

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST! HE IS AND ALWAYS WILL BE!

Welcome! Lenten/ Holy Week 2007

You are invited to witness the events of the Passion of Our Lord and Savior during Holy Week Services at St. Athanasios Greek Orthodox Chapel Gulf Shores Ala. The Holy week services are taken directly from the Gospels. The religious services of Holy Week recall the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ and are conducted each morning and evening throughout Holy Week in Orthodox Christian Churches around the world.

On Palm Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, palms will be blessed and distributed to the faithful commemorating Christ's entrance into Jerusalem. On Holy Wednesday, the faithful are anointed with the Sacrament of Holy Unction, blessed oil, which cleanses, renews and strengthens spiritually and physically. 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. He suffered and died. On Good Friday, at Vespers, the Body of Christ is taken down from the Cross, wrapped in white linen and is prepared for burial. Also, on Good Friday, the Lamentations are sung before the Epitaphios which symbolizes the burial of Christ. On Holy Saturday morning a beautiful liturgy is served and we hear for the first time that Christ Our Savior rose up from the realm of the dead and returned from the darkness of the tomb.

The Resurrection Service begins with Matins at 11:30 p.m. At midnight, the Church is completely darkened and the faithful wait in joyous expectation for the priest to come forth carrying a white candle, chanting, "Come, and 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, are joined by the congregation, and moves 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. Please attend all the Services of Holy Week.

Father Frank Paul Mayernick

Flower donations: Please contribute to the Lenten and Easter Flowers fund.

Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian

O Lord and Master of my life!
Take from me the spirit of sloth,
faint-heartedness, lust or power, and idle talk.
But give rather the spirit of chastity,
humility, patience, and love to Thy servant.
Yea, Lord and King! Grant me to see my own errors
and not to judge my brother,
for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages.
Amen.

**Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
Forgiveness Sunday (February 18, 2007).**

Today's Gospel, at the start of our Lent, speaks to us divine words of hope and divine words of warning: Forgive those who trespass against you, forgive, because unless you do forgive you cannot be forgiven. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of mutual recognition, of mutual acceptance and of love, which is simultaneously the joy of communion, but also the readiness to carry one another's burdens.

Forgive — but how? Where does forgiveness begin? It would be so easy and so wonderful if forgiveness could begin by such a change of heart that those who are repellent, (reduce your exposure), to us should become dear, that things that have hurt us should be forgotten, that we could begin as if nothing had happened before.

But this is not what happens. We feel the pain of the past, we cannot forget, we cannot simply begin as though there had been nothing before. But this is not what forgiveness means. Forgiving is not forgetting, forgetting leads nowhere. When we forget how, for what reason, in what circumstances, because of what weakness, what frailty someone has done wrong, we leave him unprotected. Someone who has done wrong must be protected against another fall. What he has done, the reasons and circumstances of his fall should not be forgotten because he needs our thoughtful, loving care not to slip again, not to sin again.

And this is where forgiveness begins: forgiveness begins at the moment when, realizing the frailty of others as I realize mine, the need of others for help, for mercy and for protection, I am prepared together with them to bear the burden of their weakness, their frailty or their sinfulness. Forgiveness begins at the moment when I take upon myself to put up with others, without waiting for them to change, to put up with them as they are in order to make lighter their burden and to make it possible for them eventually to change.

But the condition of forgiveness is in me: my readiness to take up this cross, this burden, that others should be healed or at least protected against evil. And this everyone can do, it takes a moment of understanding and it takes an act of determination and of goodwill. Everyone of us, side by side with them, have people who are difficult to bear, who are a cause of suffering, of misery or of anger; we can undo this anger and outgrow this misery if we make our task, the task of our life, our business, to carry their burden together with them, to be the person who, wounded and offended, and rejected will turn to God and say, 'Lord, forgive, because I bear no grudge, I want to become and to remain solid with this person in his frailty and his sinfulness. I will not stand in judgment against him, and if I am not yet capable of doing this, you do it for me: do not endorse my judgment, do not endorse the condemnation I rashly have pronounced, do not stand by me in my anger. Stand by the person who has done wrong, because he, because she needs help, forgiveness and healing for that very reason.'

This is where forgiveness begins and unless it begins there, it will never develop into anything at all. Bear one another's burden, accept solidarity with those who have done and are doing wrong, love them into newness of life and then only will forgiveness become what it is to be: an act of intercession before God that heals, transforms. This beginning of forgiveness we all can make, it is within our power to take up this task. Let us then do what we can, and let us wait for God to do within us, for us, in our midst, more than we can out of goodwill to build gradually a kingdom of mutual love, a kingdom which is truly the Kingdom of God. Amen

***REMEMBER THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN
ASLEEP IN THE LORD WITH SPECIAL PRAYERS ON***

MEMORIAL SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24

Memorial Saturday morning Liturgy at 10:00 A.M. February 24 the Priest will pray for all those fallen asleep in the Lord. You are requested to list the first Christian name of each person whom you wish to pray for on the list below. Please give this to the Priest in time for the service on Friday Evening.



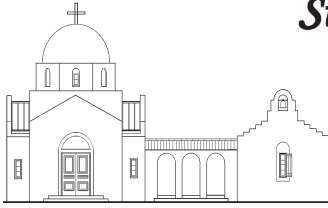
For the restful sleep in Our Lord of the servants of God,
asleep in the hope of Resurrection, and for their salvation,
we pray for...

Print Names

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Grant, O Lord, that they be forgiven for all sins, both voluntary and involuntary.
We pray that they be granted the joy shared in the Resurrection of Christ, our true God.
Amen

*Please return this to Chapel with the names of your deceased love ones and family,
and we will place them on the altar and pray for them throughout Lent.*



*St. Athanasios Greek Orthodox Chapel
Gulf Shores, Alabama*

SERVICES FOR
HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2007

As we approach the Holy Week Observance and the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord, it is proper that we give due consideration to our spiritual life and to matters of faith.

We must strive to become worthy of the Love and Sacrifice which the Son of God offered for all mankind. Let us seek forgiveness of one another and let us try always to live together in peace and harmony and in the dignity which God intended for all men throughout the world.

“This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.” John 15:12.

APRIL 1: PALM SUNDAY

Divine Liturgy	10:00 a.m.
Bridegroom Service Sunday Evening	6:30 p.m.

APRIL 2: HOLY AND GREAT MONDAY

Bridegroom Service	6:30 p.m.
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APRIL 3: HOLY AND GREAT TUESDAY

Bridegroom Service & Hymn of Kassiane	6:30 p.m.
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APRIL 4: HOLY AND GREAT WEDNESDAY

Holy Unction	6:00 p.m.
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APRIL 5: HOLY AND GREAT THURSDAY

Passion Service (The Twelve Gospels)	6:00 p.m.
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APRIL 6: HOLY AND GREAT FRIDAY

Apokathelosis (Removal from the Cross) & Lamentations (Procession of Epitaphion)	6:00 p.m.
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APRIL 7: HOLY AND GREAT SATURDAY

Holy Liturgy	10:00 a.m.
Orthros	11:30 p.m.
Easter Resurrection Liturgy (Midnight)	12:00 a.m.

Χριστος Ανεστη
Christ has risen

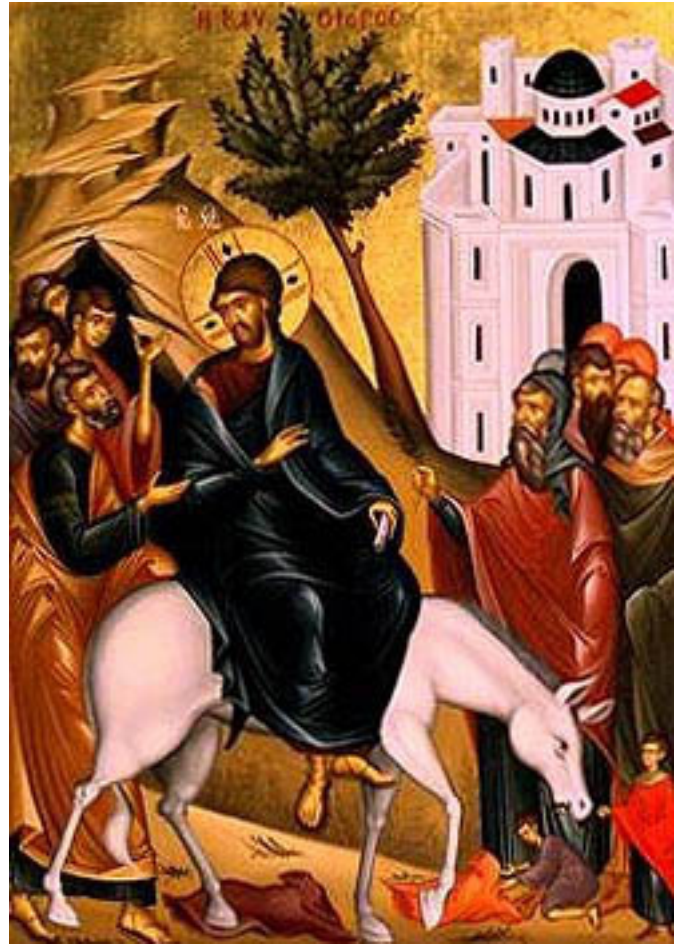
PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus entered the city riding a donkey. People meet Him with palm branches and cried "Hosanna! Blessed He who comes in the name of the Lord!" He came as the triumphant but humble Messiah prophesied by Zechariah. We receive a Palm Cross on this day to show that we too accept Jesus as King, and that we are willing to follow Him to the Cross. The Scripture readings are Phillipians 4:4-9 and John 12:1-18.

The Evening Nymphios/Bridegroom Service helps us understand Jesus's passage from death to life and how each of us can also become free from sin and death. During this evening service we chant the hymn of the Bridegroom which is carried in procession depicts Jesus bearing the marks of suffering, but at the same time preparing a marriage feast for us in God's Kingdom.

Commemoration is also made of the Blessed Joseph who was thrown into the pit and sold into slavery by his brothers, and who later became a powerful leader in Egypt. Jesus was also rejected, betrayed and crowned with glory in God's Kingdom.

Commemoration is also made of the Barren Fig Tree which Jesus cursed and withered because it bore no fruit reminding us that we cannot be Christians in name only, but must produce Christian fruit in order to gain entrance into the Kingdom of God. The Scripture reading is Matthew 21:18-23.



HOLY AND GREAT MONDAY

Holy Monday service urges us to be spiritually prepared to receive Jesus. The Parable of the ten virgins is read. The maidens who filled their lamps with oil were prepared to receive the bridegroom. Those with empty lamps were shut out of the marriage feast. Each one of us must light our lives with faith and good works and always be ready to receive Jesus. This is also the message of the beautiful hymn "Your Bridal Chamber I see adorned, O my Savior, but I have no wedding garment that I may enter. O Giver of Life, enlighten the vesture of my soul and save me." The scripture reading is Matthew 22:15-46; 23: 1-39.

HOLY AND GREAT TUESDAY

Holy Tuesday service ask us to repent our sins and to forgive others. During this service, we remember the sinful woman who anointed Jesus in anticipation of His death. Her repentance and love is the theme of the Hymn of Kassiane which is chanted. We too, may be forgiven if we confess our sins and obey God's will. The Scripture reading is John 12:17-50.

HOLY AND GREAT WEDNESDAY

Holy Unction is one of the seven sacraments of our Orthodox Christian Church . In that it is a Sacrament, only those faithful who are Baptized and Confirmed in the Holy Orthodox Church may come forth to be anointed. Holy Unction has its origin in the practice of the early Church as recorded in the epistle of St James:

“IS ANY SICK AMONG YOU? LET HIM CALL THE PRESBYTERS OF THE CHURCH; AND LET THEM PRAY OVER HIM, ANOINT HIM WITH OIL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK, AND THE LORD SHALL RAISE HIM UP; AND IF HE HAS COMMITTED SINS, THEY SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM.”

HOLY AND GREAT THURSDAY

On Holy Thursday evening the service of the Holy Passion of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, is celebrated and the “twelve Gospels” are read. This service is highlighted by the procession of the Crucifix which occurs after the fifth gospel read. During the procession the priest narrates the crucifixion with the following words:

TODAY IS HUNG UPON THE TREE, HE WHO SUSPENDED THE LAND IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS (THRICE). A CROWN OF THORNS CROWNS HIM, WHO IS THE KING OF ANGLES. HE IS WRAPPED ABOUT WITH THE PURPLE OF MOCKERY, WHO WRAPPED THE HEAVENS WITH CLOUDS. HE RECEIVED BUFFETINGS, WHO FREED ADAM IN THE JORDAN. HE WAS TRANSFIXED WITH NAILS, WHO IS THE SON OF THE VIRGIN. WE WORSHIP THY PASSION, O CHRIST. (THRICE) SHOW ALSO UNTO US THY GLORIOUS RESSURRECTION.



This service is concluded by having the entire congregation file silently by the Cross, bow reverently and kiss the feet of the Crucified Lord.

HOLY AND GREAT FRIDAY

At the Apokathelosis service, the priest removes Jesus' body from the Cross, wraps it in a white cloth and places it on the altar, as a sign of His burial by Joseph of Arimathea. The cloth Icon depicting Jesus' sacred body, called the Epitaphio is carried in procession and placed in the flowered covered Kouvouklion that represents Jesus' tomb.

In the evening, the beautiful hymns of the Lamentations are chanted. With both sorrow and joy we sing the Lamentations to Him who is symbolically buried, yet who we already know is the risen Lord and Giver of Life. During the service, the Epitaphio is taken around the Church as the faithful follow holding a lighted candle symbolizing their commitment to Jesus who is the light of the world.



When re-entering the Church, we walk under the Epitaphio to symbolize that we pass through death into life in Jesus. At the conclusion of the service everyone is given a flower which is taken home and placed by their icons.

HOLY AND GREAT SATURDAY

Holy Saturday is a day of strict fasting, but a day of hope and waiting. We know that because Jesus died, death is no longer the end of life. Christ descended into hell that death itself might be destroyed.

Anticipating Jesus' victory over the power of death, we sing at the morning Divine Liturgy: "Arise, O God, judge the earth. For to You belong all the nations." Since the liturgy anticipates the resurrection, bright vestments are worn.

Shortly before midnight the church will be darkened and the faithful will receive the resurrection light from the Priest and form a procession and proceed outside the front of the chapel. The faithful will then hear the good news of Jesus' triumph from the Gospel reading and then chant the joyous Pascha Resurrection hymn, "Christ is risen". The faithful Orthodox Christians then re-enter the Chapel for the Easter Divine Liturgy.

The Easter Divine Liturgy takes place with everyone prepared to receive Holy Communion. The magnificent sermon of St. John Chrysostom is read. At the conclusion of the service, the red eggs are distributed to everyone.

THE DESCENT OF CHRIST INTO HADES

CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND BY HIS DEATH HE HAS TRAMPLED UPON DEATH AND TO THOSE IN THE TOMBS BESTOWS LIFE!

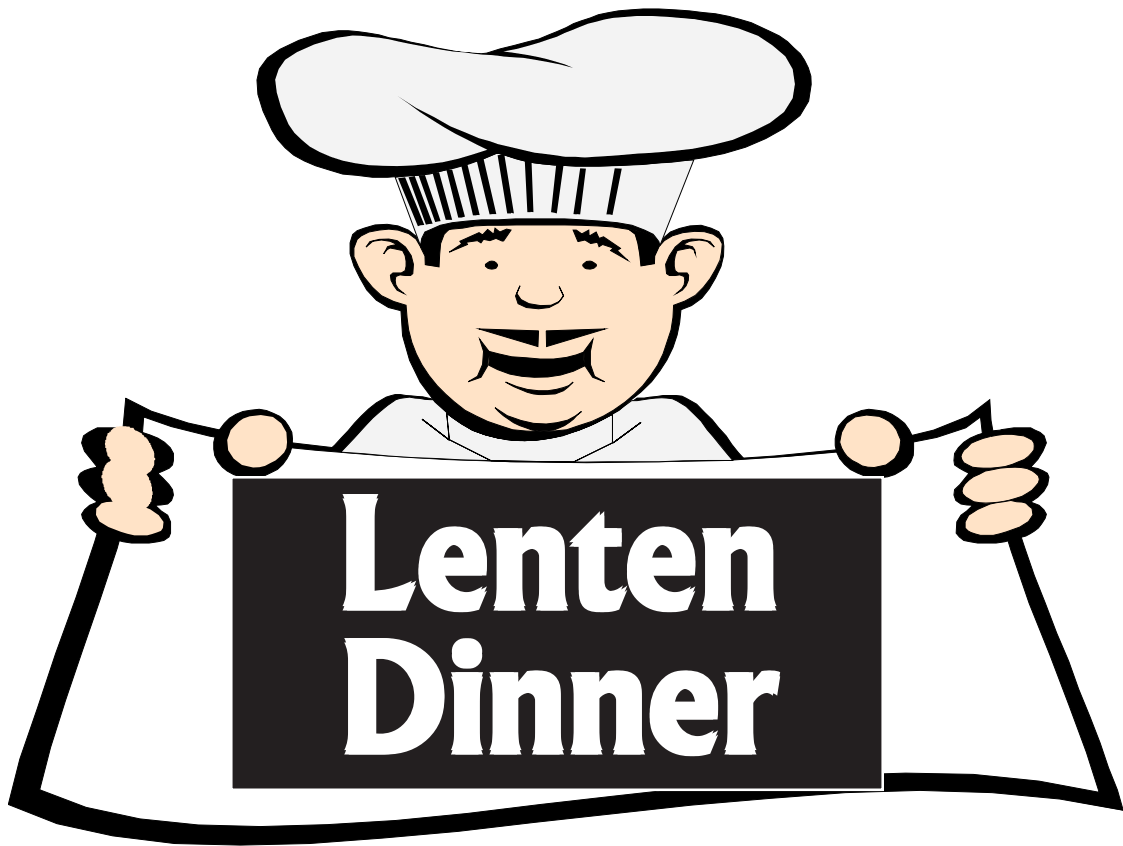


All Orthodox Christians know and chant with enthusiasm the triumphant hymn of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The icon of Christ's descent into Hades is the visual expression of this most beautiful hymn. Christ is seen as the Life-giver as He tramples on the gates of Hades, taking Adam and Eve by the hands, raising them to life.

Through our Lord's entrance into Hades, death and sin have been vanquished. The radiant halo that surrounds Him depicts the radiant energy of His glorious Resurrection. He fills the darkness of Hades with the brilliance of His light. Standing upon the broken gates of the kingdom of Death, He demonstrates His victory over sin and Death by His own Crucifixion and Resurrection.

This event reveals the promise to each of us, that we too will be raised to enjoy the Divine Life in the Heavenly Kingdom. In liberating our first parents, Christ also frees those who put their faith in His coming. This truth is seen in the presence of Kings, David and Solomon, vested in royal robes and crowns. They stand together with John the Baptist at Christ's right. Moses and the Prophets of the Old Testament stand at His left and with them, all of humanity is raised.

On the night of Pascha, the church is calm and dark. The priest comes out from the Holy Altar inviting the faithful to "...receive the light from the unwaning Light; and glorify Christ, who is risen from the dead." We "enter into the joy of the Lord" and announce to the world: "*It is the Day of Resurrection: Let us be glorious in splendor for the Festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us speak also, O brethren, to those that hate us, and in the Resurrection, let us forgive all things, and so let us cry: CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND BY HIS DEATH HE HAS TRAMPLED UPON DEATH AND TO THOSE IN THE TOMBS HE BESTOWS LIFE!*"



**Please join us for
Salutation Services to the Virgin Mary**

**Friday, February 23
and
Friday, March 23**

6:30 p.m.

**Lenten Dinner and Fellowship
will follow the service!**

Bring your favorite Lenten dish to share!