EASTER 2006

We have come to the end and the beginning of our journey through Holy Week, which began on Palm Sunday and culminated with the hymn that Christ Is Risen.

Our Journey took us through the throng of people shouting Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. They had laid palm branches on the path that Our Lord rode over. We, too, received our palms in like manner of those who had laid them in front of the Lord, rejoicing in the miracle of Our Lord having raised Lazarus from the dead.

On Palm Sunday evening, Holy Monday evening, Holy Tuesday evening we chant the hymn Behold the Bridegroom comes in the middle of the night. We are alerted to be ever vigilant in our spirituality because we never know the day, or hour when Our Lord is coming.

On Holy Wednesday evening we chant the Holy Mysterion of Holy Unction. The Mysterion of Holy Unction is given for the spiritual and physical healing of souls and bodies. This now rings us to Holy Thursday morning wherein the commemoration of Our Lord establishing the Mysterion of the Holy Communion at the Mystical Supper with His Twelve Disciples.

It is in the evening of Holy Thursday that we chant and read about Our Lord being betrayed by Judas Iscariot; being scourged and buffeted; being mocked; being led away to be Crucified; and Simon of Cyrene being forced to carry the Cross. This moment is remembered with poignant chanting of the hymn Today is hung upon the Tree. He who suspended the land in the midst of the waters. We worship Your Passion O Christ. Show also unto us Your Glorious Resurrection. We then come to the moment when He gave up His Spirit and died.

With the Royal Hours and the Apocathelosis (Taking down the Body of Christ) this is the point where the Body of the Lord is taken down from the Cross and brought into the Altar which represents the tomb. Just as Nicodemus had offered his tomb for the Lord.

We have seen Our Lord endure the Passion, the Cross and in the flesh the voluntary entombment for our salvation. This entombment is chanted with the Lamentations of Holy Friday evening.

Our Lord has defeated the Gates of Hades and has resurrected the righteous of the Old Testament. He tells Mary of Magdelene and the other Mary to tell His Disciples that He is going to go to Galilee and that He has Risen!

On the Sunday of Pascha (Easter) at midnight we gather as His Disciples to see the Resurrected Lord. The joyous hymn is chanted for the world to hear that Christ has Risen from the dead, by death trampling upon death, and has bestowed life to those in the tombs.

We have come to the end of the journey of Holy Week but for us as Orthodox Christians it is the beginning for us to rededicate ourselves to the Risen Lord and to enhance our spiritual lives and to be ever vigilant.

Yes - a beginning to be at one with Our Lord.

XPICTOC ANECH! CHRIST IS RISEN!

Father James G. Moskovites
Protopresbyter of the Ecumenical Patriarchate

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

SATURDAY OF LAZARUS - APRIL 15, 2006
9:15 AM Orthros
10:30 AM Divine Liturgy

PALM SUNDAY - APRIL 16, 2006
9:15 AM Orthros
10:30 AM Divine Liturgy
Blessing of the Palms
7:00 PM Service of the Bridegroom

HOLY MONDAY - APRIL 17, 2006
7:00 PM Service of the Bridegroom

HOLY TUESDAY - APRIL 18, 2006
7:00 PM Service of the Bridegroom

HOLY WEDNESDAY - APRIL 19, 2006
3:00 PM Holy Unction for Children
7:00 PM Holy Unction

HOLY THURSDAY - APRIL 20, 2006
6:00 AM Vespers and Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great
7:00 PM The Passion of Christ

HOLY FRIDAY - APRIL 21, 2006
10:30 AM Royal Hours
3:00 PM Apocathelosis (Descent from the Cross)
7:00 PM Service of the Lamentations
Procession of the Epitaphios

HOLY SATURDAY - APRIL 22, 2006
8:00 AM Vespers and Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great
11:00 PM Canon of the Resurrection
12:00 AM Resurrection Services
1:15 AM Divine Liturgy
Blessing of the Eggs

EASTER SUNDAY - APRIL 23, 2006
11:30 AM Vespers of Agape