

GREAT FRIDAY, SATURDAY & PASCHA

GREAT FRIDAY: THE CRUCIFIXION (Celebrated Holy Thursday Evening)

- ❖ The Passion of Christ – step by step sufferings of Christ
- ❖ The Reading of 12 Gospels
- ❖ The Procession of the Crucified One
- ❖ The veneration of the Christ on the Cross

Christ the New Adam - The Garden of Gethsemane

“Gethsemane, the Son’s priestly acceptance of His Father’s Commission (Patitsas)

“Christ comes precisely to be the "new Adam," to save Adam and the children of Adam by reversing Adam's mistakes. His crucifixion at the place of the skull, Golgotha, is held in Church apocrypha (non-canonical but edifying) to be the resting place of Adam's own physical skull, and icons of the Crucifixion depict Christ's blood falling toward and landing on Adam's remains below the Cross. Christ is tempted in a garden, as was Adam. His Cross annihilates the curse inflicted by Adam's sin before the tree in the Garden of Eden. Christ's body absorbs Adam's curse, his Cross quenches the flaming sword guarding the Tree of Life, and in fact he and his Cross become a new Tree of Life no longer forbidden to God's children. (Professor, Timothy Patitsas, *The King Returns To His City*, p. 331-2).”

“Christ in Gethsemane, amid the unbearable sorrow of his sacrifice, also must taste the indescribable pain caused by his favorite disciples. He is alone, though his chosen ones are near him!” (Bishop Traketellas).

Suffering After Gethsemane: Christ, by accepting suffering in this way, gave pain itself a greater value...it became a sacrifice of love and a work of redemption...suffering is no longer a participation in the sin of Adam, but participation in the love of Christ” (Matthew the Poor).

Our “New” Perspective: “The Christian who truly believes in the cross should not abuse his freedom and shun it, for the Christian who has fathomed the depth of the Cross conceives suffering as a part and parcel of his faith, or even a portion of his own which he cherishes and is happy to fulfill, and a goal for which he strikes out fearlessly” (Matthew The Poor).

The Trial

Jesus’ trial was a double trial;

- Religious: The court of the High priest (Sanhedrin) charged Jesus of blasphemy. “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” Jesus: “I am” (Mt. 26:63).
- Civil/Political: They found no crime in him.

The Procession of the Crucified One (1after the 5th Gospel)

“Today He who hung the earth upon the waters is hung upon the Cross. He who wraps the heavens in clouds is wrapped in the purple of Mockery. The Bridegroom of the church is transfixed with nails. The Son of the virgin is pierced with a spear.

We venerate Your Passion, O Christ show us your glorious Resurrection” (Hymn following the Fifth Gospel Reading).

The Descent Into Hades (the realm of death)



“But Christ journeys beyond and below even the tomb. *You descended to earth to save Adam . . . and went down all the way to hades seeking him* (Great Saturday Matins). In Hades the two Adams meet, and in the process the Temple (referring to both Christ's body and the Temple in Jerusalem) necessary to mediate God's meeting with man is destroyed, while Adam as the personal and direct tabernacle of God is renewed. . (Professor, Timothy Patitsas, *The King Returns To His City*, p. 334).”

“On the Cross, Christ . . . reverses Adam 's two sins (had Adam merely exercised his responsibility, either by not eating, or by taking the blame for his own *and* Eve's act) against Eve and God with as much precision as Adam had transgressed the two greatest commandments: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." In the first quote, he forgives his Bride, and counts her transgression as void. The second quote, the opening verse of Psalm 22, has the force here not of accusing God, but of accepting and proclaiming the justice of God ...(That is, it is in accepting God's justice that the Son forgives the Bride.).” (Professor, Timothy Patitsas, *The King Returns To His City*, p. 334).”

Christ fulfills His Ordained as the High Priest ~ the One who offers and is offered

“Ironically, the chief priests are speaking the truth when they "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." This is exactly correct, for Christ in two sentences is restoring the Kingly and Prophetic offices of Adam by above all becoming Priest, with himself as his only offering, in order to save

his Bride ... By not saving Himself, he regains Kingly command, even over a place below creation, Hades. (Professor, Timothy Patitsas, *The King Returns To His City*, p. 335).”

Crucified “between two thieves”

“In the Genesis account of the Fall, it is precisely the *taking* (thieving) of what was not freely given (the fruit of the Tree) which ruins mankind and expels him from Paradise, and so Christ's situation between the two thieves at Golgotha suggests the culpability of Adam and Eve for his crucifixion. "O Master, Your hands are transfixed with nails; so You heal the wound of our first parents and the sinful greed of their hands." Christ's hands are stretched and nailed because of the greedy clasping of the first parents' hands at the Tree of knowledge of Good and Evil. (Professor, Timothy Patitsas, *The King Returns To His City*, p. 224).”

The “Good Thief”

“...the Good Thief ... refuses to grumble, acknowledges Christ's sovereignty, and receives Paradise. The thief is identified with Adam directly, since he is the first to enter Paradise, while Adam was the first to leave it...It is a further irony that the thief replaces Peter, the captain of the Apostles, who wanted to die alongside Christ but lacked the courage.” (Professor, Timothy Patitsas, *The King Returns To His City*, p. 224).”

The Inauguration of the “End Times” – The New Jerusalem is Dawning

“Good Friday ...It is the day of Sin, the day of Evil, the day on which the Church invites us to realize their awful reality and power in "this world." For Sin and Evil have not disappeared, but, on the contrary, still constitute the basic law of the world and of our life ...On what side, with whom would we have been, had we lived in Jerusalem under Pilate? This is the question addressed to us in every word of Holy Friday services. It is, indeed, the day of this world, its *real* and not symbolical, condemnation and the *real* and not ritual, judgment on our life... It is the revelation of the true nature of the world which preferred then, and still prefers, darkness to light, evil to good, death to life. Having condemned Christ to death, "this world" has condemned itself to death and inasmuch as we accept its spirit, its sin, its betrayal of God -- we are also condemned... Such is the first and dreadfully realistic meaning of Good Friday... (Fr. Schmemmann, *An Explanation of Holy Week*, pg. 12)

A Day of Redemption

“... there is no sin and, therefore, no death in Christ (He fulfills all righteousness). He *accepts* (voluntarily) to die only by love for us. He wants to assume and to share our human condition to the end. He accepts the punishment of our nature, as He assumed the whole burden of human predicament. He dies because He has truly identified Himself with us, has indeed taken upon Himself the tragedy of man's life...And because His dying is love, compassion and co-suffering, in *His death the very nature of death is changed*. From punishment it becomes the radiant act of love and forgiveness, the end of alienation and solitude. (Fr. Schmemmann, *An Explanation of Holy Week*, pg. 13)

The Destruction of Evil

“His death is a saving death because it destroys the very source of death: evil...And as He dies on the Cross having accepted the ultimate horror of death: absolute solitude (My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me!?), nothing remains but to confess that "truly this was the Son of God!...”

And, thus, it is this Death, this Love, this obedience, this fullness of Life that destroy what made Death the universal destiny (Fr. Schmemmann, An Explanation of Holy Week, pg. 13).”

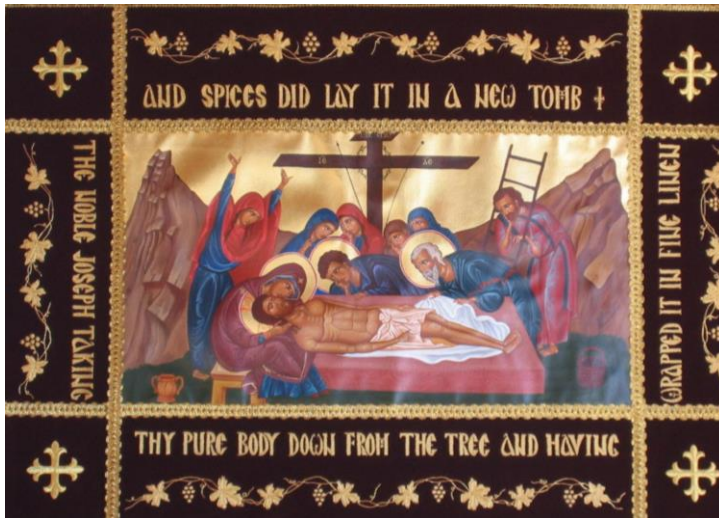
Great & Holy Friday Morning

The Royal Hours (Friday Morning)

“...at the Hours which replace the Divine Liturgy: for the prohibition to celebrate Eucharist on this day means that the sacrament of Christ's Presence does not belong to "this world" of sin and darkness, but is the sacrament of the *world to come*.” (Fr. Schmemmann, An Explanation of Holy Week, pg. 13)

The Vespers (Friday Afternoon – The Burial of Christ)

- ❖ The “Un-nailing of Christ
- ❖ The procession of the Epitaphio
- ❖ The burial of Christ in the tomb



“Vespers, the service of Christ's burial the hymns and readings are full of solemn accusations of those, who willingly and freely decided to kill Christ, justifying this murder by their religion, their political loyalty, their practical considerations and their professional obedience...And when, at the end of Vespers, we place in the center of the Church the image of Christ in the tomb, when this long day comes to its end, we know that we are at the end of the long history of salvation and redemption. The Seventh Day, the day of rest, the blessed Sabbath comes and with it -- the revelation of the Life-giving Tomb. (Fr. Schmemmann, An Explanation of Holy Week, pg. 13)

GREAT FRIDAY EVENING (Matins For Holy Saturday) The Tomb and Womb

The Lamentations / Eulogy or Encomium (Praises)

“The Church proclaims that Christ has "trampled death by death." It means that even before the Resurrection, an event takes place, in which the sorrow is not simply replaced by joy, but is itself *transformed* into joy. Great Saturday is precisely this day of transformation, the day when victory grows from inside the defeat, when before the Resurrection, we are given to contemplate the death of death itself... And all this is expressed, and even more, all this really takes place every year in

this marvelous morning service (celebrated Friday evening), in this liturgical commemoration which becomes for us a saving and transforming presence. (Schmemmann, On Holy Week, pg. 14)

**“Today You do keep the seventh Day.
Which you blessed of old by resting from your works.
You bring all things into being and you make all things new.
Observing the Sabbath rest, my Savior, and restoring your strength.”**

The Lamentations Psalm 118 (119)

“In our liturgical practice today this psalm is used only at the funeral services, hence, its "funeral" connotation ... But in early liturgical tradition this Psalm was one of the essential parts of the Sunday vigil, the weekly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection. Its content is not "funeral" at all. This psalm is the purest and the fullest expression of love for the law of God, i.e., for the Divine design of man and of his life. The real life, the one which man lost through sin, consists in keeping, in fulfilling the Divine law, that life with God, in God and for God, for which man was created. "I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies as much as in all riches." (Verse 14) "I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word." (Verse 16)... The Father desires this death, the Son accepts it, revealing an unconditional faith in the perfection of the Father's will, in the necessity of this sacrifice of the Son by the Father. Psalm 119 is the psalm of that obedience, and therefore the announcement that in obedience the triumph has begun... (Schmemmann, Holy Week, pg. 15)

- ❖ Now “real life” is made accessible to us through Christ’s fulfillment of the psalm in His life – the only righteous sinless One – he conquers death before the Cross in this sense

Celebration of Christ as the Life of the World!

“Thou O Christ the Life, was laid in the tomb, and armies of angels were amazed, and they glorified your great humility.”

“Thou O, Christ the Life, was laid in the tomb, and by your death you have destroyed death and shed life upon the world.”

Christ The Victor – LIFE CONQUERS DEATH

“The man Jesus dies, but this Man is the Son of God. As man, He can really die, but in Him, God Himself enters the realm of death, partakes of death. This is the unique, the incomparable meaning of Christ's death. In it, *the man who dies is God*, or to be more exact, the God-man. God is the Holy Immortal; and only in the unity ... of God and Man in Christ can human death be "assumed" by God and be overcome and destroyed from within, be "trampled down by death..." (Schmemmann, Holy Week pg 16).

The Procession around the outside of the Church

The procession follows around the outside of the Church while everyone sings “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal have mercy on us.”

“We now go around the Church in a solemn procession with the Epitaphion, but it is not a funeral procession. It is the Son of God, the Holy Immortal, who proceeds through the darkness of Hades, announcing to "Adam of all generations" the joy of the forthcoming Resurrection. "Shining as the morning from the night," He proclaims that "all the dead will rise again, all those in the graves will live, and all those created will rejoice..." (Schmemmann, Holy Week, pg. 18).

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS

❖ **Holy Saturday Morning is actually the first announcement of Pascha. It was originally the beginning of the all-night Paschal vigil and was retained and displaced to Saturday morning.**

❖ **Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil**

“Sabbath, the seventh day, achieves and completes the history of salvation, its last act being the overcoming of death. But after the Sabbath comes the first day of a new creation, of a new life born from the grave. The theme of Resurrection is inaugurated... (Fr. Schmemmann, Holy Week, pg. 19).”

“It is already His Resurrection, but not yet ours. We will have to die, to accept the dying, the separation, the destruction. Our reality in this world, in this aeon, is the reality of the Great Saturday; this day is the real image of our human condition... We expect the Resurrection. We know that Christ's death has annihilated the power of death, and death is no longer the hopeless, the ultimate end of everything... Baptized into His death, we partake already of His life that came out of the grave. We receive His Body and Blood which are the food of immortality. We have in ourselves the token, the anticipation of the eternal life... All our Christian existence is measured by these acts of communion to the life of the "new aeon" of the Kingdom... and yet we are here, and death is our inescapable share. (Fr. Schmemmann, pg. 20.)

“Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling upon Death, and has bestowed life to those in the tombs!” (Resurrection Hymn).

BRIGHT WEEK

“So much emphasis is placed on the somber rites of Lent and Great Week, whereas joyful Bright Week goes by without the average Orthodox ever setting foot inside a church. It is the whole point of the Resurrection that God has escaped not only the bonds of the tomb, but of any *cult* (a system of religiosity) too narrowly defined. When the doors to the icon screen are kept open for this entire week, and none of the services are formally begun or formally ended, time and space themselves have been captured for Christ. The eight consecutive Sundays formed by the Resurrection, Renewal Week ... are the sign that the Lord has outgrown all cult by making everything cult. This is a clear link to the notion of that ideal city where there is no temple because God is everywhere and makes the whole city a temple. (Patitsas, pg. 314).”

“Christians who have observed the Week inhabit a creation recast as the "New Jerusalem" where their responsibility is to behave as priests. Christians are called to the liturgy after the liturgy, to a fulfillment of their royal ministry in all that they do. Their royal consecration grants them an authority in the world that is understood as a responsibility to care for the world. "Cleansing their

senses," they see the world in a new light, and are able for the first time to "clearly" confess Christ in their daily lives.... If Great Week has succeeded in creating new "liturgical beings," then liturgy becomes the dominant existential and social category for its adherents...a people who now see themselves as living stones of the City of God, and a universe filled with the beautiful rays of divine Glory." (Patitsas, pg. 316)