



Journey Through the Holy Week

Let's take a journey through the Holy Week (the Pascha Week or the Passion Week) of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to understand our journey better we need to keep in mind the following points:

1) A day is calculated from sunset to sunset. For example, the Pascha day for Monday would begin Sunday evening and end Monday at sunset. Tuesday would begin Monday evening and end Tuesday, and so on.

2) We do not pray over the dead from Sunday evening until Resurrection Sunday because the Church focuses only on the Lord Jesus Christ and His sufferings for us. In other words if a person dies during the holy Pascha week, we do not pray over him. Instead there is a 'General Funeral' prayed after Palm Sunday for everyone, in case any of us should pass away during that week.

3) We pray the Eucharist Liturgy only once during this week, on Covenant Thursday, because it was on that day that our Lord Jesus Christ instituted this great Mystery. The Liturgy for this day is very different than all other days and it is the shortest Liturgy of the year. The Church takes into account that on that day our Lord Jesus Christ had not yet died on the Cross nor given us redemption so we don't say a lot of the Liturgy prayers we normally say (see the Holy Pascha book for details).

4) For the morning Pascha prayers, we fast by not eating or drinking anything. When the priest prays the morning



litanies we are to worship with our heads touching the ground and say “Lord have mercy” after each litany. Worshiping to the ground is called a ‘matania’ or prostrating yourself in front of God. During the night-time litanies we do not do a ‘matania’ when we say “Lord have mercy” because we have already eaten for the day.

5) All the prayers starting on Palm Sunday after the Divine Liturgy are prayed outside of the altar, in the second section of the church. This represents the passions of our Lord Jesus Christ, which took place “outside of the camp” (Heb 13:13). The **only** exceptions are:

- *The First Hour of Covenant Thursday*
- *The Liturgy of the Blessing of the Water & the Divine Liturgy of The Eucharist on Covenant Thursday*
- *The Twelfth Hour of Good Friday.*

6) Each day in the Pascha week, starting on Tuesday, we read one of the four Gospels and two other books. They are as follows:

Tuesday we read: *The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew*

Wednesday we read: *The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark*

Thursday we read: *The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke*

Friday we read: *The Holy Book of Psalms*

Saturday we read: *Revelation (during Bright Saturday)*

Eve of Resurrection Sunday: *The Holy Gospel according to St. John*

The reader **must be** fasting when reading the Holy Bible.

7) From the Eve of Wednesday (Tuesday evening) until the feast of the Resurrection Liturgy the clergy and the congregation **do not** greet one another with a holy kiss, or kiss the Holy Gospel or the icons as a reminder of Judas’ betrayal of our Lord Jesus Christ with a kiss.



Let's begin our journey...



End of the Great Fast.

- + Mystery of the Unction of the Sick
7 Candles are lit and 7 Gospel passages are read.
Abouna anoints the congregation with the oil.
- + Eucharist Liturgy
Read the Holy Book of Tobit



Lazarus Saturday.

- + Our Lord Jesus Christ raises Lazarus from the dead.
- + Eucharist Liturgy
Read Holy Gospel of St. John (11:1-45)
+ Hymns are sung between yearly tune and funeral tune.





Entry of the Lord Jesus Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)



+ Our Lord Jesus Christ enters Jerusalem in triumph. The people cut down branches and lay their clothes before Him. He rides into Jerusalem on a colt, a donkey's baby.

- + Everyone, even the little children sing "Hosanna in the highest".
- + Hosanna means 'save us'.
- + Procession is done around the church. We stand in front of the icons and read about the saint. There are 12 Holy Gospels read one in front of each of the 12 icons in the procession. – This is done during the Matins prayer hour
- + All 4 Holy Gospels about our Lord Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem are read.
- + General Funeral is prayed after the Eucharist Liturgy.
- + The Ninth and Eleventh hours are said in the Pascha tone after the General Funeral.

It is during these hours Our Lord Jesus Christ went into the temple and found the people buying and selling and He was very upset. He said to them, "*It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer.' But you have made it into a den of thieves*" (Mt 21:13).

Then He turned over the tables and kicked them out of the temple.



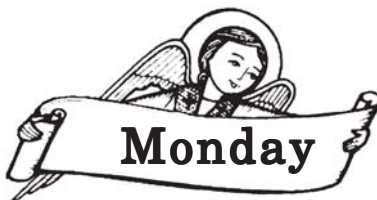
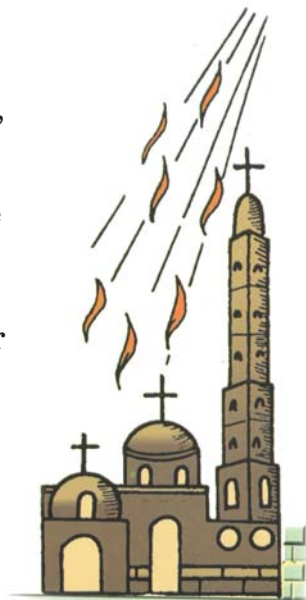


Sunday Night (Eve of Monday)

+ Our Lord Jesus Christ asked, 'Who do you think I am?'

St. Peter answered correctly becoming known as the Rock.

Our Church is built on this Rock, the belief that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God



On Monday, our Lord Jesus Christ was hungry and found a fig tree. He went to pick a fig from the tree but did not find any. He condemned it and said, 'Let no fruit come from you ever again.'

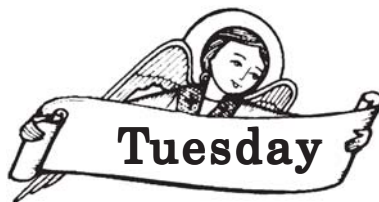
This became a symbol of the Jews who appear to have fruit but are empty inside. They are condemned and will not go to heaven.





Monday Night (Eve of Tuesday)

- + Our Lord teaches us to be ready and prepared for the time when we will meet Him for judgement.
- + He tells us to be clean from inside first and also from the outside.
- + Our Lord Jesus Christ chastises the Pharisees and the Lawyers saying, 'You hypocrites...you have taken away the key of knowledge, not entering and hindering those who will enter.'



- + On Tuesday, our Lord Jesus Christ was speaking in the temple and teaching the people to be watchful and ready for His Second Coming.
- + The Church reads the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.
- + Our Lord Jesus Christ is upset with the people of Jerusalem and says, '*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets and stone those which are sent to you. How often I wanted to gather you but you would not. Behold your house will be left to you destroyed.*'

+ Our Lord Jesus Christ also said that the Temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed. He said that not one stone will be left on top of another. The magnificent Temple was destroyed by the Romans 40 years after our Lord Jesus Christ's ascension.





Tuesday Night (Eve of Wednesday)

- + The clergy and congregation do not greet one another with a kiss.
- + The Lord Jesus Christ is telling us to be awake and to wait on Him.
 - The Parable of the Good Servant
 - The Parable of the Ten Virgins



The chief priests wanted to kill our Lord Jesus Christ because they were jealous that the people were leaving them and following our Lord Jesus. The chief priests agreed to give Judas Iscariot, one of the 12 disciples, 30 pieces of silver if he would deliver his Lord Jesus Christ to them.

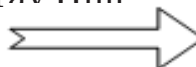
The Holy Bible said that ‘Satan entered Judas’ heart’ because Judas loved money even more than he loved our Lord Jesus Christ.

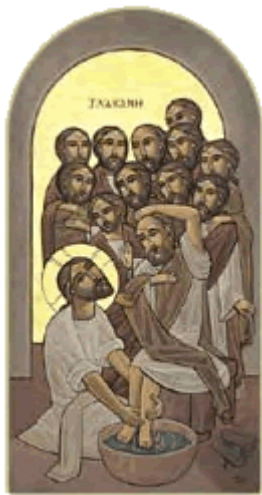
- + The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark is read.
- + Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus bought an expensive ointment and broke the bottle and poured it on our Lord’s feet. Our Lord Jesus Christ said that this was done for His burial.





- + The Holy Gospel of St. Luke is read.
- + The First Hour of Covenant Thursday we pray and condemn Judas Iscariot.
- + The Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours of Covenant Thursday we see St. Peter and the disciples preparing for the Passover supper in the upper room.
- + After the Ninth Hour we pray the daytime litanies and we begin the Liturgy of the Blessing of the Water.
 - This special liturgy is prayed only on The Day of Covenant Thursday. The priest prays over the water.
 - After the liturgy he washes the men's feet with the water, symbolizing how our Lord Jesus Christ washed the feet of His disciples. Then he anoints the head, neck and hands of the women.
 - Sometimes, people bring in water that they place underneath or next to the basin filled with water that is prayed on knowing that the Holy Spirit blesses all the water through the prayers of Abouna. The people then take that water home and drink from it throughout the year for a blessing.
- + The Divine Liturgy of the Eucharist is then prayed. This is the shortest divine liturgy of the year.
- + The Eleventh Hour is then prayed. Our Lord Jesus Christ lets His disciples know that one of them will betray Him





Our Lord Jesus Christ washes the feet of His disciples.



Our Lord Jesus Christ celebrates the very first Eucharist (Mystery of Communion) with His disciples

+ Our Lord Jesus Christ tells St. Peter that he will deny Him three times before the cock crows (before the night is over)

+ Our Lord goes to a place called Gethsemane.



+ Judas Iscariot delivers our Lord Jesus Christ.

+ Judas brings with him the chief priests soldiers to arrest our Lord Jesus.

+ Judas betrays our Lord Jesus Christ with a kiss.



Friday



Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, sits in judgement of our Lord Jesus Christ.



The Roman Soldiers whip our Lord Jesus Christ.



Our Lord Jesus Christ carries His Cross to Golgotha



The Roman soldiers nail our Lord Jesus Christ to the Cross. Then they cast lots to see who will win His robe.





If you look at the icon carefully you will notice the following:

+ There are four women and one man. The four women include the holy Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. The man is St. John the Beloved.

+ Underneath the cross is a skull that symbolizes death. By the Cross of our Lord Jesus, death is destroyed.

+ There are two guards. One is carrying a spear which pierced our Lord Jesus Christ's side and the other is holding a sponge which was filled with vinegar and given to our Savior when He was thirsty.

+ There are the two thieves that were crucified with Him.

+ There is a gate because our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified outside of the city gate.

+ There are dark clouds because the sky turned dark and the earth quaked and the curtain in the temple was torn in two.

+ The angels were there as witnesses

Friday Night to Saturday Morning

+ The Church wishes to stay awake as long as the Lord Jesus Christ is inside the earth (buried in a cave). Throughout the night the Church stays awake in prayer and praises.

+ The Church reads the Holy Book of Revelation.

+ Several prayers are read from scripture.

+ Susanna's Story is read.

+ Matins is prayed followed by the Divine Liturgy.

+ The day ends with the Divine Liturgy.





Resurrection Sunday

- + This is the most important and venerated Divine Liturgy of the entire year. The Church is exceedingly happy with the news that our Lord Jesus Christ is alive. It is important to come as early as possible to celebrate the Lord's resurrection.
- + The Divine Liturgy is prayed in the joyous tune.
- + Whether a priest or a bishop is serving the holy Resurrection Divine Liturgy they come out in the most elaborate (the very best) 'tonias' they have. They have special clothes that they wear during the Divine Liturgy of Resurrection Sunday.
- + The Resurrection Day enactment of our Lord Jesus Christ's entry into heaven to go before the Father.
 - The lights of the Church are turned off.
 - The priest is inside the Altar representing the angels in heaven
 - A Deacon is outside the Altar representing the angels of earth.
- + The Procession
After the enactment, the deacons, priests and bishops start the procession. They go around the Altar three times and then go around the church three times. This means that the good news of the Resurrection is for all people.
- + The Divine Liturgy of St. Gregory is often prayed instead of the Liturgy of St. Basil that is usually prayed on Sundays





Our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead on Resurrection Sunday.

The icon shows:

- + The three women who went to the tomb carrying the spices
- + The two angels who brought the good news to the women that our Lord Jesus Christ is risen.
- + The guards who were scared when the earth trembled on Sunday morning.

With the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ we no longer have to worry about death.

Ekristos Anesti. Alethos Anesti.

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Christ is Risen. Truly He is Risen.