



St. Michael Orthodox Church

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Sunday, March 18-----Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. **St. John of the Ladder.**

Wednesday, March 21-----Canon of St. Andrew, 10 a.m.

Saturday, March 24-----Akathist, 3 p.m. Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

Sunday, March 25-----Festal Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. **Annunciation.**

Wednesday, March 28-----Presanctified Liturgy, 10 a.m.

Saturday, March 31-----Divine Liturgy, 9:30 a.m. **Lazarus Saturday.** Church cleanup & palm preparation. Festal Vigil & Confessions, 5 p.m.

Sunday, April 1-----Festal Divine Liturgy, 10 a.m. **Palm Sunday.**

Monday, April 2-----Bridegroom Matins, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, April 4-----Bridegroom Matins-Uncion, 7 p.m.

Thursday, April 5-----Holy Friday Matins-Passion Gospels, 7 p.m.

Friday, April 6-----Holy Friday Vespers, 3 p.m.

-----Holy Saturday Matins-Lamentations, 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 7-----**ΠΑΣΧΑ!** Nocturn, Paschal Matins, Paschal Divine Liturgy, Basket Blessing, Agape Feast, beginning at 11:30 p.m., Saturday.

Sunday, April 8-----Paschal Vespers, 1 p.m. Agape, Part 2.

Parish Life

	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Coffee Hour</u>	<u>Cleaning</u>
	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	
3-18	Soot	Soot	Tolkach/Bliss
3-25	Perry	Tolkach	Scioscia
4-01	Athanasius	Athanasius	[Bagel Sunday] Scioscia
4-08	=^=^=	Dawson	<i>Paschal Agape!</i> <i>Pascha!</i>



Coming Events & Notices:

- About the Presanctified Liturgy: We will begin the Presanctified Liturgy at 10 a.m. during Lent. **But in Holy Week,** evening services will start at 7 pm.
- Confession will be available after Vespers every Saturday, or **by prior arrangement,** before Liturgy or the Presanctified.
- Paschal Flowers: Donations always accepted.

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On Worship

The worship of God we often take as a ‘duty,’ perhaps as a ‘burden’ or ‘necessity,’ sometimes even as a joyful thing. “Worship,” as Roget’s Thesaurus (§ 1030) states, is “adoration,” “devotion,” glorification” (of God), “offering,” “sacrifice,” “office,” “duty,” and so on. And we use all of these senses.

Yet in all these senses and definitions, there is one vital thing completely missing. We offer worship to God — but what effect does this have on **us**? It is so central a part of Orthodox life to worship God, that we often do not think about how this affects us, as God’s worshippers. All actions we take have a two-way effect, whatever we do to or towards others and God also has effects, repercussions, significance, to us and in us in return.

First, as we acknowledge the Most High God, we also place ourselves, our lives, our concerns, into proper perspective. As we worship God and listen to Jesus’ words to us, we realize, exactly, what everything and every worry really is worth.

At least as important, worship heals us. Each time we come to church for worship, as we let the structure and content of the service enter into our heart, where they serve as an antidote and medicine against the chaos and darkness that often poison us. Each service provides an interior, spiritual, ‘skeleton’ around which we can build stability and certainty.

So, why worship? Because it helps us ... because we *need* to.

Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday

Great Lent is completed and comes to an end with two bright, festal days, or rather, a two-in-one, two-day feast. This is Lazarus Saturday, recalling Christ's raising of his dead friend Lazarus, and Palm Sunday, when we celebrate Christ's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem six days before he was betrayed to suffer and die on the cross...

Christ was far from Jerusalem when Lazarus died, and it was not until four days later that he arrived in Bethany and met Lazarus' sisters, Martha and Mary, and his weeping and grieving friends. The gospel of St John recounts this meeting in detail (John 11) ... How can we reconcile Christ's sadness and tears with his power to raise the dead? Through its entire celebration, the Church replies that Christ weeps because, in seeing the death of his friend, He sees also death's victory over the whole world; He sees that death, which God did not create, has usurped the throne and now rules over the world, poisoning life, turning everything into a meaningless stream of days flowing mercilessly towards the abyss. Then comes this command, "Lazarus, come forth!" Here is the miracle of love triumphant over death, a summons announcing Christ's declaration of war on death, a vow that death itself will be destroyed and put to death. And in order to destroy death and its darkness, Christ himself, and this means God himself, love itself, life itself, descends into the grave to encounter death face to face in order to annihilate it and to give us the eternal life God created us to possess.

The next day Christ enters Jerusalem. But this time He doesn't enter as He did before, unrecognized, unknown, unacknowledged. No, now He himself, who never before sought either power or glory, prepares for his triumph. ... This means that Christ was a king, if only of a single city far away from us. It means that He reigned, that the people recognized Him as a king! Yes, He taught about the Kingdom of God and about his future reign. But on this day, six days before Passover, He reveals his kingdom on earth, He opens it, inviting the people, and all of us as well, to become citizens of this Kingdom of Christ, subjects of this humble King, a King with no earthly authority, with no earthly might, but with all-powerful love.

We live in a world, under governments, that have renounced God and are busy only with themselves, jealously guarding their own authority, power, might and victories. There is almost no place in this world for God's love, God's light, God's joy. But on this one day of the year, when we stand in overflowing churches, raising up our palm branches and hearing once again the thunder of that royal Hosanna, we say to ourselves and to the world: Christ's Kingdom lives! The kingdom that shone so brightly on that day in Jerusalem has not died, it has not perished, it has not disappeared from the face of the earth. ... The joy of this faith no one can take from us, even if others put all their hope in power and violence, even if their only belief is in bullets, prisons, terror, and torture. No, this kingdom of violence, evil and lies will not stand. It will collapse, as every previous kingdom has collapsed, as every previous tyrant has vanished. But Your Kingdom, Lord, will remain. And the time will come when with Your love You will wipe every tear from our eyes, dissolve every sorrow in Your joy, and fill the world You created with the light of immortality.

— Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, *The Church Year* (Sermons, vol. 2), pp. 115-118.

