



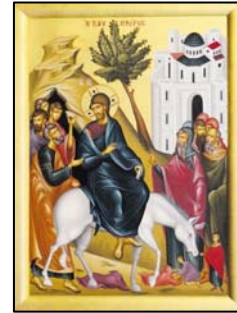
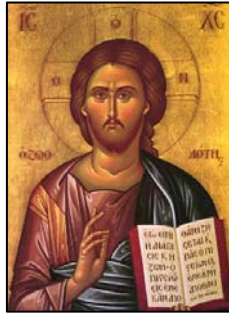
**GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA**

*Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: [www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)*

*Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: [www.atlanta.goarch.org](http://www.atlanta.goarch.org)*

*St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: [www.saintchristopherhoc.org](http://www.saintchristopherhoc.org)*

## **St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church**



313 Dividend Drive, Suite 210  
Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

**Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor***

### **Liturgical Guide for Sunday, April 12, 2009**

**ON THIS DAY, *PALM SUNDAY*, WE CELEBRATE THE RADIANT AND GLORIOUS TRIUMPH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM. WE ALSO COMMEMORATE our Righteous Father Basil the Confessor, Bishop of Parios (+700-750); Righteous Mother Anthoussa of Constantinople (+811); Righteous Akakios the Younger of Kapsokalyvia (Mt. Athos) (1730); Righteous Athanasia, Wonderworker (+860); Holy Martyrs Deme and Protion; Holy Priest-Martyr Artemos; Holy Three Martyrs, Menas, David, and John; and the recovery of the precious Cincture (Belt) of our most holy Lady, the Theotokos. *In Your ineffable compassion O Christ our God, make us victors over our unreasoning passions. Deem us worthy to witness Your swift triumph over death, and Your joyful and life-giving Resurrection, and have mercy on us. Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.***

## **Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Mission Parish!**

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. ***You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!***

*Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.*

## **Holy Week – You Are Invited to ALL our Services:**

Holy Week serves as the ultimate preparation to face and worship the Risen Lord. The joy of Pascha (Easter) cannot be complete without re-living the events that lead to it. During Holy Week, all the events of the last week of Christ's life are re-told and re-enacted with all the emotion and feeling of it all occurring at this moment in our lives. From Palm Sunday evening to Holy Friday, the services recount everything Jesus endured to fulfill the will of the Father. On Holy Friday, God's will is completed on the Cross and then with the Resurrection. By re-living Christ's experience of Holy Week, the faithful can be resurrected and come closer to becoming like God (*theosis*).

The faithful re-affirm their faith during Holy Week by preparing physically and mentally for Pascha. Social activities are curtailed and spiritual reading and acts of sharing and prayer should be substituted for plays, movies, and television. The somber demeanor parallels mourning for a deceased love one.

School Children (Grades 5-12) are encouraged to seek an excused absence from school [*use downloadable form from our website*] to participate in Holy Friday readings, preparations, and spiritual reflection, as well as assist with the decoration of the tomb of Christ (*Kouvouklion*). Young ladies (*4<sup>th</sup> grade and up*) are invited to participate as myrrhbearers on Holy Thursday evening and Holy Friday afternoon and evening. Those interested in being myrrhbearers please contact Presbytera Marinda Tsahakis (770/381-1842), who will provide information on times/dress.

## **SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE**

### **1./6. Festive Hymn Sung for Palm Sunday – (Hymnal-pp.148-150):**

*This hymn is sung after the Great Doxology and after the Small Entrance of the Priest: In our baptism we were buried with You, O Christ our God, and by Your resurrection You have granted us eternal life. Therefore, we sing Your praises, O Lord: “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

### **2. "Save Us O Son of God" – (Hymnal-pp.28-29):**

*On the occasion of today's feast of the Lord, this hymn is sung as follows: "Save us, O Son of God, who rode on the foal of a donkey, we sing to you: Alleluia!"*

### **3./5./10. Festive Hymn for Sat. of Lazarus/Palm Sunday – (Hymnal-pp.144-147):**

*This hymn is sung before and after the Small Entrance, and instead of *Ithomen to fos*, “We have seen the true light” after the distribution of Holy Communion: Before Your passion You confirmed the resurrection of all by raising Lazarus from the dead, O Christ our God. Therefore, like the children of old, we also carry symbols of victory, and to You, the Victor over death, do we cry out: “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

### **4. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:**

*On the occasion of today's feast of the Lord, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. The Lord is God and He has appeared to us. Save us, O Son of God, who rode on the foal of a donkey, we sing to you: Alleluia!"*

### **7. Kontakion of Palm Sunday – (Hymnal-pp.272-273):**

*This hymn is sung after the Small Entrance: In Heaven, upon Your throne, while on earth riding the colt of a donkey, O Christ our God, You accepted the angels’ praise with the songs of the children who cried out to You: “Blessed is He comes for the restoration of Adam.”*

### **8. Megalynarion for Palm Sunday – (Hymnal-pp.302-303):**

*Today, the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed...": The Lord is God and has appeared to us. Prepare the feast and come*

with rejoicing. Let us magnify Christ; bearing palms and branches, let us sing praise to Him: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, our Savior."

**9. Communion Hymn for Palm Sunday – (Hymnal-p.317):**

*On the occasion of today's feast of the Lord, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": Blessed is He, Who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. Alleluia. (John 12:13 – one of verses read during today's Gospel lesson! Also, it is found in Psalm 117 [118].)*

**SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY**

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom
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**Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (Matt 21:1-11, 15-17)**

*When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and He sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of Him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."...But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that He did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became angry and said to Him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself?'" He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.*

### **Epistle Reading (Philippians 4:4-9)**

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.*

### **Gospel Reading (John 12:1-18)**

*Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for Him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with Him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples (the one who was about to betray Him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of My burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me." When the great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, since it was on account of Him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus. The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of Him and had been done to Him. So the crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. It was also because they heard that He had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet Him.*

*Please join us in welcoming His Grace Bishop John of Amorion (retired Bishop living in Atlanta) to our Nymphios/Bridegroom Service on Holy Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. A Lenten reception in His honor will be offered following the service. His Grace was the first American-born Bishop of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and last year He celebrated the 51-year anniversary of His ordination to the Holy Priesthood.*

## **Blessing of the Palms TODAY:**

We thank all those who stayed after church services yesterday and prepared the woven palm crosses that will be blessed and distributed today. According to the rubrics of the Church's Book of Services (*Typikon*), this prayer normally is read at the Orthros just before the Psalms of Praise as we will offer today. The palms are then distributed to the faithful. The text of the prayer indicates clearly that it is less a prayer for the blessing of the palms, even though that is its title, and more a blessing upon those, who in imitation of the New Testament event, hold palms in their hands as symbols of Christ's victory and as signs of a virtuous Christian life. Then, the faithful can hold the palms in their hands during the course of the Divine Liturgy when the Church celebrates both the presence and the coming of the Lord in the mystery of the Eucharist. (*adapted from Great Week and Pascha in the Greek Orthodox Church by Fr. Alkiviadis C. Calivas, Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1997.*) You are invited to ask Fr. George for palm crosses for those unable to be present this morning, and to share the exclamation – "*Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.*"

## **PRAYER AT THE BLESSING OF THE PALMS**

*Fr. George: Let us pray to the Lord.*

*Faithful: Lord, have mercy.*

*Fr. George:*

*Lord our God, enthroned above the Cherubim, You have stirred up Your power and sent Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to redeem the world through His Cross, His burial and His Resurrection. When He came to Jerusalem to His voluntary Passion, the people, living in darkness and the shadow of death, taking up the symbols of victory, boughs of trees and palm branches, foretold the Resurrection. Master as we too, imitating them, carry Palms and branches on this feast, watch over us. And as we offer You Hosanna, like those multitudes and the children, safeguard us, so that in hymns and spiritual songs we, too, may worthily witness the life-giving Resurrection on the third day, in Christ Jesus our Lord, with Whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen.*

**THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):**

*“Hosanna! Blessed is the One Who comes in the name of the Lord — the King of Israel!”*  
*(John 12:13)*

**PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:**

Pascha (Easter) will be celebrated on April 19 this year by over 250 million Orthodox Christians worldwide. Holy Week commences today.

Centuries-old religious services which recall the passion, crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ are conducted each morning and evening throughout Holy Week in Orthodox Christian Churches: Greek, Russian, Romanian, Antiochian, Bulgarian, Carpatho-Russian, Albanian, Serbian and Ukrainian, which serve some 7 million faithful in the Americas.

On PALM SUNDAY during the Divine Liturgy, palms are blessed and distributed to the faithful commemorating Christ's entrance into Jerusalem.

On PALM SUNDAY evening through HOLY WEDNESDAY evening, the Nymphios/Bridegroom Service will be offered emphasizing varied spiritual themes.

On HOLY WEDNESDAY, the faithful are anointed with the Sacrament of Holy Unction, blessed oil, which cleanses, renews and strengthens both spiritually and physically.

On HOLY THURSDAY morning, the institution of the Eucharist is remembered and on HOLY THURSDAY evening, the Service of Holy Passion takes place, during which the Twelve Lessons of the Gospel are read. After the Fifth Gospel a solemn litany begins. A large crucifix is carried in a procession led by the clergy as the mournful hymn of Crucifixion is sung.

On HOLY FRIDAY AFTERNOON, the Vespers of the Descent from the Cross are offered. The Body of Christ is taken down from the Cross, wrapped in white linen and is prepared for burial.

On HOLY FRIDAY evening, the Lamentations (special hymns referring to the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross and His burial) are sung during the Epitaphios Service, which symbolizes the burial of Christ.

On HOLY SATURDAY evening, the Easter Resurrection Service begins with Matins at 11 p.m. At midnight, the Church is completely darkened and the faithful wait in joyous

expectation for the Bishop or priest to come forth carrying a lit white candle, chanting, “Come, Receive the Light, the Light of the Resurrection.” The light is passed to the congregation until the Church is ablaze with the glow of candlelight. A procession of altar boys, choir, chanters and clergy joined by the people move outdoors where the Gospel, proclaiming the Resurrection of Christ, is read. The triumphant hymn, “Christos Anesti, Christ is Risen” is joyously sung by the faithful. At the conclusion of the Resurrection Liturgy, red Easter eggs, which symbolize the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, are distributed to the congregation.

On PASCHA/EASTER SUNDAY, the Vespers of AGAPE (Love) are celebrated with the Holy Gospel of the Resurrection read in as many languages as possible emphasizing the universality of Christ’s teaching of love and peace.

The Orthodox date for Easter is based on a decree of the Council of Nicaea, Asia Minor, held in 325 A.D. According to this decree, Easter must be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon of the vernal equinox but always after the Hebrew Passover to maintain the Biblical sequence of events of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The Orthodox Christian churches have adhered strictly to this formula, but the Easter of other Christian churches is not necessarily preceded by the Passover, as was the case with their Easter date this year.

On this the two hundred and sixty-sixth Sunday of our St. Christopher’s parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia area for the glory of God!

## **COMMUNITY SCHEDULE**

### **Today - Sunday, April 12 (Palm Sunday):**

- 7:45 am Orthros Service, followed by Blessing of Palms**
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy**
- 10:15 am Distribution of Palms, followed by Palm Sunday Luncheon, Sponsored by Philoptochos**
- 7:00 pm Service of the Bridegroom Christ**

*See Inside for complete Holy Week Schedule – today through Pascha!*

### **Sunday, April 19 (PASCHA/Easter):**

- 11:00 am Great Vespers of Agape (Gospel read in various languages)**
- 12:30 pm Pascha Glendi (at George/Julie Skouteris’ home –directions inside)**

***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***