

## HOLY SPIRIT BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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## SUNDAY MARCH 31, 2024 THE GLORIOUS RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

### Schedule of Divine Services

**Easter Sunday, Mar. 31: The Great & Holy Pascha**

10:25am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy

**For the Health & Welfare of Holy Spirit Parishioners**

followed by Blessing of the Pascha Baskets (In Church Hall)

**Bright Monday, Apr. 1: No Services**

**Bright Tuesday, Apr. 2: 5pm Confessions, 6pm Divine Liturgy**

**For the deceased priest Msgr. Russell Duker, by Kathy Moyta**

**Wednesday Apr. 3: No Services**

**Thursday Apr. 4: No Services**

**Friday, Apr. 5: 5pm Confessions, 6pm Divine Liturgy**

**For the deceased priest Msgr. Russell Duker, by Mr. and Mrs. Joe O'Donnell**

**Saturday, Apr. 6: 5pm Confessions, 6pm Great Vespers**

**Sunday, Apr. 7: St. Thomas Sunday**

10:23am Rosary, 10:45am 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour, 11am Divine Liturgy

**For the deceased Mary Ann Cicero on her birthday, by Judi Ann Mackin**

**All divine liturgies are open for intentions. Call the office or fill out a request form in the back of the church and leave it in the sacristy.**

**SEEKING VOLUNTEERS:** If you are interested in learning how to lead Matins as a Reader's Service on Sunday mornings before Liturgy, please see Father Michael.

**FLEA MARKET DONATIONS:** Our next flea market will be Saturday, April 27, we are currently accepting donations. Please note we cannot take books, clothes or electronic devices. Please see Mary Dzurichko with any questions. **Donations will be accepted through Sunday, April 14.**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING:** Next meeting will be **Sunday, April 14, 2024** after Divine Liturgy.

**AT THE DIVINE LITURGY TODAY:** "This is the day that the Lord has made!" It is the Great day—the Feast of the Radiant Resurrection. Jesus has given us HOPE for salvation and access to eternal life. This Good News that Christ is risen is to be disseminated throughout the entire world. We are contemporary witnesses to the living, risen Jesus, and we affirm this fact: Indeed, He is risen! We must ever bear testimony to this basic tenet of our Faith.

### **EPISTLE: Acts 1:1-18:**

In my first account, Theophilus, I dealt with all that Jesus did and taught until the day he was taken up to heaven, having first instructed the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit. In the time after his suffering he showed them in many convincing ways that he was alive, appearing to them over the course of forty days and speaking to them about the reign of God. On one occasion when he met with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem: "Wait, rather, for the fulfillment of my Father's promise, of which you have heard me speak. John baptized with water, but within a few days you will be

baptized with the Holy Spirit." While they were with him, they asked, "Lord, are you going to restore the rule to Israel now?" His answer was: "The exact time it is not yours to know. The Father has reserved that to himself. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and Samaria, yes even to the ends of the earth." No sooner had he said this than he was lifted up before their eyes in a cloud which took him from their sight.

~**On Great Saturday evening**, many catechumens, who had been under instruction during the Great Fast and who were preparing for induction into the Christian community, were baptized at the Paschal Vigil Divine Liturgy. During this baptismal eucharistic rite celebrated on what is known as "The Great Night" (Velika Noč), these aspiring converts now were initiated formally into the Church in anticipation of Jesus' momentous resurrection from the despairing tomb of death. After the magnificent resurrection feast, these newly baptized Christians continued to receive additional instructions daily during the paschal-resurrectional season with regard to the origin, the historical beginnings, and the initial missionary efforts of the early Christian Church. They used The Acts of the Holy Apostles as a source guide. Hence, with our Resurrectional Divine Liturgy for today, we also now begin the daily, continuous reading from this fifth book of the New Testament. Through today's lesson, the Holy Evangelist Luke tells us that Jesus showed Himself to many people for forty days following His astounding resurrection event. Jesus had told the apostles to remain in Jerusalem until He would send them the Holy Spirit. They then were to be His "witnesses" to the very ends of the world, proclaiming this Good News that CHRIST IS RISEN! This is the message of HOPE for all humanity which must be reechoed by us, the "modern-day witnesses" to His redemptive acts. He has conquered Death and has emerged as a glorious Victor over all the adverse powers. We must ever testify to this basic truth that INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

**It is traditional to proclaim the Paschal Gospel in ancient and local languages, for the Good News is to be proclaimed throughout the world. Here, the Gospel is proclaimed in Greek, Slovak, Russian, and Latin, then entirely again in English.**

#### **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 came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life. And, this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. A man named John was sent from God. He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, who was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John testified to him and cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'The one who is coming after me ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.'" From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed him.

~**In keeping with the theme** of advanced instructions for the newly baptized catechumens of the Christian Church of antiquity, with today's Feast of the Radiant Resurrection of the Lord, we likewise initiate the continuous reading of The Gospel of the Holy Evangelist John. These new members of the Christian community were, as John says in the beginning of his gospel, those to whom Jesus "gave the power to become children of God," for they accepted His message. They were "reborn" in baptism through Christ, and this birth "depended not upon the course of nature, ... but on God," Who thus made them His own children. Today's holy gospel lesson tells us about the existence of the "Word" (Jesus) before the creation of the world. God's own Son Jesus—the Word—came into the world and took on our human nature in order to deify it and thereby secure our eternal salvation. He now has accomplished this by His stupendous passover and through His miraculous resurrection. He gives new HOPE to a dark world, and we declare this reality to others by proclaiming that CHRIST IS RISEN! This is certainly THE "Great day," for the Lord Jesus is truly our Savior. We thus continually confirm His message of redemption when we exclaim that INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

**THE TRADITIONAL THREE DAYS OF EASTER:** In the custom and tradition of the Byzantine Catholic Church, the Resurrection Feast is observed for a three-day period with the second and third days of Easter celebrated as major holy days. Do not neglect your obligation to sanctify these festive days by participating in the Divine Liturgy and emphasizing the spiritual manner of celebrating THE THREE-DAY RESURRECTIONAL CELEBRATION of the Easter holidays. The Church grants the bestowal of special graces, blessings, and indulgences to those faithful who observe the three resurrectional holy days. Make the sacrifice to attend church and thus receive these spiritual rewards!

**HOLY DAY OBSERVED TOMORROW – BRIGHT MONDAY** The second day of the Radiant Resurrection, the Church emphasizes the necessity of the proclamation of the resurrection event both in antiquity and in our present world. This salvific message must be proclaimed! The Emmaus Procession that follows the Divine Liturgy on this holy day commemorates Jesus' walk with two disciples to the village of Emmaus on the evening that He rose from the dead. These two men, Lucas and Cleopas, broadcast everywhere the news of Jesus' resurrection. We also are obliged to proclaim this same Good News!

**BRIGHT TUESDAY IS A HOLY DAY - THIRD DAY OF THE RESURRECTION** We observe the third day of the Radiant Resurrection on Bright Tuesday, and the Church continues to highlight the Emmaus event on this holy day. The triumphal joy felt by Jesus' followers after His resurrection is accentuated, for this same exhilaration must fill our own hearts even today. His brilliant, radiant light emanating from the triumphant empty tomb must permeate our lives by piercing our minds with holy joy and by filling our souls with divine jubilation.

**WE FESTIVELY OBSERVE HOLY PASSEOVER SUNDAY TODAY** On the Holy and Great Sunday of the Pasch, our Byzantine Catholic Church rejoices with total and complete triumph as we jubilantly celebrate The Feast of the Radiant Resurrection of the Lord. This is the principal feast of Christianity, and on this King and Lord of all Sabbaths, the Church festively echoes and resounds Jesus' marvelous message for mankind of HOPE in a "New Life" which arduously was secured through His painful passion, brutal death, desolate burial, perfect passover, and spectacular resurrection. The Ruthenian people referred to this amazing Feast of feasts as "The Great day" (Velikden'), and indeed it is THE great day, since the victorious Jesus effected for us a New Passover. For Christians, JESUS is THE real Paschal Lamb of God, Who was sacrificed for our sins. Jesus' definitive passover permits all of us to "pass-over" from darkness into the Light; from death to eternal Life; from earth up to Heaven; from fear to Faith; from being slaves of the world to being children of God; and finally, from sharing in our simple humanity to participating in His awesome Divinity! This is all true because of the fact that CHRIST IS RISEN! We are the recipients of this "New Life" since with the certitude of our faith, we can affirm this reality by shouting: INDEED, HE IS RISEN! At the Resurrection Matins on this Solemnity of solemnities, we came forward to venerate the symbols of Jesus' victory: the glorified, honorable Cross by which He conquered Death; the precious Holy Gospel Book, containing the Good News about the salvation which He obtained for us; the venerable Icon of the Radiant Resurrection, showing Jesus' unique passover as He rises from the grave, tramples upon the ignoble cross of despair, and rescues the just souls held captive in Hades; and the blessed Artos, the paschal bread, representing Jesus, our true Lamb of God, Who took away the sin of the world. The risen Savior's conquest truly makes this feast a very "great day," and on this Triumph of triumphs, we can confidently HOPE that Jesus will bestow upon each of us this same glorious resurrection. Thus, He will give us access to His eternal "New Life" in the fullness of His heavenly Kingdom!

**PRAYER FOR OUR FOUR SAINTLY BISHOPS:** Please pray for the causes of our four Saintly Bishops and ask them to intercede for your specific intentions: O Almighty God, our Lord, we bless You, we praise You, and we thank you for all the graces which You, in Your infinite mercy have bestowed upon us. We are especially grateful for giving us four saintly and heroic Bishops: **Bishop Theodore G. Romzha, Bishop Paul P. Gojdich OBSM, Bishop Basil Hopko, and Bishop Alexander Chira**, who, by their courage, charity, and intrepid faith, inspired our Ruthenian people in the darkest moments of their history. By their great sufferings, humiliating imprisonment, and violent death they gave living witness to their Catholic faith and glorified Your exalted name. Therefore, O Gracious Lord, glorify them in return by Your divine power and inscribe their names in the book of Your Saints. For you are holy, our God, and we render glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and forever, Amen. With Ecclesiastical Approbation Acknowledgment of answered prayers: Postulator's office, 54 Riverview Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15214, U.S.A.

**PRAYER FOR SEMINARIANS:** **Saints Cyril and Methodius**, Venerable Apostles of the Slavs and Patrons of our Byzantine Catholic Seminary, we place our Seminarians in your loving care. Help them to grow in humility, meekness and prudence. Enkindle in them a burning zeal for souls. May their hearts be filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and may they learn to know and love the church so that they may always and everywhere think, speak and act with Her, the Glorious Spouse of Christ. May they become exemplars of generosity and detachment from the things of this world. But above all, O Venerable Patrons, help them to truly know, love and serve the Eternal High Priest, Our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose priests they aspire to be. Amen. St. Michael the Archangel, Defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray. And do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, By the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen