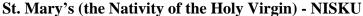
### "ORTHODOX 9" PARISHES BULLETIN

#### RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of *Orthodox IX* Churches including:



Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE Holy Ascension - CALMAR Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE St. John the Baptist - HOREN St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK) Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK) Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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Volume 49, Issue 4

**CHRIST IS RISEN!** 

April-May 2023

### THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - April 16 - HOLY EASTER



CHRIST IS RISEN!

The Holy Pascha is celebrated not as the anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ but as the Resurrection itself!

What we have done during the Great Lent is getting to know God, entirely, completely. We have not just heard that "God is love!" but we, like two disciples, that met Him after the Resurrection, approached Him closer and walked with Him all His way, to Jerusalem, and Praetorium and finally Golgotha! And, furthermore, we have met Him beyond time and this world with its nature!

He was asking us to stay and keep vigil with Him, and we tried to do so, though not always... Then, when He saw that we were having rest, He did not go on His way without us, but He stayed with us! When we were not able to go any further, He did as a good shepherd would do.

He stayed with the apostles and with us even realizing that the soldiers are already seeking and are about to find Him.

His soul was troubled no less than ours, but He did not ask Father to save Him, because it was for this very purpose that He came to us at that time and place - to suffer for the sin of all, to go through all kinds of torments. The Cross He was carrying - those were all the people he was carrying on His back, like a good shepherd.

This is how we found ourselves in the new reality and are now crying out: This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!

The Resurrection has since become a part of His Nature! Christ, our True God has become our Passover Lamb (1 Cor.): "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day." (John 6, 54)

Hence and since, the Resurrection, that we celebrate, has become the Main part of our nature, may it be so!

"The angel cried to the Lady full of grace: Rejoice, O pure Virgin.

Again I say: Rejoice. Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb.

With Himself He has raised all the dead. Rejoice, all ye people!"

INDEED HE IS RISEN!

#### PASCHAL MESSAGE OF HIS GRACE MATTHEW, BISHOP OF SOUROZH



Beloved in the Lord, all-honourable fathers, brothers, and sisters!

CHRIST IS RISEN!

I cordially greet you with these joyful and life-affirming words and congratulate you on the great and salvific holiday of the Bright Resurrection of Christ – Holy Pasch – the Easter!

In the days of the Easter celebration, filled with the light of all-conquering Divine love, the incomprehensible and great mystery of the victory of the God-Man over death was accomplished: He took upon Himself our infirmities and bore our illnesses (Is: 53:4), and, having endured suffering and death on the cross, descended to the depths of hell and crushed the gates of brass, uniting Heaven and earth - eternity and time, He opened the doors to the Kingdom of Heaven for us and gave us the joy of eternal life.

And today, filled with gratitude to the Lord, we proclaim to everyone about the great victory of Life over death, Good over evil, and share our Easter joy with our relatives and friends, testifying about the Savior Who rose from the tomb, because the Resurrection of Christ, according to St. Filaret of Moscow, *creates hope, ignites love, inspires prayer, brings grace, enlightens wisdom, destroys every calamity and even death itself!* 

Sharing with you the good news about the Risen Savior, I prayerfully wish to you, all-honorable fathers, dear brothers and sisters, bright Easter joy, fortitude and firmness in faith, peace and prosperity!

May the saving light of the Resurrection of Christ always illuminate our way of life, warm and comfort, illuminate our hearts, inspire good deeds and make us all partakers of His victory, for

#### **CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!**

Bishop of Sourozh temporary Administrator of the Patriarchal parishes in the USA and Canada

The Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom is read at the end of the Matins at Pascha, the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, universally throughout the Orthodox Church. It was composed sometime during his ministry in the late 4th or early 5th century.

The homily has a victorious tone which reflects the Orthodox concept of Christ, as a victorious King who has battled the Devil and won, broken down the gates of Hell and liberated the souls of the dead to be reunited with their Father.

The homily is particularly poignant for recent converts, as Saint John Chrysostom declares that even those who have joined the Church at the very last hour, late in life or after a dissolute existence, may share in the redemption granted by Christ's Resurrection, on equal terms with those who have been faithful Christians since the cradle.

Note again that Christ's Resurrection is described in the present tense rather than past tense; the congregation is not commemorating a distant past event but living through a current miracle!



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(Read the Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom on the next page!)

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

If anyone is devout and a lover of God, let him enjoy this beautiful and radiant festival.

If anyone is a wise servant, let him, rejoicing, enter into the joy of his Lord.

If anyone has wearied himself in fasting, let him now receive his recompense.

If anyone has labored from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If anyone has come at the third hour, with thanksgiving let him keep the feast. If anyone has arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss. If anyone has delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near without hesitation. If anyone has arrived even at the eleventh hour, let him not fear on account of his delay. For the Master is gracious and receives the last, even as the first; he gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, just as to him who has labored from the first. He has mercy upon the last and cares for the first; to the one he gives, and to the other he is gracious. He both honors the work and praises the intention.

Enter all of you, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and, whether first or last, receive your reward. O rich and poor, one with another, dance for joy! O you ascetics and you negligent, celebrate the day! You that have fasted and you that have disregarded the fast, rejoice today! The table is rich-laden; feast royally, all of you! The calf is fatted; let no one go forth hungry!

Let all partake of the feast of faith. Let all receive the riches of goodness.

Let no one lament his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn his transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Saviour's death has set us free.

He that was taken by death has annihilated it! He descended into hades and took hades captive! He embittered it when it tasted his flesh! And anticipating this Isaiah exclaimed, "Hades 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 purged! It was embittered, for it was bound in chains!

It took a body and, face to face, met God! It took earth and encountered heaven! It took what it saw but crumbled before what it had not seen!

"O death, where is thy sting? O hades, where is thy 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!

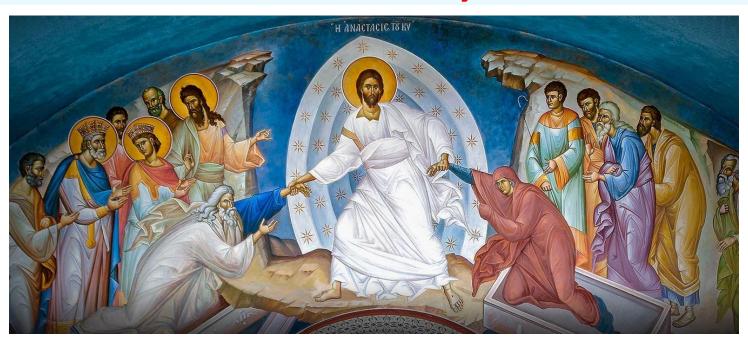
Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in a tomb!

For Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the First-fruits of them that slept.

To him be glory and might unto ages of ages. Amen.

# The Paschaltide

# **Post-Easter Sundays**



The joyous Easter season or Paschaltide is finally here! In the Orthodox Church, this season starts on Easter Sunday (April 16<sup>th</sup> this year) and continues for fifty days until the eve of the feast of the Pentecost, which falls on June 4<sup>th</sup> this year (2023).

The 50 days of rejoicing from Pascha to Pentecost are the oldest liturgical season of the Church Year—older even than Great Lent or Holy Week! That is because rejoicing in rising to new life with the Lord is the most essential dimension of the Christian understanding of time. The number "50" in the Old Testament is called a "jubilee," a time of unbounded rejoicing. The Church experiences in these 50 days a foretaste of the release, rest, and gladness of the Kingdom of God. For this reason, some Orthodox Christians do not fast during this time, and there is no kneeling during this season.

# The Bright Week

Bright Week is the first week after Easter Sunday. It is the most joyous time of the liturgical year in the Orthodox Church. Every day during this week the paschal services are celebrated in all their splendor. The Easter baptismal procession is repeated daily.

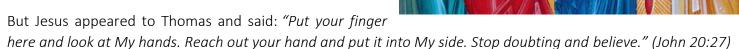
It is not like any other week because of a few more differences:

- First of all, fasting is not required during the whole week. This means that there is no fast on Wednesday and Friday and everyone is allowed to eat meat and dairy. "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?" (Luke 5:34). Of course not. Our bridegroom Christ is with us, and His Kingdom is also here. For this reason there is no need for any of us to fast.
- Secondly, the Royal Doors are open during all of the Bright Week services. This symbolizes the open door to Christ's empty tomb as well as the torn veil of the Jewish Temple: "And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom." (Matthew 27:50-51)
- Finally, during the week, all faithful greet each other with the Paschal greeting: Christ is risen! Indeed He is risen! (or *Truly He is risen!*)

# St Thomas Sunday (Antipascha)

The second Sunday after Easter is called the St Thomas Sunday or Antipascha ("opposite" Pascha, i.e., at the other end of Bright Week, or the alternative time to celebrate for those who could not do at the actual day). This is when we remember the appearance of Christ to the Apostle Thomas, which happened eight days after the Resurrection.

Thomas was not with the rest of the disciples when they saw the resurrected Christ, so he didn't believe them: "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my finger where the nails have been, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe." (John 20:25)



Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!" Christ answered, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:28-29)

Even though we have not seen Christ with our bodily eyes, we have all met Him one way or another in our lives. We have all had a look at His Kingdom and felt His grace at some point. In the Holy Spirit we have seen and touched and tasted the Word of Life (1 Jn 1.1-4). And this is why we believe.

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1)

At each of the daily services until Ascension Day we sing the **Easter Troparion**. At each of the Sunday services beginning with Antipascha, we sing the Easter canon and hymns, and repeat the celebration of the "first day of the week" on which Christ rose from the dead.

At all of the liturgies the epistle readings are taken from the **Book of Acts** telling us of the first Christians who lived in communion with the Risen Lord.

# Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women



On the third Sunday after Easter, we commemorate the Myrrhbearers: Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, Salome, Joanna, Susanna and others. After the Sabbath was over they came to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body. Inside the open tomb, they found an angel who said:

"You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" (Mark 16:6-7)

The Myrrhbearers were faithful to Jesus Christ not only till the end, but also after the "end", unconditionally, selflessly; that is why they were the very first people to hear the news of Christ's resurrection that day!

On this day, we also sing the Holy Friday hymns, like these Troparia:

"When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal,

Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead."

"The noble Joseph, when he had taken down

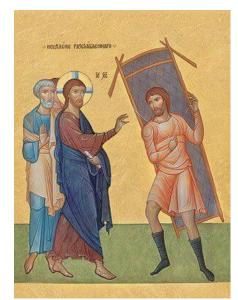
Thy most pure body from the Tree,

wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices,

and placed it in a new tomb."

"The angel came to the myrrh-bearing women at the tomb and said: Myrrh is fitting for the dead, but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption."

### Sunday of the Paralytic



The man is healed by Christ while waiting to be put down into the pool of water. Through baptism in the church we, too, are healed and saved by Christ for eternal life. Thus, in the church, we are told, together with the paralytic, to "sin no more that nothing worse befall you" (*Jn 5:14*).

While continuing to rejoice in and proclaim the Lord's resurrection and victory over death, on this Sunday the Church pivots from celebration to concentration, placing us firmly back on the path of pastoral, curative therapy within the life of grace in the Church, and setting before us one of the deeper meanings of Pascha: In the Light of the Resurrection, we can come to see ourselves *as we really are*, paralyzed by a matrix of weaknesses and failings, yet called by Christ to begin living the Resurrected Life here and now. Like the paralytic of old, we can reach out to Christ as the One who can heal us.

"Today is a feast day for all of us paralytics. Today, brothers and sisters, we to a certain degree are meeting our name-day, our feast day. Who among us can boast that he is strong, courageous, bearing all the misfortunes of this age, fulfilling all of Christ's commandments? ... Paralytic bothers and sisters! Let us rejoice that we at least understand ourselves as we are! The Lord came into the world to save paralytic sinners, and us among them... "

#### The Feast of Mid-Pentecost

In the middle of the fourth week after Easter, we celebrate the feast of Mid-Pentecost.

Though not a Sunday, the Midfeast of Pentecost links two Paschal Sundays which both have to do with water, and is itself celebrated for eight days, just as the Great Feasts.

On this day, we remember what Jesus taught at the Festival of Tabernacles.

The Festival commemorated the wanderings of the Jews in the desert. During the Festival a priest would always mix water with wine and pour it over the altar - that way the jews remembered the gift of drinking water in the desert when Moses struck the rock (Numbers 20:11).

But Jesus said: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." (John 7:37-38)

This is why, on the feast of Mid-Pentecost, a Small Blessing of the Waters usually takes place.

Here is a Mid-Pentecost hymn which explains why we celebrate this feast:

"Christ God, the Creator and Master of all cried to all in the midst of the Feast of the law: Come and draw the water of immortality! We fall before You and faithfully cry: Grant us Your bounties, for You are the Fountain of our life!" (Mid-Pentecost Kontakion)

### Sunday of the Samaritan Woman



On the fifth Sunday after Easter, Orthodox Christians remember dialog between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Again the theme is the "living water" and the recognition of Jesus as God's Messiah (Jn 4:10-11; 25-26).

Jesus asked the woman at the well to give Him a drink of water, to which she replied, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (John 4:9). At that time the Jews did not associate with Samaritans.

Here is what Jesus revealed to the woman:

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give

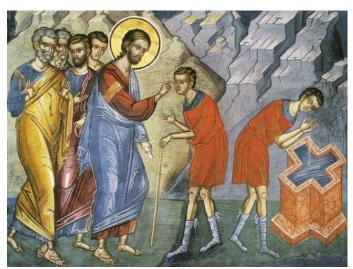
them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:13)

Christ also told the woman about the true worship:

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth." (John 4:23-24)

Jesus' words also reveal to us that salvation is offered to everyone: the Jews, the Samaritans, and all the other nations of the world!

# Sunday of the Blind Man



The sixth Sunday commemorates the healing of the man blind from birth (Jn 9). Jesus healed him by putting clay that He made on his eyes.

We are identified with that man who came to see and to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. The Lord has anointed our eyes with his own divine hands and washed them with the waters of our baptism (John 9:6-II).

The man told everyone:

"The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." (John 9:11)

Once again, this miracle was performed on a Sabbath day, when clay-making and washing were forbidden by the law. By breaking the law, Jesus showed us that He is indeed the Lord of the Sabbath and is equal to God the Father.

The entire Church follows this man in his fate, knowing that it is those who do not see Jesus as the Lord who are really blind and still in their sins (Jn 9:41). The others have the light of life and can see and know the Son of God, for "you have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you" (Jn 9:37).

On the Sunday of the Blind Man, we sing this beautiful hymn:

"I come to Thee, O Christ, blind from birth in my spiritual eyes, and call to Thee in repentance: Thou art the most radiant Light of those in darkness!" (Kontakion of the Sunday of the Blind Man)

### Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council



On this day, the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate the First Ecumenical Synod, of the three hundred and eighteen God-bearing Fathers, which took place in Nicæa in 325 A.D.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious.

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

This Synod took place under St. Constantine the Great, who put an end to the persecution of Christians, in the twentieth year of his reign, and was presiding over the sessions of the Council (Synod).

This Synod of the Holy Fathers proclaimed and confessed Him to be one in essence and honor with the Father, decreed for this reason that the present Feast should fall after the glorious Ascension, exalting this assembly of so many Fathers, as it were, for proclaiming that He Who ascended in the flesh was true God and perfect man in the flesh.

After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).

The Paschaltide is the brightest period of life of the Holy Church! May God be revealed to us during these days!

CHRIST IS RISEN!
CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!

Compiled by archpriest Yevheniy Protsenko

### **Gratitude & Announcements**

### Thank you for Church Cleaning!



The parishioners and the Parish Council are very much thankful to the people who contributed their time and strength to the grand cleaning of St. Mary's Church on March the 25<sup>th</sup>. We extend our gratitude to David and Beverley Borys, Darcy and Tanny Doblanko, Kevin and Anna Wasiluk, Daniel and Anita Borys, Dennis Fedor and Cynthia Fedor, Alexander Raybov, Glenn and Branda

Belozer, and Connie Wasieczko, and everyone who took part in the event. Thank you for shining chandeliers!

#### Most of the shrines stolen from the Holy Ascension Church at Calmar are returned!

The parishioners of Orthodox IX parishes express their profound gratitude to the people who contributed to the returning of most of the shrines to the Holy Ascension Church, by the grace of God and due to their constant care for our and God's inheritance!



#### Republication of the book "Echoes of Faith"

We are glad to announce the preparation for the reprinting of our historic Church & Family book "Echoes of Faith", to replenish the quantity and make it again available for distribution! The Historical Society, that created the book was established 40 years ago (1983), and soon (in 2025) we are going to celebrate 40 years of the book publishing. We shall let you know when this job is accomplished.

#### **Children Bible Camp**

The camp will be conducted from Sunday of July 30<sup>th</sup> to Sunday of August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at Camp "BAR-V-NOK", at Pigeon Lake. Spiritual, recreation and art will be again the core activities for the retreat. The organizers ask the families to take active part in volunteering, and any kind of support and co-operation during the camp. Organizational Meeting will be held after the Great Lent, beginning with May and/or June.

#### Cleaning up the cemetery before the Grave Yard service

Dear families, please help us clean and tidy up the family graves for upcoming in May Memorial service. The general clean-up is scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> at about 10 am, though, you certainly can also come at any suitable time for you. Thank you!

### The Schedule of Graveyard Services

#### **APRIL**

30. Sunday - 10:00 am - Grave Yard Service - CALMAR 3:00 pm - Grave Yard Service - THORSBY

#### MAY

- 7. Sunday 10:00 am Liturgy & Grave Yard Service with tent and bake sale (the Bazaar, with smokies, hot dogs, cabbage roll and bakery) to follow NISKU

  3:00 pm Grave Yard Service Old Cemetery NISKU
- 14. Sunday 10:00 am Liturgy Grave Yard Service HOREN
- 20. Saturday 10:00 am Liturgy Grave Yard Service BONNYVILLE
- 21. Sunday 10:00 am Liturgy Grave Yard Service VEGREVILLE 3:30 pm Grave Yard Service WARWICK

#### **JUNE**

24. Saturday - 10:00 am - Liturgy - Grave Yard Service - MACNUTT 5:00 pm - Grave Yard Service - INSINGER 25. Sunday - 9:00 am - Liturgy - Grave Yard Service - FOAM LAKE

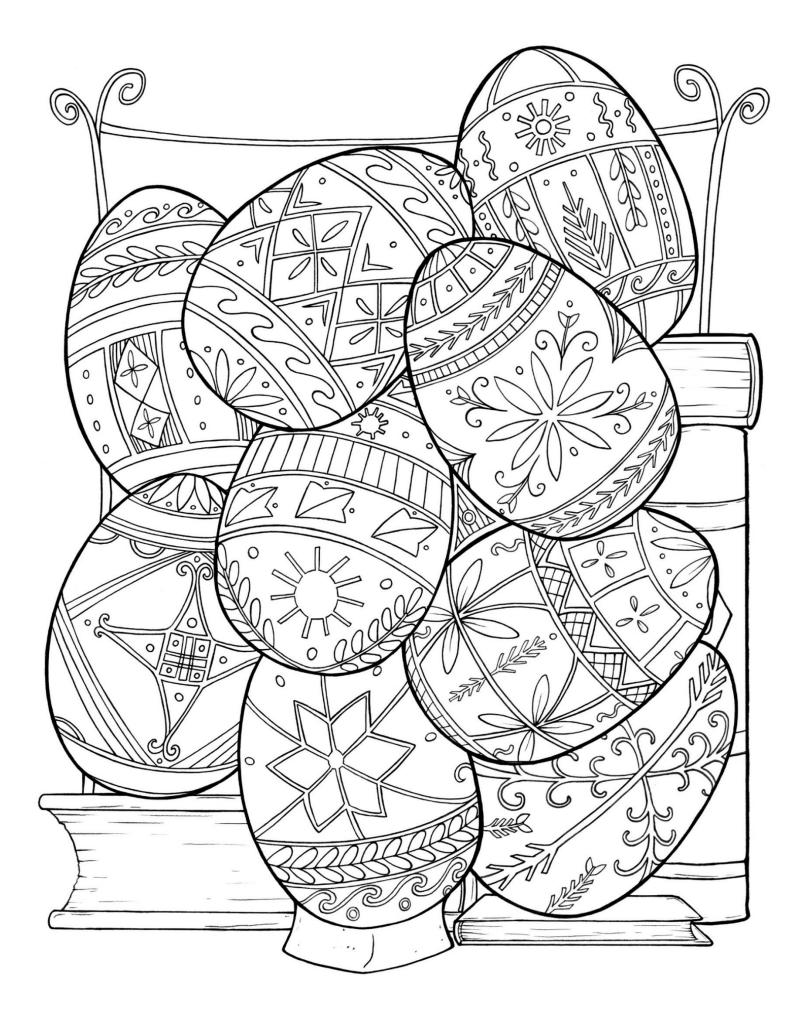
### Children's Corner: Christ is Risen! Drop in with your children and grandchildren!



There is a Holy Tradition story that St. Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalene, came to Rome with a Christian sermon and presented the Roman emperor Tiberius with a chicken egg with the words **Christ is Risen!** The emperor has shown doubt that someone can be resurrected, just as a white egg cannot turn red. At this time, a miracle happened: the white egg began to turn red. After that, Christians began to paint eggs for the Easter holiday. A new life is born from the egg. The shell depicts a tomb, and the red color indicates both the blood shed by Jesus Christ for people and the royal dignity of the Savior.

Here is an example how we can color the Easter Egg. This one has a lot of details, that may be a bit difficult for the youngest ones, so there is more coloring on the next page!





Christ is risen! April-May 2023 Truly He is risen!

Cili la l'agili (ipi li-May		2020 Huly He is Hiski!!				
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
April 16 - Holy Easter! 8:00 pm – Vegreville;	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>
11:30 pm – Paschal	Bright Monday	Bright Tuesday	<u>Bright</u>	Bright	<u>Bright</u>	Bright
Matins and Liturgy with	No Each all		<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
blessing of Easter baskets at St. Mary	No Fast all Week1					
Church, at Nisku	VVCCRI					
April 23	24	25	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>
2nd Sunday of Pascha.		 Universal				
Thomas Sunday, Anti-		Orthodox				
Pascha.		Memorial				
10:00 a.m. – Liturgy (on		service.				
demand, at Grande		All names will be read at St.				
Prairie, AB)		Mary's cemetery				
		(10 am).				
April 30	May l	May 2	May 3	May 4	<u>May 5</u>	<u>May 6</u>
3rd Sunday of Pascha.						
Sunday of the Myrrh-						
bearing Women.  Grave Yard Services:						
Calmar – 10 am;						
Thorsby – 3 pm						
May 7	May 8	May 9	<u>May 10</u>	May 11	<u>May 12</u>	<u>May 13</u>
4th Sunday after Pascha.						
10:00 a.m Divine						
Liturgy at NISKU;						
Grave Yard Service with tent and bake sale;						
3:00 pm - Grave Yard						
Service - at Old Cemetery						
<u>May 14</u>	<u>May 15</u>	<u>May 16</u>	<u>May 17</u>	<u>May 18</u>	May 19	<u>May 20</u>
5th Sunday after Pascha.						10 am -
11:00 a.m Grave Yard						Liturgy - Grave Yard
Service – at HOREN						Grave Yara Service –
						BONNYVILLE
May 21	May 22	<u>May 23</u>	<u>May 24</u>	<u>May 25</u>	<u>May 26</u>	<u>May 27</u>
6th Sunday after Pascha.	Victoria Day			The Hel		
10:00 am - Liturgy and 12:00 am Grave Yard	10:00 am - Liturgy – at			The Holy Ascension		
Service –VEGREVILLE;	UKRAINIAN			Day		
3:30 pm –WARWICK	VILLAGE			Duy		
May 28	May 29	May 30	May 31			
7th Sunday after Pascha.	<del></del>	<del></del>	<del>/</del>			
10:00 am - Liturgy –						
Patronal Feast –						
CALMAR with						
Blessing of water						