



“ORTHODOX IX” PARISHES BULLETIN

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

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



St. Mary’s (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU

Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE

St. John the Baptist - HOREN

Holy Ascension - CALMAR

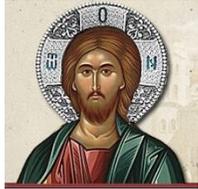
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)

Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY

Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)

St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE

Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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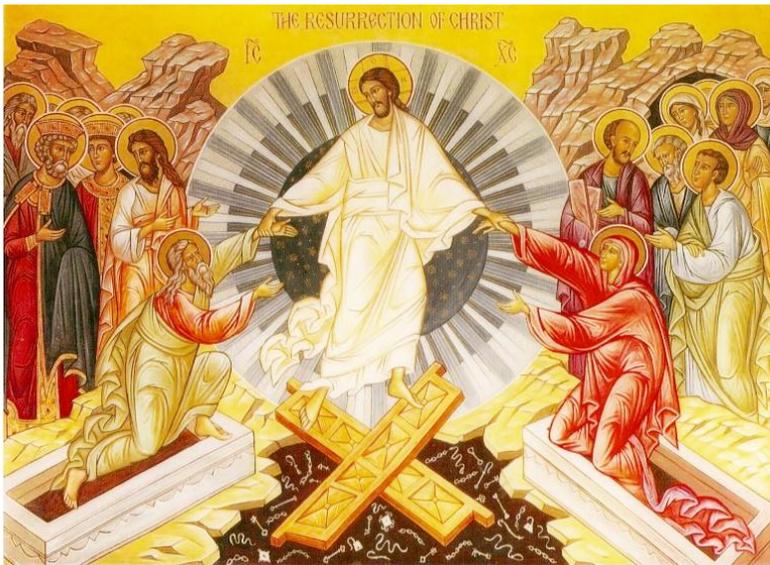


Volume 73, Issue 5

CHRIST IS RISEN!

April-May 2025

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST – April 20 - HOLY EASTER



Pascha (Easter) is the greatest and most radiant Feast of the Church, celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—the **triumph of life over death**, and the fulfillment of the hope of all mankind.

Long before the birth of Christ, the chosen people of Israel were delivered by God from slavery in Egypt. This miraculous event—freedom from bondage and death—became the foundation of the Old Testament Passover (Pascha).

In the New Testament, the meaning of Pascha is fulfilled and revealed in its fullness. **Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, has liberated all creation—across time and space—from slavery to sin and death.** This liberation was accomplished through His sufferings, death on the Cross, and glorious Resurrection.

St. Gregory the Theologian writes: *“Pascha is the Feast of Feasts and the Triumph of Triumphs—surpassing not only all earthly celebrations, but even those dedicated to Christ Himself—as the sun outshines the stars.”*

Indeed, the Resurrection of Christ is **the cornerstone of our faith and the pledge of our own resurrection.**

The truth of Christ’s Resurrection was foretold by the prophets and confirmed by the empty tomb, the witness of the Apostles, and the unwavering faith of martyrs and confessors throughout the centuries.

During these holy days of the Feast of Feasts, we greet you, dear brothers and sisters, with the eternal Paschal greeting:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

May the Risen Lord grant you and your loved ones abundant Paschal joy, grace, and His generous help in all things.

INDEED HE IS RISEN!

“Come, receive the light from the Light that never fades; come, glorify Christ, risen from the dead!”
(Paschal hymn)

With heartfelt love in the Risen Christ our Lord, V. Rev. f. Yevheniy Protsenko and family

**PASCHAL MESSAGE OF HIS GRACE MATTHEW, Bishop of Sourozh,
temporary Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA and Canada**

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

CHRIST IS RISEN!

**With great joy, I congratulate you on the Saving Feast of
THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST!**



On these holy days, the entire Universal Apostolic Church rejoices and glorifies the Risen Savior, Who opened for mankind the way to eternal life and everlasting joy: *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live."* (John 11:25).

For indeed *Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.* (1 Cor. 5:7) These words of the holy Apostle Paul reveal the depth of the Divine economy of our salvation. The suffering, the Cross, and death of the Son of God are not an accidental, tragic event in history, but the eternal plan of Divine love, revealed for the sake of the salvation of the entire human race. This is a Victory accomplished not by the sword, but by the Cross; not by the power of this world, but by the all-powerful and voluntary Sacrifice of the Divine Lamb, Who *"taketh away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29). It was in the sacrificial death of Christ that the light of the Resurrection shone – the light of the final Victory over sin and death.

The Resurrection of Christ is the triumph of life over death, light over darkness, truth over lies, and love over enmity. In Him the meaning of existence is affirmed, *"for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."* (1 Cor. 15:22).

The holy myrrh-bearing women were the first to hear the Good News from the Angel: *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said."* (Matt. 28:5-6). Since then, these words of Easter joy have not ceased to sound in the hearts of believers, inspiring them to a renewed life and filling their hearts with the light of faith, hope, and love. In them is our consolation, our strength, and joy, given to everyone who lives with the Risen Christ and in Him finds the fullness of being.

The light of Christ's Resurrection illuminates the path of everyone who follows Him, not only transforming our nature, making us *partakers of the Divine nature* (2 Pet. 1:4), but also opening for us the path to the Kingdom of Heaven, where *God Himself will be all in all* (1 Cor. 15:28), and *the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father* (Matt. 13:43).

Sharing with you the bright joy of the Easter celebration, I prayerfully ask the Risen Lord that the ineffable light of the Resurrection of Christ illuminate you every day, strengthen you in faith, console you in sorrows, and inspire you to deeds of love and mercy.

May the Risen Christ always be among us, as He once was among His disciples, saying: *"Peace be with you!"* (John 20:19) and lead us to eternal rejoicing in the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!

+ *Matthew*

Bishop of Sourozh
temporary Administrator of the Patriarchal
parishes in the USA and Canada
The Pascha of Christ, 2025, London

The History of Pascha

One cannot fully understand the meaning of the Pascha of Christ without turning to the history of the Feast. The Gospel does not appear suddenly or in isolation—it grows organically from the soil of the Old Testament, like a living tree springing from deep and ancient roots. Just as a tree cannot be separated from the earth that nourishes it, so too the mystery of Christ's Resurrection is inseparable from the sacred history of God's Old Covenant with His people.

Therefore, we humbly offer your faithful attention a brief account of the celebration of the Old Testament Pascha.

An early spring morning, 33 AD.

The sun had not yet risen. Jerusalem was still sleeping after the solemn celebration of the first day of Passover. The shared joy of one of the most important Jewish feasts could not be felt, however, by the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. That morning, they came to the tomb of their Teacher, who had been crucified three days earlier. They had been almost certain that Jesus was the very One—the Messiah-Redeemer promised by the God of Israel. But now, to them, all seemed lost.

Some time later, the Apostle Paul would say:

"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:14).

Indeed, the entire 2,000-year history of the Christian Church is a proclamation of what happened on that spring morning. And the day of Christ's Resurrection immediately became the central feast of the Christian faith.

Yet the story begins much earlier...

The Exodus and Its Celebration



The word *Pascha* (Hebrew *Pesach*) comes from a verb meaning "to pass over" or "to spare, to deliver". Passover marks a real historical event that took place in Egypt in the 13th century BC, when, according to Tradition, the Angel of the Lord passed over the Israelite houses that had been marked with the blood of a sacrificial lamb, sparing them, and struck down only the firstborn of the Egyptians.

For several centuries before that, the Israelites had been enslaved in Egypt. Despite repeated pleas to be set free, Pharaoh continually refused to release them. In the final decades of their bondage, the Israelites' situation worsened significantly. Alarmed by their growing numbers, the Egyptian authorities ordered that all newborn Israelite boys be killed.

God appointed a leader for the Israelites—the prophet Moses—who, by divine command, pleaded with Pharaoh to let the people go. This led to the ten plagues of Egypt, during which the land (except for the region where the Israelites lived) was afflicted with frogs, gnats, biting flies, locusts, pestilence, and so on.

These were clear signs of God's presence among the Israelites. Yet Pharaoh remained unmoved, unwilling to part with his unpaid labor force. Then came the final, tenth plague. God, through Moses, instructed each Israelite family to sacrifice a lamb (a one-year-old male sheep or goat), roast it, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The meal was to be eaten quickly, standing up, as God had promised that the Israelites would leave Egypt that very night. The blood of the lamb was to be smeared on the doorposts of their homes—a sign for the angel to pass over and not strike those houses. The firstborn sons of Egypt, from Pharaoh's household to the cattle, died, but the homes marked with blood were spared.

Terrified, Pharaoh finally allowed the Israelites to leave that same night. Since then, Passover has been celebrated by the Israelites as the day of deliverance from Egyptian slavery and the salvation of their firstborn sons.

How Passover Was Celebrated

The Passover celebration lasted not just one day, but seven. Every faithful Jew was required to be in Jerusalem for this time. All leavened food was removed from the home, and only unleavened bread (*matzah*) was eaten, commemorating the hurried departure from Egypt when there was no time to let the dough rise. From this comes the other name for the feast: *The Feast of Unleavened Bread*.

Each family brought a lamb to the Temple, where it was sacrificed according to the rite prescribed by the Law of Moses. The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius wrote that in the year 70 AD, some 265,500 lambs were slaughtered for Passover at the Temple in Jerusalem. This figure may be exaggerated, as often with Josephus, but even at a fraction of that number, the image of what occurred at the Temple is striking.

The lamb—called *Passover*—was to be roasted and eaten entirely on the evening of the first day of the feast, during a special meal called the *Seder*. This supper was the central event of the celebration. It included bitter herbs (to remember the bitterness of slavery), *charoset* (a sweet fruit and nut mixture), and four cups of wine. The head of the household was required to tell the story of the Exodus during the meal, both to give thanks to God and to remind everyone of the special bond between God and His people.

The Passover meal had to take place within Jerusalem's city walls. Pilgrims would arrange accommodations with local residents, who provided rooms or allowed meals in their courtyards or on rooftops. Payment for lodging was not allowed, but in gratitude, guests would often leave the hides of their sacrificed animals. The poor received special assistance to obtain everything needed, and it was considered a good deed to invite the needy to join the celebration.

The Fulfillment of the Old Testament Passover



We describe the celebration of the Old Testament Passover in the past tense because, with the coming of Christ, it was fulfilled. And yet, even today, many Jewish families still observe Passover in essentially the same way—except without the lamb. Instead, a lamb bone symbolizes the sacrificial animal. According to Mosaic Law, the lamb may be sacrificed only at the Temple in Jerusalem, which was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.

From the earliest years of Christian Church, the Old Testament Passover was understood as a foreshadowing of Christ's death and Resurrection: "*Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29); "*Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us*" (1 Cor. 5:7).

These words of John the Baptist and the Apostle Paul best express the Christian view of the Sacrifice on Golgotha.

In Egypt, the lamb was slain to spare the lives of the firstborn of Israel. Christ, however, offered Himself as a sacrifice to deliver all humanity from death. And this refers not to physical death—for people still died before Christ and continue to die even now. Rather, after Christ's Resurrection, physical death is no longer a dead end, but a doorway. The unavoidable end of earthly life becomes the beginning of a person's meeting with God.

This is why, in Christian understanding, heaven and hell are not merely places, but states of the soul—of being either prepared or unprepared for this encounter.

from "**The Way Out of Hell: The Story of Easter celebration**"
by Roman Makhankov (1976–2012), published in the journal "**Foma**"

The Three Events After Antipascha That We Should Not Miss

(Greek: ἀντίπασχα — from *anti-* meaning "instead of" or "in place of", and *Pascha* meaning "Easter")

Antipascha (April 27 in 2025) is **the second Sunday of Pascha** (first *after* Pascha), and it has two more traditional names: **Thomas Sunday** and **New Sunday**. The term *Antipascha* might sound confusing today, but it does **not** mean “against Pascha.” In fact, it is the **oldest** of the three names (first recorded in the 6th century), and it reflects the early Christian understanding of this day as a kind of **continuation or echo of Pascha**. In the ancient Jerusalem tradition, the services on this day were celebrated in many respects in the same manner as on Pascha itself. It was also the day when certain rites were performed to complete the baptismal process for those who were baptized on Great and Holy Saturday: the newly baptized would remove their white garments and wash their heads. Thus, **Antipascha marked the end of the early Church’s Paschal cycle**, bringing liturgical closure to the celebration of the Resurrection.

Radonitsa



Radonitsa (April 29 in 2025), from the Slavic root *radost*, meaning “joy”, is the traditional Orthodox day of remembrance of the departed, observed on the **Tuesday after the second Sunday of Pascha (Easter)**.

This day is named so because **the living share the joy of the Resurrection with their departed loved ones**. It is the **first day after Bright Week when memorial services for the dead are permitted**. Orthodox Christians begin visiting cemeteries, bringing Paschal foods, greeting the dead with the words “*Christ is Risen!*”, and praying for their souls—affirming our faith in the Resurrection, because **death has**

been overcome by Christ, and even in sorrow, **there is joy in the promise of eternal life**.

On this day, we will commemorate all the names of our departed parishioners, and throughout the Paschal season, we will continue services at all our cemeteries.

The Feast of the Myrrh-Bearing Women



This is celebrated on the **third Sunday of Pascha** (May 4 in 2025). On this day, the Church remembers the women who were the **first to hear the joyous news of Christ’s Resurrection**.

They are called *myrrh-bearing women* because they came early in the morning to the tomb of Jesus, bringing myrrh (fragrant oil) to anoint His body. There is no complete list of these women, but the Gospels name several: **Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and others with them**.

On this day, it is customary to **congratulate and honor all Orthodox Christian women** in gratitude for their devotion and faith.

The Leavetaking (Apodosis) of Pascha



In simpler terms, this is the **conclusion of the Paschal liturgical cycle**, and it is celebrated on the **Wednesday of the sixth Sunday of Pascha** (May 28 in 2025).

This day also marks the **last earthly appearance of the Risen Christ**, when He spoke His final words to the disciples about the Kingdom of Heaven. Accounts of His post-Resurrection appearances over the forty days between Pascha and the Ascension are found in all four Gospels.

According to Orthodox tradition, **the service on this day follows the joyful pattern of the Bright Week**, which means you can once again experience the special joy and beauty of the Paschal liturgy—before the Feast of the Ascension begins the next day.

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



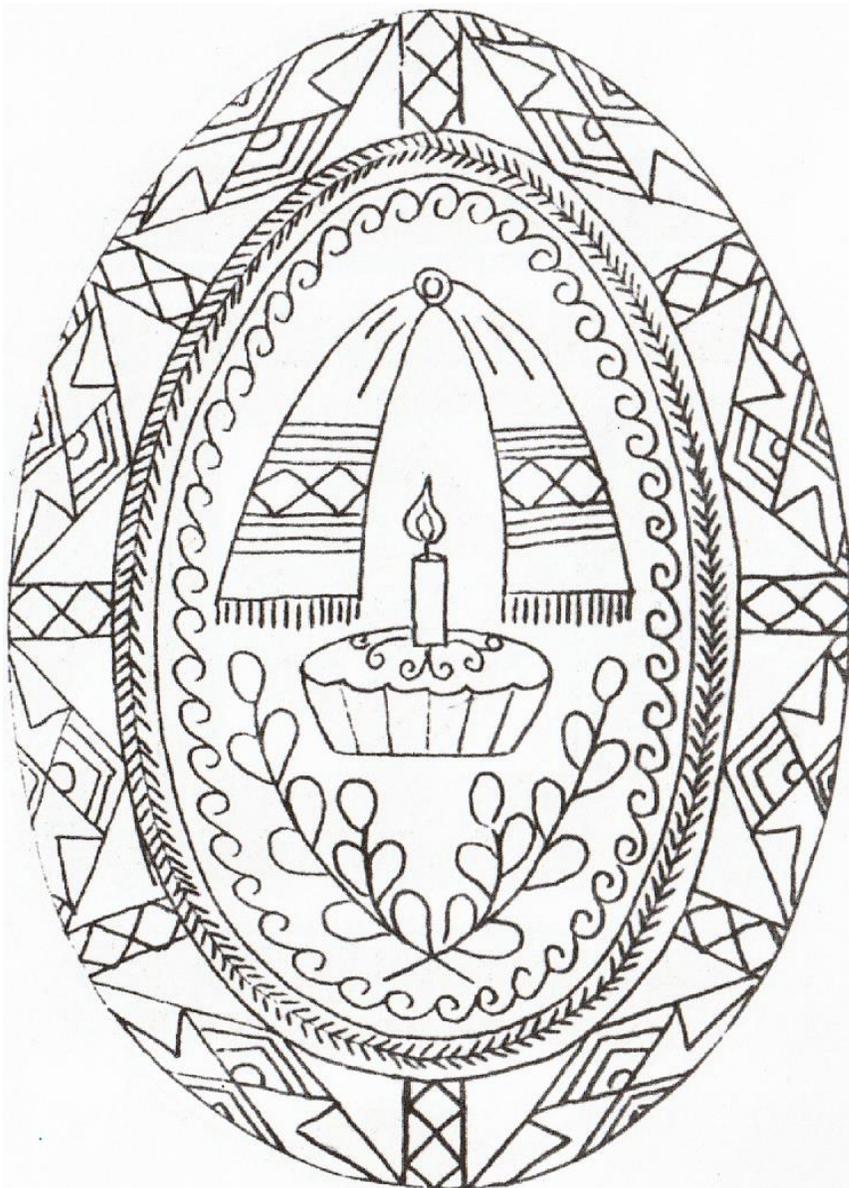
Why Do We Give Each Other Red Eggs at Pascha?

At **Pascha (Easter)**, a **red egg** reminds us of the **Resurrection of Jesus Christ**.

Just like a little bird is hidden inside the shell and then breaks out into the light—**Christ was in the tomb, and then rose again**, alive forever! The egg shows us how something that seems quiet and still can hold the mystery of life inside.

But the egg is not only about Jesus—it also tells us something about **our own future**. One day, at the **Second Coming of Christ**, we too will leave behind everything that is broken and temporary, incomplete and often not good, and be **raised to a new life**—full of joy and light—because of **His Resurrection**. When we are with God forever, our life will be full and perfect—our mind will see the truth clearly, our heart will be full of joy, and we will never be sad again.

And why is the egg **red**? Because the **red color** reminds us of the **Precious Blood of Jesus**, which He gave for us. It is also the **color of joy**, the joy that Christ **rose from the dead** and gave us the gift of **eternal life**! So, when you hold a red egg at Pascha, remember that it means that **life has won** over death; Lord Jesus is **alive** forever, and **we will live with Him**, too!



Spring brings signs of new life after a long winter. Easter reminds us of the hope of a new life too. Do you know why this special celebration began?

Look carefully at the pictures. Can you find 15 differences? Circle them.



Christ is risen!

April- May 2025

Truly He is risen!

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><u>April 19-20 - Holy Easter!</u> <i>8:00 pm – Vegreville</i> <i>11:30 pm – Paschal Matins and Liturgy with blessing of Easter baskets at St. Mary’s Church, at Nisku</i> <i>08:00 am – CALMAR (Paschal Service)</i></p>	<p><u>21</u> <u>Bright Monday</u> No Fast all Week</p>	<p><u>22</u> <u>Bright Tuesday</u></p>	<p><u>23</u> <u>Bright Wednesday</u></p>	<p><u>24</u> <u>Bright Thursday</u></p>	<p><u>25</u> <u>Bright Friday</u></p>	<p><u>26</u> <u>Bright Saturday</u></p>
<p><u>April 27</u> 2nd Sunday of Pascha. Thomas Sunday, Anti-Pascha. 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at NISKU</p>	<p><u>28</u></p>	<p><u>29</u> Universal Orthodox Memorial service. All names will be read at St. Mary’s cemetery (10 am)</p>	<p><u>30</u></p>	<p><u>May 1</u></p>	<p><u>May 2</u></p>	<p><u>May 3</u></p>
<p><u>May 4</u> 3rd Sunday of Pascha. Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women. 10:00 am – Liturgy - Grave Yard Service – CALMAR 3:00 pm - Grave Yard Service – THORSBY</p>	<p><u>May 5</u></p>	<p><u>May 6</u></p>	<p><u>May 7</u></p>	<p><u>May 8</u></p>	<p><u>May 9</u></p>	<p><u>May 10</u></p>
<p><u>May 11</u> 4th Sunday of Pascha. <i>TBC</i></p>	<p><u>May 12</u></p>	<p><u>May 13</u></p>	<p><u>May 14</u></p>	<p><u>May 15</u></p>	<p><u>May 16</u></p>	<p><u>May 17</u></p>
<p><u>May 18</u> 10:00 am – Liturgy – Grave Yard Service with fellowship to follow – NISKU 3:00 pm - Grave Yard Service - Old Cemetery</p>	<p><u>May 19</u> Victoria Day - 10:00 am - Liturgy - UKRAINIAN VILLAGE</p>	<p><u>May 20</u></p>	<p><u>May 21</u></p>	<p><u>May 22</u></p>	<p><u>May 23</u></p>	<p><u>May 24</u> 10:00 am - Liturgy - Grave Yard Service – BONNYVILLE</p>
<p><u>May 25</u> 10:00 am - Liturgy - Grave Yard Service - VEGREVILLE 3:30 pm - Grave Yard Service – WARWICK</p>	<p><u>May 26</u></p>	<p><u>May 27</u></p>	<p><u>May 28</u></p>	<p><u>May 29</u> Holy Ascension Day</p>	<p><u>May 30</u></p>	<p><u>May 31</u></p>

More commemoration days for Orthodox IX:

June 15 - 11:00 am - Grave Yard Service – HOREN; TOMAHAWK – July 5 (TBC)

June 28 - 10:00 am – Liturgy - Grave Yard Service – MACNUTT; 5:00 pm - Grave Yard Service – INSINGER

June 29 - 10:00 am – Liturgy - Patronal Feast. After the service - Grave Yard Service - FOAM LAKE