual reality, His Body and Blood which would be offered on the Cross for the forgiveness of the sins of mankind and reconciliation with God. We know that this is the moment of the institution of the Holy Eucharist through the Savior’s commandment, *“Do this in remembrance of Me”* (Luke 22:19). We now discover the full meaning of the banquet prefigured in the above mentioned moments. The communion around the table is used by God to reveal Himself in His love, goodness, and riches. At the Mystical Supper these are fulfilled through the offering of the Lord’s Body and Blood as food and drink. The One Who revealed Himself to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre now is offered as nourishment, not material and passing, but spiritual, unto eternity. When we talk about a banquet we think of a richly laden table. The Savior’s Sacrifice on the Cross and His Resurrection offer us a profound image of this richness, for God offers Himself to man as food and drink for eternity. For what we eat and drink in Holy Communion is the Body and Blood of the Savior, the One offered on the Cross and then risen, transfigured, full of the power of divinity. This Body is our nourishment for eternity.

Coming back to St. John Chrysostom’s Homily, we can find yet another meaning of the banquet to which we are invited: *“The Table is richly laden. All of you, fare sumptuously on it. The calf is a fatted one; let no one go away hungry. All of you, enjoy the banquet of faith. All of you, enjoy the riches of His goodness. Let no one grieve of poverty; for the universal Kingdom has been revealed.”* The banquet of which St. John speaks is the Kingdom of Heaven, the eternal Kingdom, and its revelation on earth through the Lord’s Resurrection. In His parables, Christ speaks of this Kingdom using words like “the wedding of the King’s son” or “the great supper.” *“The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son....”* He invited his guests, saying, *“...I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fatted cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet”* (Mat. 22:2-4). And the book of Revelation speaks of “the wedding supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9), revealing to us the profound meaning of the Kingdom of heaven. For if through the Incarnation and Resurrection the Kingdom has come, and the Church is in the world, this Kingdom will be fulfilled at the end of the ages when we are called to rejoice with Christ in His eternal Kingdom. But the parables also speak of many who had been invited and yet refused the invitation for various reasons. And of one found without appropriate garments, who was thrown out of the banquet hall. If the wedding is a true banquet, revealing the riches of the king, then the way we receive the invitation and prepare ourselves for it reveals us to be either desirous and prepared or, rather, unworthy of the joy of the Heavenly Father. This is revealed at each Divine Liturgy, which is the great supper or wedding of the King’s Son.

St. John Chrysostom then assures us that partaking of the banquet brings us forgiveness of sins and victory over death. Nourishing ourselves on the Risen One, we too proclaim the victory of life. And this proclamation is a cause of hope and joy. It is fitting that with this hope and joy we travel through our world, troubled as it is by wars and fearful of terrorist plots. The Body and Blood of the Risen Christ has become our food, and through us can become the food of this world. Thus nourished, we can bring hope to the world. At this glorious feast I encourage you to bring to the world this hope that springs from the Lord’s Resurrection, from the victory of life over death. I urge you to show your face illumined by hope and your conversation filled with faith, as those who have tasted “the banquet of faith.”

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, 2016

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

Divine Liturgy at St George's Greek Orthodox Church..... 10:00 A. M.

BRIGHT TUESDAY

Divine Liturgy 10:00 A. M.

BRIGHT FRIDAY

Divine Liturgy 10:00 A. M.

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!

GARAGE SALE

On May 27- 29, 2016, our parish will organize a Garage Sale.

Donations are accepted every Sunday between 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
or call to make other arrangements:

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!

Spread the word

We make an appeal to all of you, subscribers to our weekly electronic Bulletin, to invite your family members and friends to submit their email address and join the list of our parish subscribers.

This is so we can reach as many people as possible.

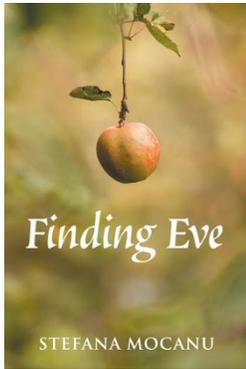
Thank you for your help!

Our Family

We would like to add something new to our website.
All members and supporters are asked to send in a picture
of their family, with the names of all members.
All pictures will available under this category: *Our family*.

Thank you for your participation!

New Romanian Book Author



Ştefana Mocanu, our Church member, has written a book, *Finding Eve*, 336 pages, published by Friesen Press.

Ştefana's debut novel captures a blend of romance, family, relationship, loss and triumph and riveting suspense.

Those who want to purchase it, please click on the link below.

Congratulations, Stefana!

<http://www.friesenpress.com/bookstore/title/119734000029592462/Stefana-Mocanu-Finding-Eve>