



HOLY WEEK & PASCHA FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH

Designed for use during the COVID-19 pandemic
by the nuns of Christ the Bridegroom Monastery

“Remind the faithful of the value of personal and family prayer, which is authentic ecclesial prayer and an important means of transmitting the content of the faith between generations. Also arrange, and distribute through the means of social communication, aids that allow an adult of the family to explain to the little ones the mystagogy of the rites that under normal conditions would be celebrated in the church with the assembly present. The riches of the Paschal celebrations, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, can also be valorised by suggesting that part of them be prayed at home and in families, with the aids to participation that are usually made available in each community every year.”

—Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation of the Eastern Churches, March 25, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Holy Week and Pascha (Easter) without being able to go to church??? Nuns to the rescue. Our monastery is just a little family, not so unlike yours, living the life of the Church in an intense way. We are here to help give you ideas and resources for Holy Week and Pascha for your domestic church (the church of your home), because the Resurrection isn't cancelled! We need to remember now more than ever the hope we have in Christ's destruction of death and His gift of eternal life. This current crisis is an opportunity to revive our domestic churches and begin to pray (or pray more) as a family/couple and individually. And, when we pray, we must remember that the whole Body of Christ—the Church, is with us. Here is [a video message from our bishop](#), Bishop Milan, to encourage you.

When you can finally go back to church and celebrate the Holy Mysteries (the Sacraments) again and pray the Divine Services with your whole church family, don't stop praying at home! We will give you some ideas for continuing your family and individual prayer.

This document is designed by Ruthenian Byzantine Catholic nuns, and the links and instructions represent the traditions and music of the Ruthenian Church. However, it can be easily adapted for other Byzantine Traditions. If you know the music of your particular Church, you can substitute it for ours, or, you can simply chant or recite the prayers.

DEFINITIONS

LEADER: Preferably, the leader is the father of the family, who represents Christ. If this is not possible, the leader can be the oldest son, if he is old enough, or the mother, or someone else.

TYPIKA: A service that can be prayed in place of the Divine Liturgy when it is not possible to attend.

PROPER: The specific texts for a service that correspond to a particular day of the liturgical year; they are “proper” to that day.

VESPERS: Evening Prayer; the first service of a liturgical day, since the liturgical day begins in the evening of the previous calendar day (for example, Vespers for the weekly celebration of the Resurrection is on *Saturday evening*). This changes slightly during the Great Fast (Lent) and Holy Week, but don't worry about it—we'll let you know what to do!

COMPLINE: Night Prayer

MATINS: Morning Prayer

SOME TIPS BEFORE WE BEGIN

Liturgical booklets

Some of the service booklets, such as *Typika* and *Vespers*, need only to be printed once and reused, if you choose to print them. We will include the link each time they are needed, but keep this in mind.



How do we pray a liturgical service without a priest?

- Instead of “Blessed is our God...” at the beginning of a service, and the prayer of blessing at the end of a service, the leader prays, “Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us,” and the others respond, “Amen.”
- Skip the prayers of the priest and deacon, including the litanies. But at the end, feel free to pray in your own words for those who have died, those who are sick or dying, your family and friends, and anyone else.
- Feel free to abbreviate as you wish. One option, particularly for Holy Week, is to pray only the propers of the service which contain the theology for that particular day. It is better to pray a smaller amount with attention than rushing through to try to finish all the prayers. We also don't want you to be overwhelmed or get discouraged!

How do we sing the services?

- The opening prayers and the psalms can be chanted antiphonally, meaning, back and forth between two groups of people. The two groups can be the leader and the rest of the family, or two halves of the family, divided between men and women, or some other way. The chanting melody is very simple; you have probably heard it before, and it goes like this:



[RECORDING](#)

- Others portions of the services have hymns written out with music notes. If there is someone in your family who knows how to read music, that person can be the cantor and lead the singing. Some melodies are more difficult than others. The most important thing is to pray, so if the music is too hard and gets in the way, simply straight chant or recite it (see below).

What if we can't read music?

That's ok, you can straight chant the hymns you don't already know by heart. To straight chant, just sing the hymn on one continuous note and end it in the same way as the Psalm tone above.

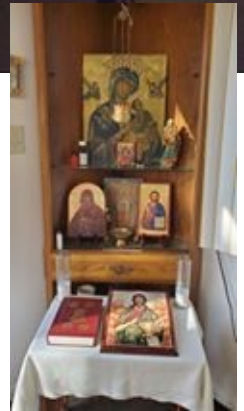
What if we can't sing at all or don't want to sing?

That's ok too...you can just recite all the prayers! But remember that God isn't bothered by your bad singing! Singing helps to elevate our prayers beyond our daily conversations that are made in a normal speaking voice. Singing has always been an important element of liturgical prayer, even in the Jewish tradition, before Christ. So don't be afraid to stretch yourselves a little bit beyond your comfort zone!

Where do we pray?

Do you have an icon corner set up somewhere in your home? If not, now is a perfect time to make one! Here are some tips:

- It doesn't have to literally be a corner of a room.
- On a table or shelf, set up at least one icon, preferably of Christ. If you don't have an icon, you can order one online (search "Purchase Byzantine Icon"). If you are unable to order one, here is [one you can print](#).
- Place a candle in front of the icon and light it when you pray.
- Other items to include: a Bible, a Cross, and optionally, other icons or holy objects that help you to pray.



How do we make a procession?

The leader, or one of the children (to give them a fun and important job to do), leads the procession, and the others follow behind. If you can, based on your living situation and the weather, process around the outside of your house, once or three times. If this is not possible, process inside of your house. During your procession, sing, if possible, the text provided on that day for the procession. We will indicate which processions should be made while holding candles. Any kind of candles you have around your house are fine!

The text in red

This first part of this text gives some information about each day. It is taken from the book "Year of Grace of Our Lord," by "A Monk of the Eastern Church." It can be read by the leader, or someone else, at the beginning of your time of prayer. The second part of this text is a help for parents in explaining the concept to young children.

What about watching a Liturgy online?

Your pastor may be live streaming Liturgies. Also, [LiveLiturgy.com](#) is a website where you can find live Liturgies at many different parishes and monasteries. Our monastery is live streaming [some services](#) through [Facebook Live](#). (You do not need a Facebook account to watch.) Watching a live Liturgy is a good addition to your family prayer, especially for keeping a connection with your parish and hearing homilies from your pastor (or another priest). But, we believe that the most important thing you can do as a family during Holy Week and Pascha is to actually pray together, rather than simply watching a video. When you do watch a video, try to *pray along* as best you can, in union with everyone else who is watching and praying.

PALM SUNDAY

“From the first day of Holy Week, we must ‘receive’ Jesus Christ, and accept that his will is sovereign over us. The meaning of Palm Sunday lies in this welcome given to the Christ who comes to us...The crowd which acclaimed Jesus carried palms and branches...probably olive branches...The palm stands for victory and the olive for peace and anointing. So let us go before Jesus and pay homage both to his power and to his tenderness, in offering our victories (which are in fact his victories) both over ourselves and over sin, and our inner peace (which is his peace)...The crowd shouted: ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord’. If I can say these words with complete sincerity and submission, if they mean that the impulse of my whole being goes towards the King whom, from henceforth, I acknowledge, then, in that instant, I have turned away from my sins and have received Jesus Christ. May He be welcomed and blessed, He who comes to me.”

Parents: Let your children know that this day is about acknowledging Jesus as King. Remind them that, according to St. Matthew, it was the children who cried, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” Encourage them to think about how they can be our example of welcoming Jesus, with the contagious excitement that children have. As you hand out your branches to them, remind them they are singing to Jesus as their King.

BASIC:

- Make a Palm Sunday procession: In your yard, do you have pussywillows or other branches that are beginning to flower or sprout leaves? Or, do you have evergreen branches? If it's possible to cut branches without damaging your tree, cut one branch for each member of the family. Make a procession, singing the opening hymn provided in the Propers for Typika, or the Palm Sunday Troparion, provided in the same document.
- At the conclusion of your procession, pray Typika while still holding your branches, including the readings for the day. On p. 14, before beginning Psalm 33, pray the Act of Spiritual Communion, then pray silently for a moment. Then conclude Typika. Or, instead of Typika, pray along with a live liturgy.
- Place your branches in a vase in your icon corner for the duration of Holy Week, as a reminder of your welcome to Jesus.

ADVANCED:

- Anticipate Palm Sunday by praying Great Vespers, or some portion of Great Vespers, on Saturday evening.
- Pray Matins, or some portion of Matins, on Sunday morning.
- Pray Vespers, or some portion of Vespers, on Palm Sunday evening to begin the transition into the sufferings of Our Lord.



RESOURCES

[TYPIKA](#)

[PROPS FOR TYPIKA](#)

READINGS FOR TYPIKA:

Philippians 4:4-9

John 12:1-18

[ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION](#)

[GREAT VESPERS](#)

[PROPS FOR VESPERS](#)

[SUNDAY MATINS](#)

[PROPS FOR MATINS](#)

[VESPERS ON SUNDAY EVENING](#)

During these first three days, we reflect on Jesus as the “Bridegroom”—the Spouse of the Bride (the Church). He is coming to lay down His life for His Bride.

“Palm Sunday spoke to us of the coming of the King. Holy Monday announces the coming again of the Son of Man, at the end of time. But, whereas the entry of our King into Jerusalem – and his entry into our soul now, if we will but allow it – reveals humility and tenderness, the second coming, which the Church contemplates on Holy Monday, will be more like a sudden and violent catastrophe...Holy Tuesday continues to develop the theme of the coming of Christ and of the judgment he will exercise over men...[On Holy Monday], the accent was placed on the objective conditions of suddenness and terror that accompany the second coming. [On Holy Tuesday], the divine Revelation concentrates especially on the vigilance that the prospect of this judgment calls for from us, and on the inner preparation which is necessary...Holy Wednesday features two figures, two states of soul. It is devoted to the remembrance of two actions: at Bethany, came to pour a jar of precious ointment on Jesus's head, and the action of the Master. These two actions are not without a certain link, for the same disciple has shown the prodigality of the woman...The world will protest, as did the disciples at Bethany: to waste?...Our heart is the first jar of ointment that we must break before him, for him

Parents: Explain to your children that we don't know when Jesus will come again, or when our time will come to meet Him. Because of this, we have to use our time wisely, preparing for that day. As the woman at Bethany, we should give fully to the Lord, without fear of cost. This is true of every part of our life, but most importantly of our heart. Encourage them to think of gifts they can give to Jesus, perhaps writing a letter to Him, or drawing or coloring a picture for Him, using their very best and very favorite paper, crayons, and decorations. Spare no cost!

- Print an icon of Christ the Bridegroom and place it in your icon corner for these three days.
- Pray the Bridegroom Troparion each day (p. 5-6 of Bridegroom Matins). It's a difficult melody, so feel free to straight chant or recite.
- Read the readings of the day. If you are not able to pray together in the morning *and* evening, you can just read all the readings together at one time. Different members of the family can take turns reading.

- Pray Bridegroom Matins, or a portion of this service, each morning (or the night before). The melodies are quite difficult, so feel free to straight chant or recite them.
- Pray along with a live stream of a Presanctified Liturgy each evening.



ICON OF CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM
BRIDEGROOM MATINS

Evening: Exodus 1:1-20, Job 1:1-12,
Matthew 24:3-35

Morning: Matthew 22:15-23:30
Evening: Exodus 2:5-10, Job 1:13-22, Matthew 24:36-26:2

Evening: Exodus 2:11-22, Job 2:1-10, Matthew 26:6-16

GREAT & HOLY THURSDAY

“Holy Thursday takes us into the mystery of the Passover...Three aspects of Holy Thursday are focused on here: the washing of the feet, the Lord’s supper, and Judas’s betrayal...Thou dost come near me, Lord, to wash my feet, and dost not allow me to protest against the exceeding humility which makes thee kneel before me to wash me...we must allow ourselves to be purified from our sins by him, from the dust of the daily road as well as from the greater impurities...I shall have part with the Christ who washes feet if I allow my feet to be washed by him and if I, myself, through his example, wash the feet of others...The central mystery of the upper room...lies in the Last Supper...it is particularly important to remember the link which our Lord wanted to establish between the meal in the upper room and the Jewish Passover, and between this same meal and the Passion. Every Eucharist is a sacrificial meal. Each time that we make our communion with the body of Christ that has been broken and with his blood that has been shed, we are in communion with his Passion, and take part in his sacrifice. We ought to break and offer our own selves, our selfish desires, our will: we should plunge the knife of the sacrifice into our own hearts. Communion is a spiritual breaking...Holy Thursday also makes us contemplate the betrayal by Judas...Judas, with betrayal in his heart, accepts the sop that Jesus offers him, and we find his gesture odious. He has profaned the table of the Lord. But, how many times have we taken a place at this table without having purified our hearts sufficiently?...Judas betrayed his Master once...We constantly betray Jesus – in details. But it is no less a betrayal...The generosity revealed by Jesus in the Redemption dominates the horror of all betrayals.”

Parents: Teach your children the three important aspects of today: the washing of the feet, the Lord’s supper, and Judas’ betrayal. Explain that the washing of the feet is not only literal (though it did happen!) but is also a reminder to us to serve one another in love. Ask (or help) your children to think of a way that they can perform an act of love for someone else in the family today. Secondly, remind them that the Last Supper was not just another meal, but a time when Jesus revealed to His closest friends that He loved them deeply, and was going to give Himself completely for them, and for all of us. Lastly, make sure they know that, while it is good for us to see Judas’ betrayal as wrong, we need to also see in him a reminder that we, too betray Jesus. Have each member of the family write down on a separate sheet of paper, in secret, the ways they think they’ve hurt Jesus recently – something will be done tomorrow with these papers.

BASIC:

- Read the readings of the day, or at least the Gospel readings.
- Preferably in the evening: Sing (or chant/recite) “Accept me today as a partaker...” (p. 19 of the Vespers booklet). Then pray the Act of Spiritual Communion and pray silently for a moment.
- Set up your tomb before going to bed (see next page).

ADVANCED:

- Pray Matins, or part of Matins.
- Pray Vespers, or part of Vespers, in the evening, or pray along with a live stream of Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil from your cathedral or parish.
- After your evening prayers, “stay awake” with Jesus for an hour in silence near your icon corner. Just be with Him.

RESOURCES

[MATINS](#)

READINGS:

Morning: Luke 22:1-39, Jeremiah 11:18-12:5, 9-11, 14-15

Evening: Exodus 19:10-19, Job 38:1-21; 42:1-5, Isaiah 50:4-11,

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

Gospel: Mt 26:2-20, Jn 13:3-17, Mt 26:21-39, Lk 22:43-45, Mt 26:40-27:2

[VESPERS](#)

[ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION](#)
[EPARCHY OF PARMA LIVE STREAM](#)

SETTING UP THE TOMB

On Thursday night before going to bed, set up a tomb in front of or near your icon corner. This is the place where you will pray the remaining services this week (and throughout the Paschal season, if you are able to leave it up!). If your children are old enough, you can place vases of flowers around the tomb. Explain to your children the reasons for the flowers: 1. Jesus was buried in a garden. 2. Out of love for those who have died, we have flowers at funerals and plant flowers around graves. 3. Living plants represent the eternal life that Jesus gives us through His death and resurrection. Here are two ideas for the design of your tomb:



1. TRADITIONAL TOMB DESIGN

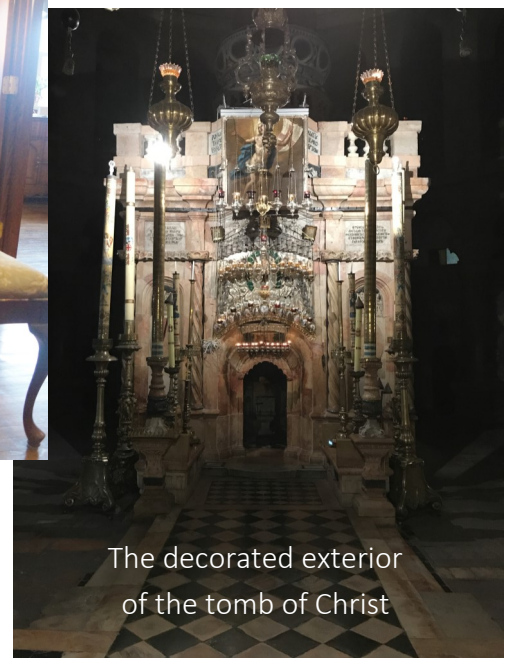
This is the type of tomb you are probably accustomed to seeing at your church. It is meant to represent the stone upon which Jesus' body was placed in the tomb. The church itself (or your house, in this case) represents the outer walls of the tomb. You can make this type of tomb with a coffee table, a piano bench, or boxes. Cover it with a dark-colored blanket, table cloth, or other piece of fabric. On Friday evening you will place the body of Christ on top of the tomb.



Praying in the actual tomb of Christ, in Jerusalem

2. "FORT" TOMB DESIGN

This design might be a lot of fun for young children (or nuns)! They can make it in the same way they make a "fort" to play in. Inside, place a large book (but not a Bible!) or a box on the ground, which will serve as the stone upon which you will lay the body of Christ on Friday evening. Your kids can keep vigil *inside* the tomb!



The decorated exterior of the tomb of Christ

GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY

“He surrendered himself as a ransom to Death by which we were held captive, sold into slavery under sin” (Anaphora of St. Basil).

“On Holy Thursday we followed Jesus to the upper room. Today, Holy Friday, we follow him up to Golgotha. We will follow him, not as Peter followed him, from ‘afar off...to see the end’, but as his mother, as John and the holy women, who did not abandon him...

Holy Friday confronts us with Jesus Christ crucified for our salvation. In our encounter with the Cross of Jesus on Holy Friday, we can distinguish several essential moments or elements. There is first of all the objective mystery of the Redemption. The Cross is the instrument of our salvation, the instrument of Christ’s sacrifice. But in what way are we saved by the Cross?...We say that Jesus Christ died for us. But have we any kind of clear idea what these words ‘died for us’ mean?...Jesus Christ wanted, by means of his voluntary death, to ‘make satisfaction’ superabundantly for all sins and to substitute a new life – his – for our irremediably corrupted life...The ‘satisfaction’ that Jesus makes for my own sins is the most important event of my life. It is only through contrition or repentance that we can assimilate the mystery of this Redemption...Holy Friday will bear no fruit for us unless a violent upsurge of contrition throws us to Jesus’ feet. Is this Holy Friday to be a day of holy sorrow in my life?...Forgiveness is declared from the height of the Cross. Jesus says to the thief: ‘Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.’...On this Holy Friday, have I sought a word of forgiveness?...Finally, Jesus’s Cross must be placed at the centre of my life. The Cross of Jesus: not only an instrument of suffering, but an instrument of victory...The day when a man understands the ‘centrality’ of the Cross – of the radiant Cross as well as of the blood-stained Cross – is the great day of his life.”

Parents: Let your kids know that today is all about the Cross! Place a crucifix in a prominent place in your home that everyone can pray before and venerate today. Perhaps you could also have each member of the family make (using paper, wood, or any other material you want!) a cross to hang/place in their bedrooms. Explain that it is through His death on the Cross that our sins are forgiven. Today, each member of the family can kiss the cross, whisper (no eavesdropping!) to Him the sins on their paper from yesterday, then everyone can rip up or burn their paper.

BASIC:

- Remember that we follow a strict fast today: no meat, eggs, or dairy products.
- Print out a copy of the plaschanitza (burial shroud) provided and have it ready before Vespers.
- In the late afternoon or evening, pray at least part of Entombment Vespers, including the readings. At the end of Vespers, make a procession, holding candles and singing (or reciting) “The noble Joseph.” The leader carries the plaschanitza, and when the procession returns to the tomb, the leader places it there.
- Each member of the family can now approach the tomb on his or her knees and kiss the wounds of Christ. Until the Resurrection, each time you come to your icon corner to pray, do the same thing.
- See the next page for ideas for keeping vigil at the tomb.



RESOURCES

[8.5 X 14 SIZE PLASCHANITZA](#)

[8.5 X 11 SIZE PLASCHANITZA](#)

[VESPERS](#)

READINGS FOR VESPERS:

Exodus 33:11-23, Job 42:12-17,

Isaiah 52:13-54:1 (If one Old

Testament reading is chosen, the

reading from Isaiah is to be preferred),

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:2,

Gospel: Mt 27:1-38, Lk 23:39-43,

Mt 27:39-54, Jn 19:31-37, Mt 27:55

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GREAT & HOLY FRIDAY, CONTINUED

ADVANCED:

- Pray Matins, or part of Matins, with some or all of the 12 Gospel readings indicated in the booklet.
- Pray one or more of the four Royal Hours and read the readings indicated in the booklet. They can be spaced out throughout the day, or prayed together. The *literal* times of the Hours are: 1st Hour—6:00 a.m., 3rd Hour—9:00 a.m., 6th Hour—Noon, 9th Hour—3:00 p.m., but you do not need to pray them at their literal times.

RESOURCES

[MATINS WITH 12 GOSPEL READINGS](#)

[ROYAL HOURS](#)

KEEPING VIGIL AT THE TOMB



In parishes, it is tradition for the faithful to sign up for an hour time slot to keep vigil at the tomb, even throughout the night, until the celebration of the Resurrection. Since this won't be able to happen at churches, we decided to make an online sign-up form so that we can all know that at every hour there will be someone keeping vigil somewhere, at the tomb in their homes! Please sign up for yourself or your family.

VIGIL SIGN-UP

During your vigil, ask for the grace to be silent, not only exteriorly, but also interiorly. Bring all of your concerns to the Lord and place them in the tomb. Surrender all of these things, all those you love, the whole world, and yourself to Him. Ask Him to transform everything by the power of His Resurrection. And then, just sit and be with Him and let Him do the work. Love Him by surrendering to Him.

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Time (EDT)	Available Slot	Calendar View
04/10/2020 (Fri.)	6:00pm - 7:00pm	Disciple #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Christ the Bridegroom Nuns
		Disciple #2	Sign Up
		Disciple #3	Sign Up
	7:00pm - 8:00pm	Disciple #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Christ the Bridegroom Nuns
		Disciple #2	Sign Up
		Disciple #3	Sign Up
	8:00pm - 9:00pm	Disciple #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Christ the Bridegroom Nuns
		Disciple #2	Sign Up
		Disciple #3	Sign Up
	9:00pm - 10:00pm	Disciple #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Christ the Bridegroom Nuns
		Disciple #2	Sign Up
		Disciple #3	Sign Up
	10:00pm - 11:00pm	Disciple #1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Christ the
Submit and Sign Up			

GREAT & HOLY SATURDAY

“On Holy Saturday, the Church directs and concentrates our attention on our Lord’s tomb...this day shares both in the sorrow of the Passion and in the joy of the Resurrection...In the life of every disciple of Jesus, there come times when the Master seems to withdraw himself and to remain absent – as if in some way he is buried. These Galilean women show us what our attitude should be at such moments. They have observed the grave; they know where Jesus is. And we, too, must not doubt that Jesus is there, even if he does not seem to answer, even if he has become invisible: we must keep our eyes fixed, if not on him, at least in his direction. The women are not idle, they do not say: ‘Now nothing can be done.’ They prepare spices with which to anoint Jesus’s body. They continue to honour him, although life has withdrawn from his human body. In the same way, during the times when Jesus veils himself and is silent, let us not cease to keep him at the centre of our adoration. Let us prepare spices – the spices of our affections and works – to offer from now on to the Friend whom we do not see, and also to offer to him when once again we shall feel his presence – for we know he will come back to us...The peace of Holy Saturday is entirely oriented towards the great event of Sunday morning, towards the power and the joy of the Resurrection. But we have to safeguard this peace ‘which waits’...”

Parents: Explain to your children that today is a day of waiting. We all know how hard it is to wait for something exciting, and what is more exciting than the Resurrection!? But it is important for us to know that when time is spent waiting with Jesus, it is not wasted time. There are times in our life when Jesus feels far away. These are the times He asks us to wait with Him. As a family, think of things you can “do” in these times. Not “do” as distraction, but as a way to remember He is with us; for example, read Scripture, sing hymns from church, read saint stories, etc.

BASIC:

- In the morning, pray one of the “stations” from Jerusalem Matins, beautiful and mournful hymns about Jesus in the tomb. Some of the melodies are difficult, so feel free to straight chant or recite them.
- Spend some time “waiting” at the tomb today and reflecting on the work that Jesus is doing as He is going down into Hades and bringing up the dead with Him!
- In the evening, pray a portion of Vespers, or watch a live stream of Vespers and Divine Liturgy of St. Basil. This liturgy is the traditional time when catechumens are brought into the Church through the Holy Mysteries of Initiation (Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist). Pray for those who must wait even longer this year to be received into the Church. The readings at Vespers reflect this theme of baptism and can be found in the Vespers booklet. Read or listen to the Epistle and Gospel readings of the Divine Liturgy. Here is the first proclamation of the Resurrection! Pray the Act of Spiritual Communion.

ADVANCED:

- Pray more or all of Jerusalem Matins. At the end of the Great Doxology, make a procession with candles, singing the “Holy God” in the funeral melody that is given (or reciting it), the leader carrying the paschanitza as yesterday, then placing it back in the tomb.

RESOURCES

[JERUSALEM MATINS](#)
[VESPERS](#)

READINGS FOR THE EVENING

DIVINE LITURGY:

Epistle: Romans 6:3-11

Gospel: Matthew 28:1-12

[ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION](#)

PASCHA: THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD!

“Descending by the cross into Hades to fulfill all things in himself, he freed us from Death’s despair, and rose on the third day, preparing the way for the resurrection of all flesh from the dead. Since Corruption could not keep the Author of Life in its clutches, he became the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep, the first-born of the dead, that in all things he might have pre-eminence over all” (Anaphora of St. Basil).



including them in his Passion. All except one had abandoned him during the harrowing hours of Golgotha, yet, nevertheless, he admits them directly to the joy of his Resurrection. It is not that the economy of salvation has altered: without the Cross, the glory of the Risen One cannot become our share. But the Lord Jesus deals gently with the weakness of his disciples...Our Lord acts in the same way with us. We are far – at least most of us are – from having drunk of the chalice of the Passion. We have not helped Jesus to carry his Cross. We have not died with him. We have slept during his agony and abandoned him; we have denied him by our many sins. And yet, poorly prepared and impure as we are, Jesus invites us to enter into the paschal joy. If we truly open our heart to the forgiveness which flows from the empty tomb

(the fact that the tomb is now empty is, in itself, the visible pledge of our forgiveness), if we allow ourselves to be penetrated by the light of Easter, if we adore the presence of the risen Lord, we, too, will receive the power of the Resurrection.”

Parents: It is here! Let your kids know that the Resurrection is the most important feast of the year. The Church calls it “The Feast of Feasts!” Today we celebrate that even though none of us “deserve” or have “earned” it, Christ in His mercy, makes us worthy of salvation. We open our hearts to receive this gift, and embrace it with joy. Let’s be extra attentive today to

enjoy our time together, not spoiling it with unkind words or anger. As Jesus forgives all our sins, when we ask Him to, even though we don’t deserve it, let us forgive one another and start fresh today! Today we are all on equal ground, all offered a life of joy and celebration.



PASCHA, CONTINUED

BASIC:

- If you don't have an icon of the Resurrection, print the one provided. Find a white sheet, blanket or table cloth.
- As early in the morning as you can all be ready, gather at your tomb with all of the lights in the house off and just one candle lit in your icon corner. From this candle, the leader lights a candle for each member of the family to carry during the procession. While singing (or reciting) the hymn "When You descended" from the "Music for Procession," the leader removes the paschanitzs from the tomb and places it on the table or shelf in the icon corner. Then, make a procession singing the hymn "Your resurrection, O Christ our Savior." One member of the family carries the icon of the Resurrection, another a Bible. The mother (or someone else) stays inside for a few moments, replacing the dark cloth on the tomb with the white one, turning on all the lights, and lighting any additional candles at your icon corner. When she is finished, she may join the procession. At the door of the house (or room), stop, and sing the Paschal troparion, "Christ is Risen," for the first time! The leader opens the door and all enter into the lit room, while singing "Christ is Risen" additional times. The Resurrection icon is placed on/in the empty tomb that is now covered in white.
- Sing as much of Resurrection Matins as you can/desire, with a lot of joy! Or, pray along with the live stream of Resurrection Matins and Divine Liturgy from your parish, or if not possible, from another parish or a monastery.
- If praying on your own, at the end of Resurrection Matins, the leader can read the Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom, with enthusiasm!
- If not praying along with a Divine Liturgy online, pray Typika, including the readings. Replace the Typical Psalms with the troparion, "Christ is Risen," three times.



RESOURCES

[ICON](#)

[MUSIC FOR PROCESSION](#)

[RESURRECTION MATINS](#)

(Includes a blessing of Paschal foods that can be prayed by a lay person)

[HOMILY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM](#)

[TYPIKA](#)

[PROPERS FOR TYPIKA](#)

READINGS:

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8

Gospel: John 1:1-17

[ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION](#)

[AGAPE VESPERS](#)

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!



- Pray the Act of Spiritual Communion.
- Sing "Christ is Risen" some more!, and sing it when you pray before meals and when you pray as a family during the whole 40-day Paschal season!

ADVANCED:

- In the evening, pray Agape Vespers, or part of Agape Vespers.

BRIGHT WEEK

“During the week that follows Easter, the doors of the iconostasion [icon screen] remain constantly open: in this way we symbolise the free access to the Holy of Holies that Jesus Christ, our great high priest, opened to us with his blood...One must neither fast nor prostrate oneself during the week of Easter...Easter week, in Greek, has a very beautiful name: ‘The week of Renewal’ [the Slavic Churches call it ‘Bright Week’], which in fact suits the whole of the paschal time. Jesus wished to die and to rise again at the threshold of spring...Springtime speaks to us – if we know how to interpret God’s creation – of inner renewal. There is a springtime of the soul. Easter, like springtime in nature, brings us a message of hope. The Resurrection of Jesus tells us that we can be changed.”



Parents: Explain to your children that in the ancient tradition, the newly-baptized, who had just entered into a new life in the hope and joy of the Resurrection, wore their white baptismal robes all week as a sign of this new hope and joy. Perhaps everyone in the family can wear something white each day this week! Help your children to remember the reason for your joy. Be examples to them of this joy, and ask them to be examples to you as well. Encourage one another this week to remember this is a time of knowing that we, through the grace of God, can change, can make better choices than we have before. Do something each day this week that is fun, joyful, special – but when you do this, be sure to remind everyone the reason for it. This week is not a week of simple natural happiness, but of true supernatural joy, a celebration of the fact that our God is a living God, that He desires relationship with us, and that He loves us deeply.

BASIC:

- Each day of Bright Week is a celebration of Pascha. Each day, gather at the empty tomb to pray. Sing the troparion, “Christ is Risen,” three times and read the readings of the day.
- You may also pray part (or all) of Resurrection Matins (without the procession), and/or pray one of the Paschal Hours or Typika (the same way it was prayed on Pascha) and the Act of Spiritual Communion.

ADVANCED:

- On Bright Monday, make a procession around your house and stop at each corner, reading one of these Gospel readings at each corner:
 - 1) Matthew 28:1-15
 - 2) Mark 16:1-9
 - 3) Luke 24:1-11
 - 4) John 20:1-10
- Pray Vespers, or a portion of Vespers, each evening.

RESOURCES

[PASCHAL HOURS](#)

READINGS:

MONDAY

Acts 1:12-17, 21-26, John 1:18-28

TUESDAY

Acts 2:14-21, Luke 24:12-35

WEDNESDAY

Acts 2:22-36, John 1:35-51

THURSDAY

Acts 2:38-43, John 3:1-15

FRIDAY

Acts 3:1-8, John 2:12-22

SATURDAY

Acts 3:11-16, John 3:22-33

[ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION](#)

[VESPERS](#)

CONTINUING TO PRAY

We hope that this guide has helped you and your family to pray together during this unusual and difficult time. We also hope that you are inspired to continue to pray together, if you don't already. Even when there is not a crisis happening in our lives, we are always in need of God! We are always called to praise Him, thank Him, open ourselves to receive His merciful love, and remember the reason for our hope.

BASIC:

- During Bright Week, sit down as a family (or couple) and talk about how you would like to continue your family prayer.
- Perhaps daily, you could pray one of the Daily Hours (short liturgical services for various times throughout the day) or part of one of the Hours, read the readings of the day, and pray for your family, friends, and those who are in need of God's help.
- Here is [a hymn](#) you can pray to the Mother of God for her protection of those for whom you are praying. The second version is simpler to sing. You can also listen to the recording.
- When there is an [important feast](#), sing the troparion of the feast when you pray together (found in the Divine Liturgy propers).
- Those who are old enough: Take some time each day to pray alone in silence, praying with Scripture and being still with the Lord and letting Him love you and speak to your heart. Lay before Him your worries and ask for His help.

ADVANCED:

- Pray Daily Vespers in the evening.
- Pray Great Vespers on Saturday evening and/or Matins on Sunday morning, or a portion of these services (if they are not offered at your parish, once you can go back to church).
- Pray Great Vespers and/or Festal Matins when there are important feast days, if they are not offered at your parish.

CONNECT WITH OTHERS



We've created a Facebook group, [The Domestic Church, Byz-y at Prayer](#), so that you can connect with other Byzantine families/couples/individuals who are striving to pray the Holy Week & Pascha services together using this guide. You can ask questions and share ideas, photos and videos! If you don't have a Facebook account, you can still view the posts.

RESOURCES

[DAILY READINGS](#)

[DAILY VESPERS](#)

[COMPLINE](#)

[DAILY HOURS](#)

FOR SUNDAYS & FEASTS:

[GREAT VESPERS](#)

[SUNDAY/FESTAL MATINS](#)

PROPERS FOR SUNDAYS & FEAST DAYS, & OTHER RESOURCES:

[METROPOLITAN CANTOR INSTITUTE](#)

(For propers, see right-hand column and find the current date)

RECOMMENDED READING:

"Beginning to Pray," by Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

[TALKS & REFLECTIONS BY THE NUNS ABOUT PRAYER](#)

BYZANTINE ONLINE EDUCATION:

God With Us

✠ ONLINE ✠

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