

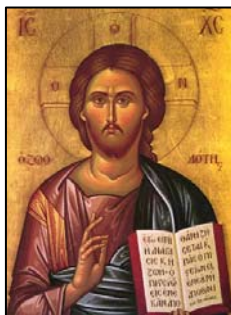


Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlanta.goarch.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Peachtree City, Georgia 30269

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

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, April 5, 2009

ON THIS DAY, THE *FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT*, WE COMMEMORATE *our Righteous Mother, St. Mary of Egypt (522 – SEE TRIODION INSERT ON NEXT PAGE)*. WE ALSO COMMEMORATE the Holy and Glorious Martyrs Victor, Victorin, Claudius, Diodoros, Pappios, Nikiforos, and Serapion of Corinth; Holy Martyrs Theodora and Didymos; Holy New-Martyr George of New Ephesus (+1801); Theodora the Righteous of Thessaloniki (9th cent.) and her daughter Theopista; Holy Martyr Thermus and his sister and her servant; Holy Martyr Pompus; Holy Martyr Zeno; Holy Martyrs Maximos and Terentius; Holy five young Women Martyrs from Lesvos; Presbyter Mark of Trache (+400); Agathopodes and Theodulos the Martyrs; and Holy New Martyr Panaghiotis. *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.

TODAY's Spiritual Theme for the 5th Sunday of Great Lent:

On this *Fifth Sunday of Lent*, the Church commemorates *St. Mary of Egypt*, so that her example of sincere repentance and great virtues may strengthen the slothful and urge sinners to atone for their sins.

This coming Saturday, we commemorate the Saturday of Lazarus. Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, were friends of Jesus. The weeping of Jesus over the dead body of Lazarus is a manifestation of Christ's mortal humanity, and his raising him from the dead, an act of immortal and divine power. Orthros will begin at 7:45 a.m. and the Divine Liturgy will begin at 9:00 a.m. and be followed by a light lenten breakfast and our parish's tying of palm crosses to be used on Palm Sunday and the baking of the Lazarus Bread. Everyone is invited to join us.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2. Resurrectional Hymn (First Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.98-101):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: Although Your tomb was sealed with a stone, O Savior, and Your most pure body was guarded by the soldiers, You rose on the third day giving life to all the world. Therefore, O giver of life, the powers of heaven praise You: Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ. Glory to Your kingdom. Glory to Your saving wisdom, O only lover of mankind.

3. Hymn for St. Mary of Egypt – (Hymnal-pp.140-142):

This hymn is sung after the Small Entrance: In you, holy mother Mary, the image of God shone forth, for you took up your cross and followed the Lord. By word and example you taught us to live in the spirit while still in the flesh. Therefore your spirit rejoices with the angels forever.

4. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

5. Kontakion – (Hymnal-pp. 224-227):

Since this year the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25th) falls before the Friday of the Akathist Hymn (Friday of the fifth week of Lent), the regular Kontakion is sung on this Sunday. This hymn is sung after the Small Entrance: O unfailing protection of Christians, and our faithful advocate before the Creator: though we are sinners, do not ignore our entreaty; but in your goodness, grant your timely help to us who appeal to you in faith. Quickly make intercession; on our behalf make speedy supplication, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

6. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (Hymnal-pp. 298-301):

On the first five Sundays of Great Lent when we use the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, a different hymn is sung instead of “Axion Estin” or “Truly it is proper to call you blessed...”: In you, O woman full of grace, all creation rejoices, the orders of angels and the race of mankind. O hallowed temple and spiritual paradise, glory of virginal souls, from you our God was incarnate and became a child, He who is God from all ages. By making your womb His throne He made you more spacious than all the heavens. In you, O woman full of grace all creation rejoices. Glory to you.

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

Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (John 20:19-31)

“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After He said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.’ When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in His side, I will not believe.’ A week later His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it in My side. Do not doubt but believe.’ Thomas answered Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in His name.”

Epistle Reading (Hebrews 9:11-14)

But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. For if the blood goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

Gospel Reading (Mark 10:32-45)

They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to Him, saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn Him to death; then they will hand Him over to the Gentiles; they will mock Him, and spit upon Him, and flog Him, and kill Him; and after three days He will rise again." James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Him and said to Him, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You." And He said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" And they said to Him, "Grant us to sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink You will drink; and the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

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

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you..."

(James 4:7-8)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

Orthodox Holy Week & Easter – April 19, 2009

Holy Week in the Orthodox Church is the culmination and the zenith of liturgical worship and the Christian life, as the Faithful gather to experience the Gospel portrayed before their eyes. During Holy Week, worship becomes almost continuous, from Palm Sunday Services on Sunday morning through the Resurrection Service early Sunday morning (midnight). We see and experience the whole drama of Christ's Holy and Saving Passion and Resurrection through liturgy, hymns, prayers, and Scripture readings. Each service opens our hearts and minds to the experience of Christ, giving us the precious opportunity to join with our brothers and sisters in declaring that Christ is the center of our lives. Holy Week invites us to share with Christ the experience of betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, death and resurrection. In Holy Week we come face to face with Christ upon the Cross.

Since the early days of the Church, there has been a cycle of services celebrated during Holy Week and Pascha. We learn from the letters of *Egeria*, a Spanish nun made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 383 A.D. and experienced Holy Week and Pascha in the same services still being conducted today by the worldwide Orthodox Church.

Fr. George Tsahakis, Pastor of St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church in Peachtree City, GA, will celebrate all the traditional Orthodox services of Holy Week and Easter with the help of his parishioners, choir, and chantors. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to attend as their schedules permit. The journey begins with Lazarus Saturday, on April 11th. The Gospels clearly relate that six days before Christ's own death, He raised his friend Lazarus from the dead. On Palm Sunday, we celebrate His triumphal Entrance into Jerusalem, with a procession of palms. On Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday evenings of Holy Week (4/12-15), the *Nymphios*, or Bridegroom Vespers, have as their theme Christ the Divine Bridegroom, and His Second Coming. The solemn procession of the Icon of Christ-Bridegroom takes place around the church, as the Faithful, anticipating His sufferings, sing: "Thy sublime sufferings, on this day, shine upon the world as a light of salvation". The services tell us to watch for we do not know when Jesus Christ will come again.

On Holy Wednesday evening, the ceremony of the Sacrament of Holy Unction takes place. The themes of the service are repentance, confession and the remission of sins by the Lord, preparing the faithful to receive Holy Communion. Holy Unction is one of the

seven Sacraments of the Church, and it has its origin in the practice of the early Church as recorded in the Epistle of James (5:14-15). The Priest anoints the people with Holy Oil, as a sign of healing and remission of sins. The Vespertal Liturgy of Holy Thursday morning commemorates the Last Supper, breaking the solemnity of the week with the Eucharist. In the Service of the 12 Gospels on Holy Thursday evening, we hear the dramatic events of the final hours of our Christ's life, His betrayal and Crucifixion, from the Gospel accounts. We witness the procession with a wooden cross as representing Christ carrying His own cross along the Via Dolorosa, and we see before us the King of Glory crucified.

On Holy Friday afternoon, the body of Christ is removed from the wooden cross and that evening, the service begins with Lamentations, hymns of mourning, sung as we stand before the tomb of Christ (pictured above), the image of our dead Lord lies inside, His funeral bier decorated with flowers offered by the faithful present. There is a solemn procession of the wooden "tomb" led by the clergy outside the church accompanied by all the people present holding candles.

The Vespertal Liturgy of Holy Saturday morning celebrates "Christ descending into Hell" and breaking down its doors, His Victory over sin, death and hell. Christ, having been laid in the tomb began our vigil of the Resurrection. The tomb has now become a place of life, and the service is bright and joyful. The Priest passes through the congregation flinging bay leaves and chanting psalm verses as a symbol of Christ's victory over sin and death.

The Services of Great and Holy Pascha (Easter), the Joy of Joys, Holy Day of Holy Days, celebrating Christ's Resurrection begins with the Canon of the Crucifixion at 11:00 p.m., anticipating the Resurrection. It is followed by the Paschal Service and Divine Liturgy which continues on well into the early hours of Easter morning. At midnight, all the lights in the church are extinguished, and the Faithful wait expectantly in total darkness. The Priest then bears a lighted candle through the Royal Doors and all the Faithful light their candles from this flame. Then all is light and joy, with the great Paschal hymn – "Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs bestowing life!"

Early Sunday morning, the faithful return to church to hear the Resurrection Gospel of Christ proclaimed in as many languages as possible – proclaiming the universal message of salvation to the world. After this Vespers Service of Love (Agape) – a red-dyed egg is given to all the faithful as they depart, encouraging them to proclaim the victory of life over death through the miracle of Christ's death and resurrection for all.

For information on scheduled Holy Week and Easter Services, visit the parish's website at www.saintchristopherhoc.org.



Annual Palm Sunday Luncheon

Next Sunday, April 12, 2009
Immediately following Distribution of Palms – Join us!

On this the two hundred and sixty-fifth 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 is the 6th Sunday of Great & Holy Lent

Sunday, April 5 (Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt):

- 7:45 am Orthros Service
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy/Coffee Fellowship
- 10:45 am Religious Education Classes
- 11:30 am Hellenic Language Class
- 12:30 pm Introduction to Orthodoxy Class

Wednesday, April 8 (6th Wednesday of Great Lent):

- 6:00 p.m. Service of the 9th Hour & Presanctified Liturgy
- 7:15 p.m. Community Lenten Dinner (*please bring food*)
- 7:30 p.m. Lenten Family Program (*Walk in the Light*)

Friday, April 10:

- 12:00 p.m. Peachtree City Good Friday Ecumenical Service (*Peachtree City United Methodist Church – Fr. George will be participating.*)

Saturday, April 11:

- 7:45 am Orthros Service
- 9:00 am Divine Liturgy/Lenten Breakfast/Tying of Palm Crosses

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
- 7:00 pm Service of the Bridegroom Christ

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!