

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter the final weeks of Great Lent, we have already to anticipate the celebration of Holy Week and Pascha. Unfortunately, sometime we speed ahead to the end of the season, focusing on the preparations for our celebration of Pascha and all the details of food, clothing, and travel that it might involve without taking the time to fully realize and experience the days of the week we call “Great and Holy.”

The message that is proclaimed in the services of Holy Week is not only that Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for us, but also that He also from the dead for us. In the liturgical services of Holy Week we remember the past, what the Lord has done for us. But we also celebrate it in the present, what it means for us here and now, and how it defines our lives. We also profess our belief that one day, sometime in the future, in a time known only by God, we will experience the resurrection definitively in the life of the world to come.

When we gather for the liturgical services of Holy Week we will remember that even on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the mystery of Christ’s Passion and Death is already enveloped by the glorious mystery of His Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven. It means that just as in Christ’s life, neither suffering of any kind nor death has the last word in our life. The message of Holy Week, therefore, is that Christ will rise again, in your life, in my life, in fact Jesus is risen and we will rise to life with Him.

The message of Holy Week and Pascha provides us with the opportunity to express our faith in Christ in a very direct and personal way. And so we respond with Christ’s Paschal Mystery by saying, “I believe I shall rise again ... from my mistakes, from my sinfulness, from my failures, from my tomb—and this will happen because of Christ’s death and resurrection.” As we approach the awe-inspiring days of Holy Week, I invite you to enter into its spirit reverently, prayerfully, reflectively, remembering that that our life is not all work, and making only a living ... but it is made up also of life in the spirit ... remembering that whatever we do must be focused on God, the God who reveals himself as suffering and dying in Jesus Christ on the Cross ... and also as suffering with the many sufferers of the world.

Please join in participating in the worship and ceremonies that will be held in our Parish: Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, the Bridegroom Matins , the Liturgy of the Lord’s Supper, the proclamation of the Twelve Gospels, the Burial Vespers on Good Friday and the Lamentations on Holy Friday evening, the Liturgy of Holy Saturday morning, the Paschal Matins and Divine Liturgy and, finally the Vespers of Pascha on Sunday afternoon. This is the most Holy Week of the entire year, because we remember how dearly God has loved us, by dying and rising for us.

I look forward to celebrating with you the Lord’s Victory over sin and death – the Victory He has won for us.

With love in the Lord,

Father David