

March 24, 2024 / Palm Sunday / Festival T one

The Mother of God, our teacher of the Prayer of St. Ephrem

By Mother Gabriella of Christ the Bridegroom Monastery



As we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation on a Monday of the Holy Great Week of Our Lord's Passion, we come into contact with one of the great mysteries of our faith – the Incarnation. God enters into time, at the consent of a virgin in Nazareth, and takes on human flesh. As I pondered this mystery, something else that came to mind is the Prayer of St. Ephrem, a staple of the Byzantine Lenten prayer diet, which is as follows: O Lord and Master of my life,

spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter.

Instead, bestow on me your servant, a spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love.

Yes, O Lord and King, let me to see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

As I was praying these words and thinking of the Theotokos at the Annunciation, I began to see just how beautiful it is to celebrate this feast in the context of Lent. Being a lover of feasts and all things relating to St. Gabriel, I have a natural affinity for the Annunciation, but Mary wanted to take that love even deeper. I stood in awe of her, as did my namesake, as I began to see how Mary, as the first disciple of Jesus, is our model for living out the Prayer of St. Ephrem. “Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!... Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus” (Lk 1: 28,30). Hearing Gabriel's exhortation, I can see what might be a bit disconcerting! How often in my life do I hear Jesus calling me to something more and deeper, and I cringe and moan and shudder to think of it (until I finally say yes!). Mary, hearing these words for the first time, could have fallen into any of the first sins that are named in the Prayer. Indifference – she could have given Gabriel the cold shoulder and walked away! How could a conception happen without a man? Despair – she could have realized the full weight of what he was asking her, without considering the mercy and love of God, and folded under the weight of the request. Lust for power – can you imagine what kind of prestige would come if people knew and believed she was the Mother of God? Idle chatter – how many people could she have told about her news – the world's greatest “gender reveal!” But instead, she receives the angel's request and asks only one practical question. She does not pause in her question long enough to consider any amount of worry about the future. She does not flippantly share about her pregnancy.

Her response embodies integrity, or wholeness of being, so much so that her “yes” cooperated directly with the power of the Holy Spirit to conceive a child – Jesus. She accepted this invitation to motherhood with the utmost humility; she put no conditions on her acceptance, but simply offered herself to God. She became our model of patience and love, starting with her care of Elizabeth in the hill country and ending at the foot of the Cross on the mount of Calvary.

Lastly, she exemplifies not simply introspection into faults but a proper understanding of herself before God – seeing her weaknesses and trusting perfectly in His mercy and grace at all times. This posture of receptivity allows her to place love above judgment, loving any and all who may have been lead to judge what they did not understand regarding her pregnancy, and later, her life in service to her Son.

On this Feast of the Annunciation, let us take a moment to reflect on our own Lenten journey, in light of our beloved Theotokos and her “yes.” How are we saying “no” to sin and “yes” to virtue during these days in the midst of our own daily “annunciations?” What more needs to be purged before we can give ourselves, fully and without reserve, to all that Jesus is asking of us this Lent? We place ourselves under the mantle of Mary and ask for her intercession – O Most Holy Theotokos, save us! (taken from “Christ the Bridegroom Monastery website: <https://www.christthebridegroom.org/2017/03/the-mother-of-god-our-teacher-of-prayer.html#:~:text=As%20we%20celebrate%20the%20feast,and%20takes%20on%20human%20flesh.>)

Holy Protection of Mary Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Phoenix

Most Reverend Kurt Burnette Apostolic Administrator

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Byzantine Catholic Church

1837 Alvarado Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110 Parish office: (505) 256-1539

www.olphnm.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday—Friday 10:00 am—4:00 pm

Thursday OFF

THEOSIS: 2nd & 4th Thursday

Bible Study 6:45 pm / Zoom

Advisory Board

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Confession (Mystery of Reconciliation):

9:00—10:00 am on Sundays, before or after weekday Liturgies, or by appointment with Father

Mysteries of Baptism/Chrismation/Eucharist:

Must be arranged three months in advance.

(Pre-Jordan requirement)

Mystery of Crowning:

Must be arranged six months in advance

(Pre-Cana requirement)

May the Lord Bless your kindness and generosity to His House!

ONLINE GIVING / ONLINE TITHING

is available on our website:

For those parishioners who can't attend in person or traveling or anyone who find this more convenient, we just set up a new way to tithe online using your credit card or debit card information. You can do a one-time donation or setup weekly donations!! You will receive a receipt and statement immediately after donating. The software takes a very small percentage of the donation, but its worth it for the ease of the system. You can donate using your computer / smartphone at: [ps://www.olphnm.org/giving](https://www.olphnm.org/giving).

Sick and Shut-Ins: It is the family's responsibility to notify the parish office when a parishioner is in the hospital or confined to home because of sickness or old age. Father will bring the confined person the Holy Mysteries on a regular basis. It is recommended that one receive the Anointing of the Sick before any major surgery. Please don't let the priest be last to know that someone is ill!

Welcome to our Church! If you are looking for a spiritual home, contact Father Artur/Fr Chris or the office staff for more information. God bless you!

Philippians 4:4-9; John 12:1-18

YouTube Live 8:30 am Rosary 9:00 am Festal Matins & Confessions
ECF Classes 10:00 am Divine Liturgy for Parish Family, Benefactors & Friends
Eternal Lamp: Holy Protection of the Mother of God over People of Ukraine

Mar 25 Mon ***Holy Monday / Annunciation of the Theotokos / Solemn Holy Day***
Ex 1:1-20; Job 1:1-12; Heb 2:11-18; Mt 24:3-35; Lk 1:24-38

Mitigation of Fast 6:00 pm Vesper Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
+Abraham Placencio by Gliotzners / Confessions (YouTube Live)

Mar 26 Tue ***Holy Tuesday / Ex 2:5-10; Job 1:13-22; Mt 24:36-26:2***

6:00 pm Bridegroom Matins / Confessions (YouTube Live)

Mar 27 Wed ***Holy Wednesday / Ex 2:11-22; Job 2:1-10; Mt 26:6-16***



7:00 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts / Holy Anointing / Confessions
+Judith Siksay by Maria Kartsub (YouTube Live)

Mar 28 Thu ***Holy Thursday / Is 50:4-11; 1 Cor 11:23-32; Mt 26:2-20; Jn 13:3-17; Mt 26:31-39; Lk 22:43-45; Mt 26:40-27:2***

7:00 pm Vespers Divine Liturgy of St Basil / Confessions
+Dmytro Dzek by Helga Dzek (YouTube Live)

Mar 29 Fri ***Good Friday (Day of strict abstinence) / Is 52:13-54:1; 1 Cor 1:18-2:2; Mt 27:1-38; Lk 23:39-44; Mt 27:39-54; Jn 19:31-37; Mt 27:55-61***



10:00 am Passion Matins (YouTube Live)
7:00 pm Vespers & Procession with the Burial Shroud / Confessions (YouTube Live)
11:30 pm Jerusalem Matins / All night Vigil

Mar 30 Sat ***Holy Saturday / Rom 6:3-11; Mt 28:1-20***



11:00 am Akathist to the Life Bearing Tomb of Christ (YouTube Live)
6:00 pm Easter Vigil Liturgy of St Basil / Blessing of Baskets
Healing and Salvation of Sven and Barbara by Svenssons

Mar 31 Sun ***Resurrection of Our Lord / Pascha / Acts 1:1-8; John 1:1-17***

YouTube LIVE 9:00 am Resurrection Matins / Liturgy / Blessing of Baskets /
Paschal Potluck in the Hall
Eternal Lamp: Holy Protection of the Mother of God over People of Ukraine

Remember Those Who Request Our Prayers:

Physician and Help of Those in sickness, Redeemer and Savior of the infirm; O Master and Lord of all, grant healing to your servants. Be clement, show mercy to those who have sinned much, and deliver them, O Christ, from their Iniquities, that they may glorify your might divine

Sharif Rabadi	Buster Miscusi	Christopher
Jenny Ford	Harry & Barbara	Barlow
Marilyn Fore	De Lap	Jordan Smith
Sven & Barbara	Irene Bradley	Janet Worthington
Svensson	Sorilah Chavez	Patti Klinkovsky
Laurie Bienz	Abraham Haddad	Matt Williamson
Brent Dodson-	Marianne Gerace	James Epstein
Sands	Michael Baron	Katy Ford
Lara Davis	Gabriel Preisler	Alton & Barbara
Carol Donlin	Jessica Pieniadz	Bertschinger
Marcie Dark	Rhonda	Madalyn Davis
Jesse Hebert	Glasscock	Rebecca Russo
Fr Chris Zuggger	Amber Roybal	Jacob McTernan
Fr Chris Andrews	Philip Leahy	Paola Terlaza
Fr Robert Rankin	Juanita Montoya	Vicki Frank
Fr. Steve Washko	Linda Granci	Jennifer Herring

Intentions of the Rosary:

- 1st Decade: Help for persecuted Catholics, especially in communist and Islamic states
- 2nd Decade: Spiritual and physical growth of our parish and the Byzantine Catholic Church
- 3rd Decade: Increase in vocations to priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life to serve the Byzantine Catholic Church
- 4th Decade: Repose of the souls who have no one praying for them
- 5th Decade: Healing of the sick in body, mind and soul

Holy Father's Intentions / March The New Martyrs

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

Blessed be Your name, Lord Jesus Christ! We celebrate your triumphal entrance into the world to save your people. We implore you, raise up men and women who would answer your call to live their lives in accordance with your will. Guide those called to marriage to find and live their vocation. Grant us also an increase of vocations to holy orders and the religious life, we pray you, hear and have mercy.



Vocation Icon

Today:
Talamante Family
Next Sunday:
Wofford Family

March 31, 2024

Cantor: Andrea Riley
Reader: Michael Wells
Altar Server: Michael Grega
Trojca: To Be Determined
Counters: Maria Alden & Ann Rajala

Propers for 3/31/2024

PASCHA

Festal Tone

Third Antiphon - 165

Troparion - 165

v. *Glory... Now & Ever*

Kontakion - 166

Instead of 'Holy God' - 32

Prokeimenon & Alleluia - 166

Instead of 'It Is Truly Proper' - 167

Our Father- 167

Communion Hymn - 168-9

Dismissal - 170

The OLPH Prayer Warriors

make intercessory prayer a daily commitment. We pray voluntarily and without bias; that is, we take to the Blessed Trinity the requests that come our way.

The Prayer Warriors meet on Zoom every Sunday at 9:30 a.m. for themed meetings. **If you would like to join the Prayer Warriors**, would like additional information, and/or would like for us to pray for your intentions, please contact Patricia at pocb@unm.edu

Alicia's Hall Report

We had a wonderful Italian St. Patrick's Day feast! Thanks to everyone who brought pizza toppings, Irish soda bread, pesto pasta salad, caprese salad ingredients and to Rita Montañó and the young ladies of the parish who assembled it all so beautifully. A big thanks to Julia for all the elbow grease she put into washing the pizza pans with cheese baked onto them and all the rest! Next Sunday we'll share our Easter Baskets!!! Have a blessed Holy Week everyone!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C054AAAAA2AA4F94-olph>

Coming Events—Mark Your Calendars Now

Mon Apr 1	Bright Monday / Solemn Holy Day 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy/Procession around the Church
Tue April 9	6:00 pm Father Chris' talk on his NEW book, <i>Looking to Tomorrow, Part 1 (YouTube Live)</i>
Mon Apr 22	6:00 pm <i>Vigil Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Great Martyr St. George the Conqueror</i>
Wed April 24	Mid-Pentecost
Tue April 30	6:00 pm Father Chris' talk on his NEW book, <i>Looking to Tomorrow, Part II (YouTube Live)</i>
Sat May 4	10am—3pm Annual Byzantine Bazaar
Wed May 8 Thu May 9	Ascension of Our Lord Holy Day of Obligation 6:00 pm Vigil Divine Liturgy 9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Tue May 14	6:00 pm Father Chris' talk on the History of OLPH 1974—2024
Sat May 18	5th All Souls Saturday 9:00 am Divine Liturgy / Panachida
Mon May 20	Pentecost Monday / Holy Day 6:00 pm Liturgy/Procession with reading of four Gospels
Mon May 26	Beginning of Apostles Fast
Jun 3 - Jun 7	Annual Clergy Conference in Albuquerque
Mon Jun 24	Birth of John the Baptist/Solemn Feast 6:00 pm Divine Liturgy
June 27—30	Byzanteen Youth Rally at the University of San Diego
Fri June 28 Sat June 29	Peter and Paul Preeminent Apostles Holy Day of Obligation 6:00 pm Vigil Divine Liturgy 9:00 am Divine Liturgy
Sun July 7	50th Jubilee OLPH Patronal Feast
Fri July 19	Elijah Great Prophet / Simple Holy Day 6:00 pm Vigil Divine Liturgy
Thu Aug 1	Beginning of Dormition Fast
Tue Oct 15	Celebration of the OLPH 50th Jubilee 3:30 pm Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 6:00 pm Dinner at Sheraton 7:30 pm Dancing with a live band (Die Polka Schlingels)

We have a new booklet by Father Chris available in the Gift Shop - **A Church for All Peoples: Essay on the History and Mission of the Byzantine Catholic Church**. This serves as a good overview and introduction to his big book, *Looking to Tomorrow* and includes sections on the history of our Church in Central Europe and North America, and what it offers to the world today. 10 pages of text, 6 pages of photographs, only \$3.

HOLY WEEK: Willows and palms blessed on Palm Sunday should be put in the icon corner, or behind icons, crucifixes, or holy pictures. Old ones can be burned, or buried in the garden, but never put in the trash.

Abstinence and Fasting during Holy Week: Full fast and abstinence is required on Good Friday: no meat or dairy, one main meal. Traditionally this is kept on Holy Saturday as well. On Holy Monday and Wednesday, abstinence from meat. We are all encouraged to add penances as we are able to, and certainly to intensify our prayer lives.

Vigil at the Tomb, Good Friday night to Holy Saturday "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb." Matthew 27:61. This is the source of the Byzantine Catholic custom of coming to church on Good Friday night for one hour (Jesus asked the Apostles to stay awake one hour with Him), facing the tomb. It is always a powerful experience. Please sign up on the page provided at the front door; we need at least two adults for every hour the church is open.

Basket Covers - Traditionally, the family brings food to be blessed either on Holy Saturday night or Pascha morning in large baskets. The baskets are covered with embroidered linens - if you do not have one, a few imported ones are in the store. Handouts on how to make a traditional basket are available near the front door - basically, all the food must be cooked in advance and is eaten cold on Easter Sunday at the church or at home. Children's chocolate bunnies and other candies are most welcome to be placed in these baskets.

ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM All icons of Palm Sunday follow a basic composition: Jesus is the center of the icon, the focus of this great day. He is seated on the humble donkey, with his disciples immediately behind Him at the left of the icon. Jesus blesses with His right hand, while holding a small scroll in His left hand to show that He is the eternal Word. The Jewish children put branches and cloaks on the road to welcome the King of Kings, as the crowd of adults gathers, partly to welcome Him (Hosanna in the highest!) and partly in anxiety (Rabbi, tell Your disciples to stop this) about a reaction from the Romans. The city of Jerusalem is at the right hand side, as the procession moves to the gate. The palms are carried by the people, and we do the same thing today. The palm and pussy willow branches are blessed at the end of Matins or the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, and are distributed to be held by the people, clergy, and altar servers throughout the services. These are a tangible sign of how we will be participating in Holy Week through sacred time, *kairos*, as every day during Holy Week we are invited to follow Jesus. The victory cry "Hosanna", which we still sing in the Liturgy, is translated as "Save now!" or "Save (me), I pray".

The Mystery of Holy Week and Pascha: We are at the threshold of the most important week in the whole Liturgical Year of the Church. The services are long and plentiful. Many-many hours of services and prayers are in front of us. Given the significance of what is remembered in the services of Holy Week, Christ's suffering, betrayal, death and resurrection, the work would be justified if it were merely a memorial. Although, as memorials go, 40 hours over the course of a week would seem extreme to most. No doubt, were memory alone the heart of the matter, Holy Week would have dwindled over the centuries rather than grown. Holy Week is only the most intense example of something that occurs with every service of the Church and is the heart of the liturgical life: it is a participation in the mystery of Christ Himself. For the modern mind, history is something that is past. As such, it is inaccessible, except through some exercise of the memory. And, of course, we are always certain that our memory of the past is flawed. The larger part of our modern memorials is sentiment, an expression or feeling for something that once had importance and that seems worth remembering. It is this empty approach to history that weakens its place in our lives. Modern memorials continue only long enough to produce a desired set of feelings. A bit of music, perhaps a little drama, special clothes and Easter is done.

The liturgical life of the Church does not place any particular value on “history” as the modern world understands it. Rather, it is the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God, tabernacling within “history,” that is the focus of our attention. The Kingdom of God is always “present” and never “past.” It is eternal, transcending space and time, even as it fills space and time with its presence.

This is the key to the liturgical life and the very heart of Holy Week. The Church’s liturgical actions are never memorials. They are a mystical participation in the ever-present reality of the events that they celebrate. In Holy Week, we are raised with Lazarus. We greet Christ with palms. We endure the cleansing of the Temple. With the Harlot, we bathe His feet with our tears. We partake of His Body and Blood. We betray Him and deny Him. We judge Him and condemn Him. In Him we are also betrayed and denied, judged and condemned. With Him we are mocked and scourged. We crucify Him and are crucified with Him. With the thief we find paradise in a single moment. We grieve with Mary and John and bury Christ’s most pure body alongside Joseph of Arimathea. We bury Him and are buried with Him. We descend into Hades and take our place with Adam and all those who through the ages have been imprisoned in death. We are raised from the dead with Christ as He takes captivity captive.

Just as the Kingdom of God enters history and gathers us into itself, so in our liturgical celebration, the very same Kingdom of God enters our lives and gathers us into itself. We do not remember a past event: we accept and enter the eternal reality that was made known and revealed in those events. The gospel is not a record of what has happened and is now past – finding value only in its “change of history”. In the words of St. Luke, the gospel is a “narrative of those things that have been fulfilled among us” (Lk. 1:1).

The very heart of the faith is found in our present moment participation in the Kingdom. In this participation, we are “fulfilled.” Our lives become bearers of the Kingdom, no longer bound to this world. This is the inner reality that yields the fruit of a new life. The new life in Christ is not an improved version of our historical existence. St. Paul describes it as a “new creation.” It is a revealing of a new reality. The resurrection is not the improvement of a corpse: it represents the marriage of heaven and earth.

Our long services are filled with Scripture (especially the Psalms), punctuated by the various hymns that form both praise as well as a mystical commentary on the events themselves. The Psalms hold a unique place. For the Church, they are not a mere collection of ancient poetry encrusted with obscurity. The Psalms are the voice of Christ Himself. As we offer them in the Church, Christ stands in our midst and prays. Our voice becomes His voice.

It is a great gift of grace that our merely human actions become the actual embodiment of the Kingdom of God. This is revealed particularly in the sacraments. In Holy Baptism, St. Paul says we are “baptized into the death of Christ.” He does not say that we do this to remember Christ’s death. It is an actual and true union with the death of Christ. The same is true of the Eucharist:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [participation, *κοινωνία*] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (1 Cor. 10:16)

Our liturgical actions all have this character about them. They gain their meaning and value through their direct participation in the very things they celebrate.

There is, indeed, a journey made in the services of Holy Week. The events of the week, carefully shared in the fullness of their significance, form the framework for a pilgrimage of the heart. Our Faith should never be reduced to mere mental exercise. A liturgical pilgrimage is physical, even sensual. Set in the context of the worshipping Church, it carries us into the mystery that is set before us. Just as the Holy Eucharist is that most perfect presentation of the death and resurrection of Christ, in which we not only remember, but actually partake, so, too, the liturgical drama of Holy Week forms an extended Divine Liturgy. It is the whole of our salvation mystically made present, over the course of days rather than mere hours.

The friend of St. Gregory of Nyssa, that other Gregory, called “the Theologian,” gave instructions to his congregation for Great and Holy Pascha. His words are as apt some 1600 years later as they were the night they were spoken:

If you are a Simon of Cyrene, take up the Cross and follow. If you are crucified with Him as a robber, acknowledge God as a penitent robber. If even He was numbered among the transgressors for you and your sin, become law-abiding for His sake. Worship Him Who was hanged for you, even if you yourself are hanging; make some gain even from your wickedness; purchase salvation by your death; enter with Jesus into Paradise, so that you may learn from what you have fallen.

Contemplate the glories that are there; let the murderer die outside with his blasphemies; and if you be a Joseph of Arimathæa, beg the Body from him that crucified Him, make your own that which cleanses the world. If you be a Nicodemus, the worshipper of God by night, bury Him with spices. If you be a Mary, or another Mary, or a Salome, or a Joanna, weep in the early morning. Be first to see the stone taken away, and perhaps you will see the Angels and Jesus Himself. Say something; hear His Voice. If He says to you, "Touch Me not," stand afar off; reverence the Word, but do not grieve; for He knows those to whom He appears first. Keep the feast of the Resurrection; come to the aid of Eve who was first to fall, of Her who first embraced the Christ, and made Him known to the disciples. Be a Peter or a John; hasten to the Sepulchre, running together, running against one another, vying in the noble race. And even if you be beaten in speed, win the victory of zeal; not looking into the tomb, but going in. And if, like a Thomas, you were left out when the disciples were assembled to whom Christ shows Himself, when you do see Him do not be faithless; and if you do not believe, then believe those who tell you; and if you cannot believe them either, then have confidence in the print of the nails. If He descend into Hell, descend with Him. Learn to know the mysteries of Christ there also.... And if He ascend up into Heaven, ascend with Him. Be one of those angels who escort Him, or one of those who receive Him. Bid the gates be lifted up, or be made higher, that they may receive Him, exalted after His Passion....

It was just this sort of understanding that yielded the depths of theology within the soul of St. Gregory. St. Paul used the imagery of the journey in his own life. He placed himself in Christ in fullest way possible: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me." By faith, he became an eyewitness of everything he preached.

This is the same invitation that is given to us in Christ. In Holy Week, it is written large so that we can read it with care, pausing over each letter and each word. Holy Week dwells among us and always calls to us. But how can we refuse to be there when such care and effort has been made by so many through the centuries to make this inner journey possible?

No one can go there in our place. Christ did not die in order to keep us from dying. He died so that we might die with Him, bearing the Cross He commanded us to take up. But dying with Him, we live and become partakers of the Kingdom.

Year after year, the faithful look ahead to these days. It is a labor of love, a reaching out towards that which has come into our midst. Our actions echo the words of St. Paul:

...but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. (Phil. 3:12)
(adopted from Ancientfaith.com from the blogs by Fr Stephen Freeman)



Catholic Women's Choir

We rejoice with Jon and Lo Hebert on birth of their twin boys Aden Cruz (right) and Noah Sage. They arrived early morning just before sunrise on Thursday of the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete, March 14th. Grant O Lord to the new born twins Aden and Noah, their three older brothers Jude, Levi and Jesse and their parents peace, health and happiness for many and blessed years!!!!

