

Bishop Alexis Con't

realize that we have been placing almost all the emphasis on God reaching down to us by giving us His Body and Blood, and very little emphasis on our reaching up to Him in constant prayer. The church fathers, however, have always maintained that the extent to which we are transformed by the purifying, illumining, and deifying grace of the Holy Spirit in the Divine Liturgy is in part dependent upon our own struggle to commune with Christ and to follow His commandments at all times. What distinguishes those who have become Saints and those who have not has never been the reception of Holy Communion. The distinguishing characteristic of the Saint is being someone who loves Christ wholeheartedly, prays to Christ continuously, fulfills His commandments consistently.

If we desire to approach Christ, if we desire to commune of Christ, if we have our sanctification as our goal in life, nothing is hindering us. We can still welcome our Lord into the Jerusalem of our hearts, even if we can no longer do so in our Churches. We can still greet Him with the palms of prayer and lay at his feast the clothing of virtuous acts, even if we cannot wave our palms in our parishes. We can still allow the Holy Spirit to gather us together, to gather our entire selves into the temple of our heart where we cry out “Hosanna in the highest, blessed is He that comes in the Lord.” And if we do this, we will be preparing ourselves for the reception of Holy Communion, the way the Saints have always prepared themselves for this greatest of all mysteries, in a way that demonstrates that we indeed love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength. And our Lord, “meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass” will give us everything we could ever desire, even the complete sanctification of our souls.

Two Saints in the Twin Cities: Historic events in the life of the Cathedral of Saint Mary and Orthodoxy in America by Fr. Andrew Morbey

As we continue to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America, we also remember those saints, bishops, clergy, and laymen who worked so diligently and with immense faith to establish Christ's Holy Church here in North

America. In this reflection, Archpriest Andrew Morbey, Dean of the Cathedral of Saint Mary, Minneapolis, Minnesota, reflects on the place of the cathedral in the history of the Orthodox Church in America on the anniversary of the reception back into the Orthodox faith of the cathedral parish.

On April 7th we commemorated the repose of Saint Tikhon of Moscow, Enlightern of North America, and celebrated the Feast of the Annunciation on the Julian Calendar. There are at least two significant ‘recent’ events for Saint Mary’s Cathedral on this date.

The first is that it is on this date in 1891 that [Bishop Vladimir](#) came to Minneapolis from San Francisco and received the Greek Catholic parish of the [Protection of the Mother of God](#) into the Orthodox Church. Prior to his Minneapolis pastoral visit, he had received [Saint Alexis of Wilkes Barre and Minneapolis](#) into the Orthodox Church at his [San Francisco Cathedral](#). Saint Alexis had travelled to the Bay to meet the Bishop on behalf of the parish. I think that the words of the Troparion of the Annunciation on that day in 1891 had a special poignancy: Today is the beginning of our salvation...

Interestingly enough, Bishop Vladimir had a Japanese connection. Some years before his appointment to America, he had been attached to the Orthodox Mission in Japan. It is said that he was a zealous disciple of [Saint Nicholas of Japan](#). Matthew Namee writes on his Orthodox History blog, “*With his own eyes he [Bishop Vladimir] saw how Orthodoxy was inaugurated and began to flourish in Japan, and he wanted to establish the same in America. He began serving the Divine Liturgy in English and preaching in English, knowing well the language. From Russia he brought with him twenty people, among whom were priests, deacons, readers and singers. He had ambitious designs and an example to emulate in the person of his teacher, Saint Nicholas of Japan...*” It was Bishop Vladimir’s keen interest in Orthodox mission, and his positive, hands-on experience of mission work in Japan, that inspired his warm reception of Saint Alexis and the Minneapolis parish.

The following year, after Bishop ***Con't Next Page***

Vladimir had returned to Russia, his replacement, the new [Bishop Nicholas](#), requested confirmation from the Holy Synod in Saint Petersburg of the situation in Minneapolis. Namee writes, "In its Ukase addressed to Bishop Nicholas on 14 September 1892, the Holy Synod approved the reception of Priest Toth in his existing rank, and his Minneapolis parish was registered as part of the Aleut diocese." And so an early link was made between Saint Mary's and the Alaskan Church. It is a history that needs to be documented. [Saint Anatole Kamenskij](#), for example, was assigned from Alaska to serve Saint Mary's and the Missionary School established there in 1899. Bishop Nicholas later went on to become the missionary-minded Archbishop of Warsaw, reposing in 1915.

The second connection concerns [Saint Tikhon](#), the New-Confessor, Patriarch of Moscow (1917 - 1925), Enlightener of North America, who had been the head of the Orthodox Mission in North America with the title of *Bishop of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska* and later *Archbishop of North America* (1898 - 1907). In early April in 1925, under house arrest in Moscow at the Donskoy Monastery, harassed and probably poisoned, *he began to feel overwhelmed, and his strength and health declined. On Sunday April 5, 1925 he served his last Liturgy.* Two days later, he died blessing himself with the Sign of the Cross, *saying, "Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee."* *He only crossed himself two times, dying before he could complete the third.*

Saint Tikhon made several visits to Saint Mary's Cathedral. Two important ones took place after our little wooden church burned down in 1904. He came in 1905 to bless the foundation of the new church. He returned in 1906 to consecrate the altar table and the impressive new brick temple which we continue to worship in today. We continue to use the original altar table. It is a very real and inspiring connection between our community and the life of the Patriarch and ultimately to his witness and confession of faith. We have a relic of Saint Tikhon embedded in his icon on the anoly to the right of the iconostasis, and of course, he appears on our south wall, in a fresco with Saint Alexis, together holding Saint Mary's. We count them among our founders and benefactors, and our heavenly intercessors.

Saint Alexis, Bishop Vladimir, Bishop Nicholas and Saint Tikhon were dedicated to the building up of

Orthodoxy. They had a vision for the mission of the Orthodox faith in America, and they prayerfully, diligently and creatively worked to allow it to flourish with God's help. They lived lives of tremendous Christian witness.

That these events fell on the Annunciation can remind us that we are individually and collectively under the Protection of the Mother of God. By her intercessions, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and save us!

Christos Anesti! Alithós anésti!

Greek

Acts 1:1-8 (Epistle)

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

HOLY PASCHA: The Resurrection of Our Lord Commemorated on [April 19](#)

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith; receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness.

(Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom, read at Paschal Matins)

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the center of the Christian faith. Saint Paul says that if Christ is not raised from the dead, then our preaching and faith are in vain (I Cor. 15:14). Indeed, without the resurrection there would be no Christian preaching or faith. The disciples of Christ would have remained the broken and hopeless band which the Gospel of John describes as being in hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They went nowhere and preached nothing until they met the risen Christ, the doors being shut (John 20: 19). Then they touched the wounds of the nails and the spear; they ate and drank with Him. The resurrection became the basis of everything they said and did (Acts 2-4): “. . . for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39).

The resurrection reveals Jesus of Nazareth as not only the expected Messiah of Israel, but as the King and Lord of a new Jerusalem: a new heaven and a new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . the holy city, new Jerusalem. And I heard a great voice from the throne saying “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:1-4).

In His death and resurrection, Christ defeats the last enemy, death, and thereby fulfills the mandate of His Father to subject all things under His feet (I Cor. 15:24-26).

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (Rev. 5: 12)

THE FEAST OF FEASTS

The Christian faith is celebrated in the liturgy of the Church. True celebration is always a living participation. It is not a mere attendance at services. It is communion in the power of the event being celebrated. It is God’s free gift of joy given to spiritual men as a reward for their self-denial. It is the fulfillment of spiritual and physical effort and preparation. The resurrection of Christ, being the center of the Christian faith, is the basis of the Church’s liturgical life and the true model for all celebration. This is the chosen and holy day, first of sabbaths, king and lord of days, the feast of feasts, holy day of holy days. On this day we bless Christ forevermore (Irmos 8, Paschal Canon).

PREPARATION

Twelve weeks of preparation precede the “feast of feasts.” A long journey which includes five pre-lenten Sundays, six weeks of Great Lent and finally Holy Week is made. The journey moves from the self-willed exile of the prodigal son to the grace-filled entrance into the new Jerusalem, coming down as a bride beautifully adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2) Repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and study are the means by which this long journey is made.

Focusing on the veneration of the Cross at its midpoint, the lenten voyage itself reveals that the joy of the resurrection is achieved only through the Cross. “Through the cross joy has come into all the world,” we sing in one paschal hymn. And in the paschal troparion, we repeat again and again that Christ has trampled down death—by death! Saint Paul writes that the name of Jesus is exalted above every name because He first emptied Himself, taking on the lowly form of a servant and being obedient even to death on the Cross (Phil. 2:5-11). The road to the celebration of the resurrection is the self-emptying crucifixion of Lent. Pascha is the passover from death to life.

Yesterday I was buried with Thee, O Christ.
Today I arise with Thee in Thy resurrection.
Yesterday I was crucified with Thee: Glorify me with Thee, O Savior, in Thy kingdom (Ode 3, Paschal Canon).

THE PROCESSION

The divine services of the night of Pascha commence near midnight of Holy Saturday. At the Ninth Ode of the Canon of *Con’t next Page*

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Nocturn, the priest, already vested in his brightest robes, removes the Holy Shroud from the tomb and carries it to the altar table, where it remains until the leave-taking of Pascha. The faithful stand in darkness. Then, one by one, they light their candles from the candle held by the priest and form a great procession out of the church. Choir, servers, priest and people, led by the bearers of the cross, banners, icons and Gospel book, circle the church. The bells are rung incessantly and the angelic hymn of the resurrection is chanted.

The procession comes to a stop before the principal doors of the church. Before the closed doors the priest and the people sing the troparion of Pascha, "Christ is risen from the dead...", many times. Even before entering the church the priest and people exchange the paschal greeting: "Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen!" This segment of the paschal services is extremely important. It preserves in the experience of the Church the primitive accounts of the resurrection of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. The angel rolled away the stone from the tomb not to let a biologically revived but physically entrapped Christ walk out, but to reveal that "He is not here; for He has risen, as He said" (Matt. 28:6).

In the paschal canon we sing:

Thou didst arise, O Christ, and yet the tomb remained sealed, as at Thy birth the Virgin's womb remained unharmed; and Thou has opened for us the gates of paradise (Ode 6).

Finally, the procession of light and song in the darkness of night, and the thunderous proclamation that, indeed, Christ is risen, fulfill the words of the Evangelist John: "The light shines in darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

The doors are opened and the faithful re-enter. The church is bathed in light and adorned with flowers. It is the heavenly bride and the symbol of the empty tomb:

Bearing life and more fruitful than paradise
Brighter than any royal chamber,
Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our
resurrection (Paschal Hours).

MATINS

Matins commences immediately. The risen Christ is glorified in the singing of the beautiful canon of Saint John of Damascus. The paschal greeting is repeatedly exchanged. Near the end of Matins the paschal verses are sung. They relate the entire narrative of the Lord's resurrection. They conclude with the words calling us to actualize among each other the forgiveness freely given to all by God:

This is the day of resurrection.
Let us be illumined by the feast.
Let us embrace each other.
Let us call "brothers" even those who hate us,
And forgive all by the resurrection. . .

The sermon of Saint John Chrysostom is then read by the celebrant. The sermon was originally composed as a baptismal instruction. It is retained by the Church in the paschal services because everything about the night of Pascha recalls the Sacrament of Baptism: the language and general terminology of the liturgical texts, the specific hymns, the vestment color, the use of candles and the great procession itself. Now the sermon invites us to a great reaffirmation of our baptism: to union with Christ in the receiving of Holy Communion.

If any man is devout and loves God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. . . the table is fully laden; feast you all sumptuously. . . the calf is fatted, let no one go hungry away. . .

THE DIVINE LITURGY

The sermon announces the imminent beginning of the Divine Liturgy. The altar table is fully laden with the divine food: the Body and Blood of the risen and glorified Christ. No one is to go away hungry. The service books are very specific in saying that only he who partakes of the Body and Blood of Christ eats the true Pascha. The Divine Liturgy, therefore, normally follows immediately after paschal Matins. Foods from which the faithful have been asked to abstain during the lenten journey are blessed and eaten only after the Divine Liturgy.

THE DAY WITHOUT EVENING

Pascha is the inauguration of a new age. It reveals the mystery of the eighth day. It is our taste, in this age, of the new and unending day of the Kingdom of God. Something of this new and unending day is conveyed to us in the length of the paschal services, in the repetition of the Paschal *Con't next page*

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order for all the services of Bright Week, and in the special paschal features retained in the services for the forty days until Ascension. Forty days are, as it were, treated as one day. Together they comprise the symbol of the new time in which the Church lives and toward which she ever draws the faithful, from one degree of glory to another.

O Christ, great and most holy Pascha.
O Wisdom, Word and Power of God,
grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in
the never-ending day of Thy kingdom
(Ninth Ode, Paschal Canon).

The V. Rev. Paul Lazor
New York, 1977

John 1:1-17 (Gospel)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

The Paschal Sermon

The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom is read during Matins of Pascha.

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; He gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour. And He shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one He gives, and upon the other He bestows gifts. And He both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, **Con't Pg 15**

Bullet Points on Guidelines for Home Worship

On April 13th I had a Zoom Meeting with some parents from the Diocese to discuss their experiences working with their children in becoming “a Little Church” during this time of the pandemic. Many of the parents who joined the meeting asked for some guidelines (not directives) from me for ordering their home life during this time relative to prayer, activity, and attending livestreams. So, here it goes:

Most kids are doing their schoolwork from home or doing online classes. This is the main “obedience” kids need to follow at this time.

It would be good to schedule as part of the family day, times of work that can be done around the house. (i.e. one hour). This might involve spring-cleaning tasks or outdoor work that may need to be done.

When it is time to attend to the Sunday livestream in your parish for the Liturgy, don’t be a couch potato when the services are offered. Dress up as you would for going to church and get ready for church as if you were going to attend liturgy (even if you are not). This would help remind children that what is being done is important. People are not to be curious, passive observers. Encourage children to participate as much as is possible. If they can sing along with the hymns offered via livestream, encourage this.

Be aware that one size does not fit all when it comes to soliciting participation among your children. Don’t expect your children to become little adults during services. Some children may show a greater ability to attend to the service while still being physically active. In a home situation, this is understandable.

Get out some table games that all family members can play together. When was the last time families have done this?

If you won’t be doing any livestreaming, download the reader services that your parish priest has provided you, and do them with your family. Or, you may download these services from the Coronavirus section on the Midwest Diocese website. (domoca.org) Involve your kids in the service, giving them certain parts to read if possible.

Don’t have any meals until after the Sunday liturgy has been celebrated, or after any daily services you are livestreaming or doing on your own as a reader service. Make the Sunday liturgy meal the best meal of the week. Begin and end the day with morning and evening prayers.

Understand that if you are doing reader services, depending on the length, parts of those services may need to be abbreviated. Speak with your parish priest for guidance.

There are several approaches to celebrating Holy Week at home as a family that have been posted on the Diocesan website in the Coronavirus resource page (domoca.org) and on the Midwest Centre for Family Life (midwestfamily.org). Please review those and download what might be helpful in your family situation.

I hope these suggestions are helpful. May you have a blessed Holy Week and Glorious Pascha!

The blessing of the Lord be upon you,
The unworthy +Paul

Paschal Greeting from the Rector

I greet you with **CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!** on this **FEAST OF FEASTS, THE EIGHTH DAY** - the day that ends on Saturday.

This has been an exceptional year. We have had to fast and pray alone with our families and participate in services in a limited way via the Internet. Despite us not being together to celebrate this joyous feast does not mean it didn’t happen. Christ is truly risen and we rejoice.

I hope and pray that this crisis has awakened us to the realization of how much we need Christ in our lives. Glory and thanks to God for all who received the Sacrament of Confession. Glory and thanks to God for all of you who continued the fast despite all the trials and tribulations. Glory and thanks to God for those of us who stayed off social media and did not participate in frivolous chit chat. And most especially, Glory and thanks to God for all those still tithing to the church.

I hope and pray you all have a blessed Feast of Feasts. Enjoy this day but let us never forget how much we missed not being able to stand in our Holy Church to physically participate in it.

CHRISTOS VOSKRESE!
VOISTINU VOSKRESE!

Love in the Risen Christ, Fr. Andrew

Bishop Paul's Message Con't

But if you have some fondness for this body, and you are sorry to be unyoked from what you love, do not be in despair about this either. For although this bodily covering is not dissolved by death, you will see it woven again from the same elements, not indeed with its present coarse and heavy texture, but with the thread respun into something subtler and lighter, so that the beloved body may be with you and be restored to you again in better and even more lovable beauty. (Chapter 10, On the Soul and the Resurrection, St. Gregory of Nyssa)

What wonderful words of encouragement and hope St. Macrina by the hand of St. Gregory brings to us. This brings me to the conclusion that we as Orthodox Christians have a living faith, we believe not in the God of the dead but of the living. We heard this from the gospel reading at Tuesday Bridegroom Matins:

And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living. (Matthew 22:31-32)

Our Lord Jesus Christ conquered the tyranny of death over us through His own life giving Death on the Cross and bringing life to a place where there was no hope. In Christ, death is no more!

And again to Moses: "I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." God "is not the God of the dead," of those who have died and will never be again. Rather, he is the God of the living, whose souls live in his hand and whose bodies will by the resurrection live again. And David, the ancestor of God, says to God, "You shall take away their breath, and they shall fail and shall return to their dust." See how it is a question of their bodies. Then he adds, "You shall send forth your spirit, and they shall be created; and you shall renew the face of the earth." (St. John of Damascus on Psalm 104:27-30)

I don't know how long we will continue under these restrictions. But I do know nothing can stop us from singing, **"Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!"**

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

With love in Christ, the unworthy

+PAUL

Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest

St. John's Paschal Sermon Con't

and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

BUILDING / RESTORATION FUND

Our 125th Anniversary is coming!

Fund Purpose: To collect funds to pay for the restoration, repair and beautification of the building and parish room. This will avoid using general funds which are earmarked for budgetary items.

Please consider contributing generously to the *Building/Restoration Fund*.

PRAY FOR OUR CATECHUMENS

Rachael Adamcio Luke Welch
Lydia Welch Tristen Welch

Possible Catechumens:

Loreen Welch Cheyenne Welch

May God & the Holy Spirit guide them in their journey in the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox way of Life.

CATASTROPHIC RELIEF FUND

Purpose of fund: To provide some small financial assistance to a parishioner, family member or community member who has suffered a catastrophic event.

Funds will be offered at the discretion & blessing of the Rector and the discretion of the Board.

Two parishioners have given a portion of their stimulus checks to this fund. Please feel free to donate as well. Thank you and God bless!

CHRISTOS VOSKRESE!



VOISTINU VOSKRESE!