

Holy Week and Pascha: Home Resource Guide

- with gratitude, modified off the labor of Presvytera Jennifer Moore to match our parish practice -



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, God is with us!

He is with us in sickness and health, in poor and plenty, in our temple and in our homes... in time of epidemic! He shall be with us during Holy Week as we follow the events of that week in our homes.

How can we keep ourselves and our children attentive to this most holy time of our Church year? How can we continue to celebrate the week in our homes? Here are some ideas and resources for you.

For the Whole Week-

- Follow along with the services and readings for each day (listed by date):
<https://www.oca.org/liturgics/service-texts>
- Research the icons surrounding the events of Holy Week

Lazarus Saturday – Saturday, April 11th

- Learn the Troparion of the Day (Tone 1):

*By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,
Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.
Like the children with the palms of victory,
we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death:
“Hosanna in the highest!!!
Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord.”*

[Here is a video to help learn the music](#)

- Place an icon of Lazarus Saturday in your icon corner that day. If you do not have one, print one! You can surely find one for children to make as well. Adorn your icon corner with flowers, leaves, vines...

[Ancient Faith](#) has a [podcast](#) of Lazarus Saturday aimed at younger children

[Orthodox Pebbbles](#) offers a craft idea, an explanation of the icon, discussion points, and even more resources.

Make [“Lazarus Bread”](#)

- Go on a hike to find “symbols of victory”. Lazarus Saturday palms are folded to form crosses in the Greek Orthodox tradition, Slavic traditions use pussy willows. These are special and beautiful traditions that have adapted to cultural climate and fauna. Go on a walk to find a suitable symbols: a fern leaf, pussy willows, wildflowers, tree branch, etc.

Palm Sunday - Sunday, April 12th

- Bring out or print an icon of the feast day.
- The Tropar for today is the same as yesterday.
- During morning prayers this morning, wave your “symbols of faith” you collected yesterday when you hear “Hosanna in the Highest!” or “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” in the Gospel Reading!

[A video on the feast of Palm Sunday](#)

Bridegroom Matins - Sunday evening, April 12th

- Print a “Bridegroom” icon, also known as “Extreme Humility”
- Bridegroom Matins services begin with the special [Troparion](#):

*Behold, the Bridegroom comes at midnight,
and blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching;
and again, unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless.
Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep,
lest thou be given up to death,
and lest thou be shut out of the Kingdom!
But rouse thyself, crying: “Holy, holy, holy, art Thou, O our God!”//
Through the Theotokos have mercy on us!*

Holy Monday- Monday, April 13th

- Read the Parable of the Ten Virgins where we get the imagery of Christ as “Bridegroom”.

[A short audio book for kids](#)

- Learn the [hymn](#):

*Thy bridal chamber I see adorned, O my Savior,
and I have no wedding garment that I may enter.
O Giver of Light,
enlighten the vesture of my soul, and save me!*

Holy Tuesday- Tuesday, April 14th

- The Bridegroom service focuses on the woman who anointed Christ’s feet with oil. Find and read this passage in the Gospels.

- The Hymn of Kassiani:
Tone 8 **(The Hymn of Cassia)**

*The woman had fallen into many sins, O Lord,
yet, when she perceived Thy divinity,
she joined the ranks of the myrrh-bearing women.
In tears she brought Thee myrrh before Thy burial.
She cried: “Woe is me!
For I live in the night of licentiousness,
shrouded in the dark and moonless love of sin.
But accept the fountain of my tears,
Thou Who didst gather the waters of the sea into clouds!
Bow down Thine ear to the sighing of my heart,
O Thou, Who didst bow the heavens in Thine ineffable
condescension!
Once Eve heard Thy footsteps in Paradise in the cool of the day,
and in fear she ran and hid herself.
But now I will tenderly embrace those pure feet
and wipe them with the hair of my head.
Who can measure the multitude of my sins,
or the depth of Thy judgments, O Savior of my soul?//
Do not despise Thy servant in Thine immeasurable mercy!”*

- Today is a good day to start planning your Pascha basket! We won't be able to bring our baskets to church this year for a blessing, but we can still prepare it for Pascha. Your basket can be traditional or simply full of the things you've missed during the fast. If you've never done one, this is a great year to start.

[Here is a graphic on a “traditional” Pascha basket.](#)

Holy Wednesday- Wednesday, April 15th

- Today is a traditional day for Holy Unction even though it is not specifically a Holy Week service. If you have holy oil or even holy water, anoint each other, making the sign of the cross on each person's forehead.
- Tonight is the final Bridegroom service. Sing the hymns you have learned during the service.

Holy Thursday- Thursday, April 16th

- Bring out or print an icon of the Last Supper. Holy Thursday begins with a vesperal liturgy which celebrates the institution of the Eucharist.
- To celebrate the institution of the Eucharist, make prosphora as a family. You can find several Prosphora recipes and instructional videos on-line.
- Holy Thursday is a perfect day to dye eggs and make your preparations for Pascha!
- Research the “Miracle of the Red egg”.
- Thursday Night Matins includes the Twelve Gospel readings. Look up and read those 12 passages together as a family.

- After the Fifth Gospel Reading, the priest places the icon of Christ on the Cross, and the choir sings:

Today, He who suspended the earth in the waters is suspended on a cross. The King of the Angels wears a crown of thorns. He who wraps the sky in clouds is wrapped in a fake purple robe. He who freed Adam in the Jordan accepts to be slapped. The Bridegroom of the Church is fixed with nails to the cross. The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear. We worship Your Passion, O Christ. We worship Your Passion, O Christ. We worship Your Passion, O Christ. Show us also Your Glorious Resurrection.

Holy Friday- Friday, April 17th

- Today is a “strict fast”. Let us fast from not only what goes into our mouths, but from technology, news, television, etc. and have “quiet time” for reflection on our Lord.
- The tomb of Christ is decorated this day.
 - [For little ones, consider making a “Tomb of Christ”.](#)
- The final service today is the [Lamentations Service](#). The women come to the tomb bearing spices, singing unto Christ our Lord.
- Matins ends with a procession around the Temple singing “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us”. Process your around your home singing unto God! At the end of the procession we read of the dry bones that come to life (Ezekiel 37), foreshadowing the Universal Resurrection.

Holy Saturday- Saturday, April 18th

- The icon for today is the [“Harrowing of Hades”](#).
- Vespereal Liturgy of today commemorates Christ’s descent into Hades and breaking the bonds of the captives, as depicted in the icon. The colors change from purple to white at this serve as it inaugurates us into our Paschal joy.

- Read a few of the [Old Testament Readings](#) prescribed, as a family: Jonah and the Whale, The Three Holy Youths in the Furnace...
- Sing [“Arise O God Judge the Earth! Praise the Lord Sing and Exult Him throughout All the Ages!”](#) and change any colors in your icon corner to white!
- Baptisms traditionally follow this service. Reflect on the meaning of Baptism. If you have pictures of your baptism, show them to your children!
- Learn “Christ is Risen” in a many languages as you can find!

Pascha! - Sunday, April 19th

- At midnight, or in the morning, have all the lights in your house off but the candle in your icon corner. Light a “Paschal Candle”, then light all other candles from that one. Sing [“Thy Resurrection O Christ our Savior...”](#) Go outside and (if you have hand bells, use them!) and then come back inside and turn all the lights on and sing Christ is Risen, [Let God Arise \(text\)](#) [The Angel Cried!](#) Sing aloud “Christ is Risen!” Read the [Pascha Gospel](#).
- Full text of [Paschal Services](#)
- Listen to a live-stream of the service.
- Enjoy a Paschal meal together!
- Call your loved ones, FaceTime, or Zoom chat with them and greet them. in the Risen Christ!

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!