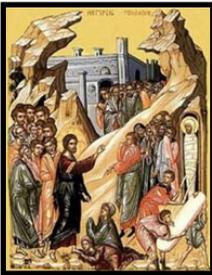
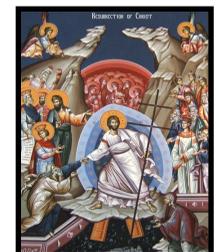
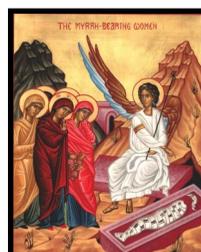
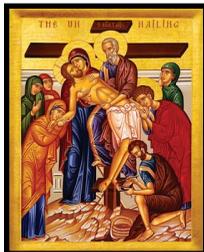
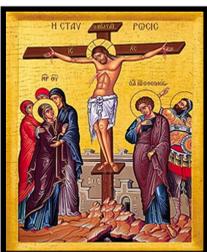
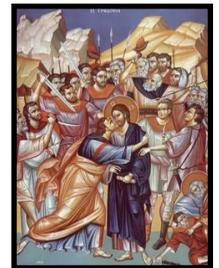


HOLY WEEK at ST. NICHOLAS



The services of Holy Week transform us into eyewitnesses and direct participants in the awesome events of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. In readings taken from both Old and New Testaments, in hymns, processions, and liturgical commemoration, we see the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies and the mighty acts by which God Himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, grants us forgiveness for our sins and rescues us from the pain of eternal death. This can be the most spiritually rewarding week of the year if we give ourselves over to the celebration of it. A full participation will require schedules to be reworked—everyone is encouraged to consider taking off at least the first half of Holy Thursday and all of Holy Friday for a once-a-year transforming experience (work/school religious observance letters are available). Through the Divine Services, we walk with Christ from His raising of Lazarus, through the final week of His Earthly ministry, to His Passion, Death, and Resurrection!



LAZARUS SATURDAY: Our Lord raises Lazarus from the dead, “confirming the universal resurrection.” The crowds respond to this miracle by welcoming Christ in His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, but this welling up of support convinces the religious leaders to plot Jesus’ death.

PALM SUNDAY: Our Lord is welcomed into Jerusalem with cries of “Hosanna!” and we the faithful join their cry and celebrate our Lord’s coming as the Conqueror, though not of the Romans or other earthly powers, but of the power of Death itself. Blessed Palms are distributed to be held by the faithful and we process around the Church, joining the crowds at the first Palm Sunday.

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY MONDAY & HOLY TUESDAY EVENINGS: These evening services call to mind the beginning of Jesus’ suffering, each with unique themes. On Sunday evening, we commemorate both the prophetic figure of Joseph in the Old Testament suffered unjustly at the hands of his brothers before being greatly rewarded; and the parable of the fig tree which was cursed for not being fruitful. Monday’s theme continues the need for watchfulness and preparation, lest we be called unprepared before the awesome judgment seat of Christ to render an account of ourselves. On Tuesday evening, the transformation from the life of sin to a life of faith and obedience is exemplified for us in the person of the sinful woman who received the gift of forgiveness when she anointed Jesus with myrrh and washed His feet. The highlight of the service is the hymn written in honor of this woman by St. Kassiani.

HOLY MONDAY, TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY MORNINGS: The Presanctified Liturgies offer us the spiritual strength of Holy Communion. Besides Great and Holy Friday when no Liturgy is permitted due to the solemn nature of the day our Lord hung upon the Cross, we have a chance to commune each day of Holy Week.

HOLY WEDNESDAY EVENING: In the Sacrament of Holy Unction, the faithful are anointed and thus healed both physically and spiritually. They are also reconciled to God and one another so that they might receive the Eucharist instituted by Christ at the Last Supper.

HOLY THURSDAY MORNING: We ascend Mt. Zion with Christ and the Twelve, and enter into the upper room. Once there, we witness the awesome moment when, at the Last Supper, Christ abolishes the ritual practice of sacrifice in the Old Covenant and establishes the ritual of the New Covenant through the Sacrament of Holy Communion. In imitation of our Lord’s humility, the Priest washes the feet of the faithful as Christ washed the feet of His disciples.

HOLY THURSDAY EVENING: In this service, we contemplate the undeserved suffering of Jesus Christ, endured for our salvation. The 12 Gospel readings witness for us the betrayal and arrest of Jesus, his trial and conviction, and finally his torture, crucifixion and death at the hands of a sinful humanity. This evening’s service includes the procession representing Christ carrying His own cross hearing the haunting hymn, telling us that “Today, He is suspended on a tree, He who suspended the Earth over the Waters.”

HOLY FRIDAY AFTERNOON: We keep vigil at the Cross, hearing the prophecies and Gospel readings of our Lord's Passion and Death. We are once again reverent witnesses to the undeserved suffering of Christ, to his terrible passion and death. The brief services of the Hours are held on each hour, beginning at Noon. The time between services can be spent in quiet rest, prayer or spiritual reading, making for a day of peaceful retreat. At the Vespers of the Unnailing, we join in the love of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who tenderly removed Christ's body from the Cross, wrapped it in clean linen, and carried it to Joseph's own unused tomb for burial, portrayed for us in the removal of the icon of the Crucifixion and the procession of the Epitaphios—the icon of Christ's Burial—and its placement in the Bier, symbolizing His Tomb.

HOLY FRIDAY EVENING: On Holy Friday evening, we sing the Lamentations before the tomb of Christ mourning His Death while we celebrate the Salvation it accomplished. We carry his decorated Tomb (the "Bier" or "*Kouvouklion*") around the Church in procession. The service ends on a note of joy and hope, with the reading of the Prophet Ezekiel in which the "dry bones" foretell the resurrection yet to come. Death is about to be conquered and faithfulness rewarded. Following this service we keep vigil all night with the reading of the Gospels before the Tomb, taking shifts until the Liturgy of Holy Saturday morning.

HOLY SATURDAY MORNING: We conclude the entire season of preparation and repentance begun two months before, and celebrate the theme of faithfulness receiving its reward. Christ is buried, the twelve apostles scattered and defeated. And yet, three Myrrh-bearing women come in faithfulness to perform the last act of love - to anoint Jesus according to the Jewish burial custom. They discover the Empty Tomb and are the first to share in Christ's triumph over evil and death—celebrated by the changing from Purple to White in the midst of the service and the jubilant scattering of bay leaves and rose petals as symbols of victory and triumph!

HOLY SATURDAY EVENING / GREAT and HOLY PASCHA: We enter the Church and find it plunged into darkness to symbolize the despair and defeat experienced before the dawn of Christ's victory over Death. A single lit candle emerges from the Altar representing the victory of Christ over death, the defeat of the Prince of Darkness by Jesus, the Light of the World. As the light is passed, it pushes back the darkness in the church and defeats it completely. The Resurrection is proclaimed in song and triumphant procession.

EASTER SUNDAY AFTERNOON: Christ's Resurrection and the victory He offers all is affirmed as the Gospel is read in numerous languages to illustrate the universality of the Good News of the Resurrection and its proclamation to the very ends of the earth. Love, forgiveness, reconciliation, triumph and joy—these are the gifts which we receive because Christ lived and died and triumphed for our sake.

HOLY WEEK at ST. NICHOLAS

Lazarus Saturday	April 20	9 am	Matins
		10 am	Divine Liturgy (followed by breakfast & church cleaning)
		6 pm	Great Vespers of Palm Sunday
Palm Sunday	April 21	8:50 am	Matins & Orthodox Education
		10 am	Divine Liturgy followed by an all-parish luncheon hosted by the Parish Council. <i>Note: Everyone is invited to bring a Lenten appetizer, dessert or fruit tray.</i>
		7 pm	Bridegroom Matins
Holy Monday	April 22	9 am	Presanctified Liturgy
		6 pm	Bridegroom Matins (@ St. George - <u>Note</u> the starting time)
Holy Tuesday	April 23	9 am	Presanctified Liturgy
		7 pm	Bridegroom Matins (sung by our Church School)
Holy Wednesday	April 24	9 am	Presanctified Liturgy
		7 pm	Holy Unction (followed by Lenten dessert reception. <i>Note: Everyone is invited to bring a Lenten appetizer, dessert or fruit tray.</i>)
* Holy Thursday	April 25	9 am	Divine Liturgy of the Institution of Holy Communion w/Washing of the Feet (followed by breakfast)
		6:30 pm	Matins w/12 Passion Gospels

HOLY FRIDAY RETREAT

Royal Hours — 1st Hour Noon
Royal Hours — 3rd Hour 1 pm
Royal Hours — 6th Hour 2 pm
Royal Hours — 9th Hour 3 pm

Everyone is encouraged to dedicate this day to Christ who offers His life to us. Between each of the Hours, consider the following ideas: Remain in Quiet Reflection, Read Scripture or an Orthodox Book, Take a Prayer Walk, Volunteer for a Project, Watch an Inspirational Movie, Chat for a few moments with Fr. Michael, etc.. Activities for children will be available.

Vespers of the Un-nailing of Christ — 4 pm
Vigil at the Tomb of Christ (Readers sign-up in the Narthex)
Matins with Lamentations — 7 pm
All-night Vigil at the Tomb of Christ (Readers sign-up in the Narthex)

Holy Saturday	April 27	10 am	Divine Liturgy (followed by a wine & roll breakfast)
		10 pm	Rush, Matins & Paschal Liturgy (followed by a celebration meal. <i>Note: Everyone Is invited to bring a side dish & dessert to share. The Parish Council is preparing lamb & rice.</i>)
Easter Sunday	April 28	1 pm	Agape Vespers (followed by an Easter Egg Hunt)

* Everyone is encouraged to arrange for time off school/work for Holy Thursday & Holy Friday.
Excuse forms are available on the table in the Narthex or at the Church Office.