

Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania + Wilkes-Barre Deanery

Elevation of the Holy Cross
Orthodox Church
Williamsport, PA.



PASCHA
CHRIST IS RISEN!
INDEED HE IS RISEN!

April 19th, 2020

Elevation of the Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Today's Scripture Readings:

Epistle: Acts 1:1-8

Gospel: St. John 1:1-17

Welcome to ALL our visitors and guests this morning via our live streaming! You are most welcome to be with us anytime!

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

CHRISTOS ANESTI! ALITHOS ANESTI!

CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! VOISTINU VOSKRESE!

Services, Events & Announcements

****Services are being streamed live on our website homepage & Facebook page - Schedule is subject to change****

Great Vespers – Saturday April 25th @ 5pm

Divine Liturgy – Sunday April 26th @ 10am (Hours @ 9:40)

Our Giving –Apr 12th, 2020

Tithes/Offerings - \$1,285.00 / Memorial Fund - \$200.00

Benevolence Fund – \$1,000.00

Candles - \$94.00 / Love Offerings - \$200.00

Pascha Gifts - \$140.00

From Your Pastor . . .

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

A Joyous PASCHA to all of you!! This certainly has been a Lent and Pascha to remember. Glory be to God for His great love toward us!

God Willing, we will all be able to gather again soon, and my prayer is that we will ALL have a greater love and appreciation for receiving the Eucharist.

April's Love Offerings will be used for the flowers for Pascha.

+ Fr. Seraphim

We must receive the closure of our churches with a peaceful heart

I remember hearing, early on in my monastic life, of a holy elder who lived as a hermit, far from any group of other monks, and deprived of the chance to participate in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Hearing of this, I thought to myself, how could such a man survive without the Holy Body and Blood of the Saviour? How could this hermit experience the saving grace that comes from the Eucharist, while living alone in a mountain cabin, far from any church?

When asking the elder who'd shared this story of a hermit who'd not received the Eucharist in years, he reminded me of Saint Mary of Egypt, who'd received only once in her life, yet is venerated today as one of the greatest of saints, even to the point that we commemorate her twice each year, during the Great Fast and Passion Week. Saint Mary never partook of any of the Great Feasts of the Church, including the Nativity of Christ, the Annunciation, Pentecost, and not even Holy Pascha!

My own Elder Dimitry of Santa Rosa, told me that hermits would fast as if preparing for Holy Communion, reading the services in their chapels, and would “commune” by drinking Holy Water and eating particles of the Holy Bread taken by communicants following the reception of the Holy Mysteries, noetically receiving Holy Communion as if from Holy Angels.

So, being deprived of participation in the Holy Eucharist, are we filled with judgement against our bishops for the closure of our churches, obeying the dictates of our governmental authorities who are trying to keep the population of our cities safe from the ravages of this pandemic? Or are we humbly worshipping before the Throne of God, having created a domestic church for ourselves? Do we complain that our local church is closed down, while ignoring the fact that such closures are wonderful opportunities for us to replace one parish with four hundred domestic churches?

Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica tells us, “Our life depends on the kind of thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility.”

Saint Seraphim of Sarov said that if we “acquire peace, a thousand around us will be saved”. While each of us has been created in the image of God, our thoughts directly influence both those around us, and even extend to affect the entire cosmos. If we focus on the negative, those negative thoughts impact everyone around us, and even the whole world. The Elder Thaddeus tells us we can be either very good, or very bad, depending on the thoughts and desires we breed.

There is a lot that is wrong with the world, and the Covid-19 pandemic that is wreaking havoc around the globe must be seen as having begun with us. If there is to be peace in our world, it must begin with me. If hatred, anger, envy, lust, and spite, are to end, it must end with me. Likewise, if this pandemic is to come to an end, it must begin with me.

When we allow destructive thoughts to destroy our peace, the peace around us is destroyed. We should not blame our governmental authorities, nor our bishops, for the closure of our churches, because of this pandemic that is ravaging our cities, is radiating from us. Blame for all that is wrong with the world, cannot be placed beyond our own hearts.

If this Holy Week and Pascha leaves us spiritually depleted, because we cannot attend services in our parish, and we are left immersed in the blame game, we will have no one to blame but ourselves. That God is allowing this terrible virus to lay waste our world, must be seen as a wakeup call for all of us. If we truly see this pandemic for what it truly is, we will have all the more reason to shout out on Pascha, even if alone in our apartments, “Christ is Risen”, and perhaps really feel the truth of these words for the very first time.

*Love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon*

All Merciful Saviour Monastery – Vashon Island, WA.