

Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Entrance Into Jerusalem

April 8, 2012

Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Our celebration is concluded today with distribution of blessed palms and pussy willows as well as festal anointing. The customary greeting is "Christ Is Among Us!" to which we respond, "He Is And Shall Be!"

+++ Please be certain you are with us in soulful prayer and worship this coming Passion Week. We ask all to consider offering a Seven Day Light that will beautify the Tomb of our Lord and his subsequent glorious Resurrection.

+++ We ask those who have not yet done so, to please submit their parish and diocesan dues as soon as possible.

+++ Today we celebrate in triumph the Lord's entry into Jerusalem and a special offering is taken. We pray all are generous in greeting the Lord among us for Passion Week.

+++ Decorated candles are available for home use at the coming feast of the Resurrection of our Lord. They are on the table in the vestibule and their cost is \$15.00 each.

+++ We are pleased Eleanor Korba is offering the candles for the coming feast of our Lord's Resurrection in blessed memory of her beloved husband, +John Korba, whose anniversary occurs this month. We pray the gracious Lord continues to comfort Eleanor and her loved one in their loss and that He grants the soul of +John a blessed repose and creates for him Eternal Memory!.

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ The **Paschal Bake** Sale took place this past Friday and yesterday. We thank all who labored to make it a success or the good of the parish. God bless you devoted souls! Cookies and Paskas are available.

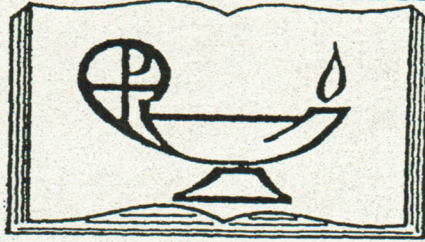
+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, [REDACTED]; Candles, [REDACTED]; Food Coupons, [REDACTED]; Great Fast Sacrifice, [REDACTED]; Kitchen, [REDACTED]; Refund, [REDACTED]; Holyday, [REDACTED]; Flowers, [REDACTED]; Parish Dues, [REDACTED]; Bulletin Sponsor, [REDACTED]; Website Sponsor, [REDACTED] for a total of [REDACTED]. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Robert Gorbich, Anna Zacharyczuk, Eleni Pallas, Debra Szmaida, Paul Szmaida, and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of [REDACTED] from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

+++ For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals [REDACTED]. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

LORD



TEACH
US

Spiritual Life

Learn then, that I, I alone, am God, and there is no god besides me. It is I who brings both death and life, I who inflicts wounds and heals them, and from my hand there is no rescue Deuteronomy 32: 39.

The thief's purpose is to rob and steal. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness John 10: 10.

For you have given him authority over every man and woman on earth. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. And this is the way to have eternal life: by knowing you, the only true God and Jesus Christ the one you sent to earth! John 17: 2.

But this is recorded so that you will believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing in him you will have life John 20: 31.

Jesus told her: I am the one who raises the dead and gives them life again. Anyone who believes in me, even though he dies like anyone else, shall live again. He is given eternal life for believing in me and shall never perish John 11: 25.

Yet even though Christ lives in you, your body will die because of sin; but your spirit will live, for Christ has pardoned it Romans 8: 10.
13: 9.

The good man's life is full of light. The sinner's road is dark and gloomy Proverbs 13: 9.

One Life Is Enough

Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death
Philippians 1: 20.

A faithful follower of Christ said longingly, even wistfully, "Oh that I could turn back the clock twenty years and go on serving the Lord." That is a commendable wish, but impossible to fulfill. One life is all we are given. Within the sovereign purposes of our heavenly Father, one life, whether long or short, is enough.

God has revealed that tribulation and possible death awaited Paul in Jerusalem. "But now, as you see, I am on my way to Jerusalem compelled by the Spirit and not knowing what will happen to me there – except that the Holy Spirit has been warning me from city to city that chains and hardships await me" Acts of the Apostles 20: 22, 23; "He came up to us, taking Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it. Then he said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, this is how the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and hand him over to the Gentiles'" Acts of the Apostles 21: 11.

Instead of avoiding Jerusalem, Paul declared, "None of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus" Acts of the Apostles 20: 24. The realistic goal of St. Paul was not to extend or prolong his ministry of service, but to complete it.

Our goal, likewise, as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles, should be to glorify Jesus Christ "...whether I live or I die" Philippians 1: 20. Then, if necessary, we can afford to make a sacrificial offering of our liberty and our way of living because all contributes to our salvation and final glorification. We can be confident our God will use others to carry on his work and bring it to completion.

The death of St. Paul did not bring to an end his influence on believers in the life of the Body of Christ. He bequeathed his ministry of service to the bishops of the Church and we are still reaping the benefits of his life today. "Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock the Holy Spirit has given you to guard. Shepherd the church of God which he has acquired at the price of his own blood" Acts of the Apostles 20: 28.

Human life is brief, as St. James describes it, "...a vapor...." James 4: 14. It is allotted us that we might achieve our salvation by heaven's grace, and tailored to our individual talents and sanctity. With Christ's help, let us invest our lives in something that assuredly will outlast us beyond the imaginary fantasies of our children. Living for Christ makes life worth living.

Only this hour is mine, O Lord.
May it be invested for you;
May every passing moment
Count for eternity.



**For God
so loved the world
that he gave his only-begotten Son,
that whoever believes in him
will not perish,
but have
life everlasting**

John 3:16.

UNDER PONTIUS PILATE

The cross is the center of Orthodox Christian faith. It is the first concrete event in the proclamation of faith in the life and service of our Lord among us for the sake of our salvation. We do not simply profess He was crucified, but that "he was crucified under Pontius Pilate..." The Creed here fulfills a legal demand that Jesus is crucified by the authority of the Roman procurator or local ruler and governmental official.

The Jewish authorities did not have the power to execute. "We may not put anyone to death," the Jews answered. John 18: 31, though the Sanhedrin had found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, a capital offense under Mosaic Law. They, therefore, turned him over to the Roman governor, explaining, "We have a law an according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God"

John 19: 7. So Pilate said to Jesus, "Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you And I have power to crucify you?" John 19: 10.

This passage from the Creed parallels the statement about the Resurrection. Both affirmations need a clarification. Jesus is crucified "...under Pontius Pilate" but He rose from the dead "according to the Scriptures." The law brings death, but grace, the truth of the Gospel message, brings life, St. Paul was to write, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" 1 Corinthians 15: 56.

The name of Pontius Pilate, therefore, is mentioned in the Creed which we profess at each Divine Liturgy, not because of our faith, but because of his action verifies the unjust sentence pronounced on our Lord. It situates the crucifixion in a historical time, and makes

it an official unfortunate part of human history. For all that, however, the man named Pontius Pilate has, by his participation in the death of Jesus, acquired a notorious reputation. His name will forever and always be associated with the divine act of human redemption, fulfilling, in a way, the observation of our Lord: "You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above" John 19: 11.

Together with Jesus himself and Mary, his mother, Pilate becomes one of only three members of the human race mentioned in the Creed, our profession of faith. His presence init reminds man of how desperate we need redemption because our own lifestyle is reflective of that of the Roman ruler, a microcosm as it were, of his self-willed deception and timidity of soul. Nobility of soul and salvation was in his grasp, but it literally fell out of his hands!

Pilate achieved this fate, or infamy in a particular sense, because of his involvement in the life of Jesus. We do not know much about the rest of his life. We do not know where he was born, or when; we do not

know about his career after he judged Jesus. We do know that he was the procurator or governor of the Roman province of Judea from 26 to 36 AD. As governor, he represented to the Jewish people the power of their Roman conquerors. He was not an official elected by the people; he was their master with official Roman imperial approbation.

Therefore, it is obvious that he was not popular. He could be a harsh ruler as he perceived circumstances dictated, and in the only mention of Pilate in Scripture outside of Jesus' trial, St. Luke tells about how he mingled the blood of some Galileans with their sacrifices. "At that time some were present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate mixed with their sacrifice" Luke 13: 1.

As governor, it was his job to keep order and collect taxes for the Roman authorities. To do this, he had military troops under his command. It was also his power to administer justice, and to authorize public works for the benefit of the community, a part of concern for the welfare of the nation as an improvement in

life style under Roman domination. As judge, he also could administer the death sentence to criminals which explains his adjudication in the trial of Jesus.

Pilate is also mentioned by non-Christian writers and historians. He was a zealot for Roman power and tried to introduce signs of it at Jesus' time. In 36 AD he ordered his troops to attack a group of armed Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, killing many. He was summoned to Rome over this action and a new governor was appointed.

Pilate disappears from history, although the Christian historian Eusebius claims that he ended his life by suicide in Gaul to which he was exiled. Philo and Josephus both describe him as an inflexible governor.

Various collections of legends including him include the *Acta Pilati* and the *Paradosis Pilati*. In 1961, a Latin inscription containing the words *Pontius Pilatus praefectus Iudaea* was discovered in Caesarea in Palestine and attests to the abundance of civil works he presided over.

These are the facts, but what are we to say of Pilate? The Church of Ethiopia is said to consider him a saint, that he converted because of his encounter with Jesus, together with his wife, who was said had dreams about Jesus and urged her husband to release him because He was a "...righteous man..." Matthew 27: 19.

However, that is a mere minority sympathetic constructed view, probably based on the fact the Church considers his wife a saint. Most see Pilate as a villain, the man who condemned God to the Cross. In the gospels, we see a little of the kind of man he was. He seemed to be of weak character. He tries repeatedly to get Jesus freed, but the Jewish Sanhedrin pressures him to alter his conviction.

In the Gospel of St. John, he tells the Jewish authorities, "I find no guilt in him," and then, tries to get them to accept the death of Barrabas in the place of Jesus. "Speaking for myself, I find no case against this man. Recall your custom whereby I release someone to you at Passover time. Do you want

me to release to you the king of the Jews?" They shouted back "We want Barrabas, not this one!" Barrabas was an insurrectionist" John 18:38 - 40.

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Pilate washes his hands in public and proclaims, "I am innocent of the blood of this man" Matthew 27:24.

In the end, however, he passes the sentence of death because he is afraid, both of his reputation that he would be accused of not dealing firmly with challenges to Roman power and that, somehow the igniting a riot and he would be accused of not keeping things under control. In short, he fulfills the negative stereotype of a corrupt politician whose does not follow his own conscience. As a result, a man dies, and not just any man, but the very Son of God in the flesh, ironically dispatched to earth in the first place to save and redeem such as Pilate himself.

Pilate also comes across as a cynic. When Jesus

proclaims that he is preaching truth, Pilate turns him off and asks, sarcastically, "What is truth?" John 18: 38, it is just what people make it and interpret it and think it to be, presupposing as present day situation ethics people insist.

So Pilate's name appears in the Creed as a reminder of someone getting into a position of importance and notoriety, being noticed by everyone even though their small sinful contribution of their own publicity is not worth what they actually did. Its negative affect is obviated. People are repelled and are wont to observe "He got into that position the same way Pontius Pilate got into the Creed." How often this indictment is true of so many in our time and place.

In the Creed, Pilate is less than a an average man, is self-depicted as some outright jerk who comes along and take the easiest route to make life comfortable for himself. But his presence in the Creed does raise questions of us: "Are we indifferent also, or do we have a stronger and more enduring faith in Jesus Christ and in the salvation

He proffers to those baptized who forever remain faithful? Do we, by our free choice, continue to crucify the Savior and deny him while recognizing our need for the emancipating dignity He alone offers? Do we have the courage amid life's varied difficulties to deny ourselves, bear our cross and follow after him accepting his gift of everlasting life?

There are, of course, underlying questions that are very disturbing. Did Jesus have to die for the life of the world? Was Pilates' decision in some way necessary for the economy of man's salvation? Did the human race have to go this far to finally find life and redemptive salvation?

One thing is certain: commitment to Christ is the source and fountain of life. We cannot remain indifferent, but must choose the will of God not futile personal isolated understanding. Otherwise we are led to the same doleful predicament Pilate found himself in then and for all eternity.



WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE!

Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. Entrance Hymn, Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

O Christ God, You confirmed the resurrection of all before the time of Your passion by raising Lazarus from the dead; therefore we, as the children of Israel, carry the symbols of victory and cry out to You, the Conqueror of death: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord." Troparion; Lazarus Saturday

In heaven, You are enthroned on high; on earth You ride upon a colt of a donkey. O Christ God, You received the praise of angels and the hymns of children crying out to You: "Blessed is He Who comes to restore Adam!" Kontakion, Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord; God is the Lord, and has revealed Himself to us. Prokimenon, Feast of the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem.

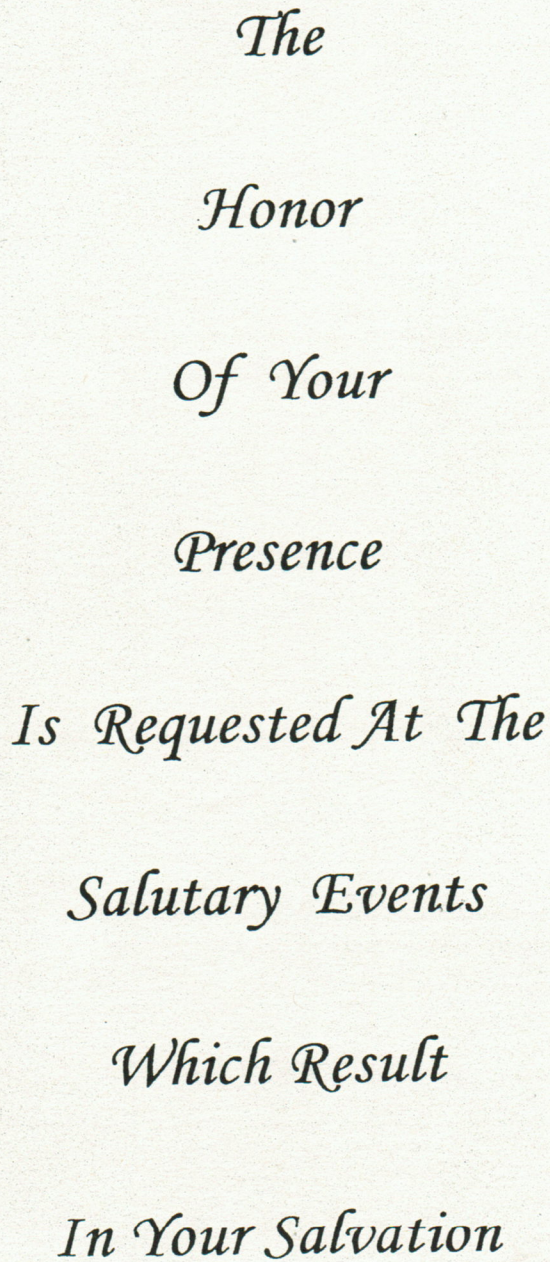
We have been baptized with You through baptism, O Christ our God! We have become worthy of immortal life through Your resurrection. We cry out to You: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord." Troparion, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Christ, the Joy of all, the Truth, the Light, the Life, and the Resurrection of the world, appeared to those on earth. Because of His goodness, He became also the image of resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all. Kontakion, Lazarus Saturday.

Let us all gather this day, the new Israel, the Church of the Gentiles, and with the prophet Zechariah, let us say, Rejoice, O daughter Sion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem: behold your King comes to you; He is the Saviour, meek and humble, seated on the colt of a donkey, a beast of burden. Carrying psalms, let us praise Him as did the children: "Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he Who is coming, the King of Israel." Vesper hymn, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Having first praised You with their palms, the ungrateful people then crucified You; but we honor You with our unchanging faith as our Benefactor, O Lord, and we unceasingly cry out to You: "Blessed is He Who comes to draw Adam forth from the tomb." Matins hymn, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.

Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord; God is the Lord, and has revealed Himself to us. Communion Hymn, Feast of the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem.



*The
Honor
Of Your
Presence
Is Requested At The
Salutary Events
Which Result
In Your Salvation*

Passion Week Service Schedule

Great and Holy Wednesday 7:30 PM Sacramental Mystery of Holy Anointing

Just as Christ on this day is anointed for burial, the Church lovingly anoints her faithful children for burial of imperfection and sinfulness... "...now consider yourselves dead to sin but alive for God in Jesus Christ" Romans 6: 11.

Great and Holy Thursday 7: 30 PM Mystical Supper celebrated at Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great with Vespers.

We join the Master at the altar table to hear His prayer: "I have given them the glory you gave me that they may be one, as we are one – I living in them, you living in me – so that their unity may be complete" John 17: 22, 23.

Great and Holy Friday 10:30 AM Reading of the Passion Gospels of Christ

We witness the Passion of the Lord as we accompany Him for the arrest, trials, the denials, the sentencing and final execution on the Cross. "Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted, but he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him was the chastisement that make us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way, but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all" Isaiah 53: 4 – 6.

7:30 PM Vespers of the Passion with Procession and Entombment of Holy Shroud followed by Vigil.

We prayerfully participate in the burial of our Saviour. "They took Jesus' Body and in accordance with Jewish burial custom bound it up in wrappings of cloth with perfumed oils" John 19: 40.

Great and Holy Saturday 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

We pray and mediate as the Lord's body lies in the tomb, effecting salvation of our souls by His entrance into the place of the righteous dead. "In the place where he had been

crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been buried” John 19: 41.

7:30 PM Matins of the Resurrection with Procession followed by blessing of Paschal Foods.

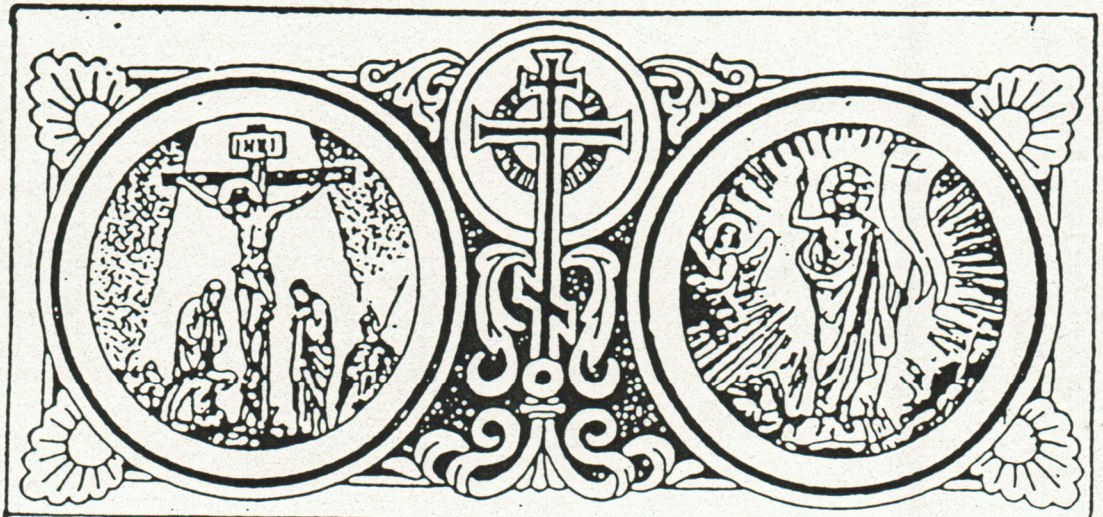
“I have seen the Lord...” John 20: 18. “You became a believer because you saw me” John 20: 29. “When he seated himself with them to eat, he took bread, pronounced the blessing, then broke the bread and began to distribute it to them” John 24: 30.

The Glorious Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour, Jesus Christ

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom concluded with festal anointing and blessing of Paschal Foods.

“But these have been recorded to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, so that through this faith you may have life in his name” John 20: 30, 31.

Confessions are heard prior to and after all services so that by the feast of the radiant Resurrection we should all be prepared for triumphal celebration!





Dear Sojourner with Christ into the Passion and Resurrection:

This enclosed map covering the events of our Lord's last week in the flesh among us, will not show you how to get there, but will help you better understand the salutary events we celebrate liturgically in our parish church.

Accept it in the spirit it is offered. Take it, read it, study it and the accompanying Scripture citations that you be enriched in heart and soul.

Our prayer is that you come to a better understanding and appreciation of what occurred in the events leading to our redemption.

May we thus then be equipped to enjoy the triumphant victory over death which includes us as well!

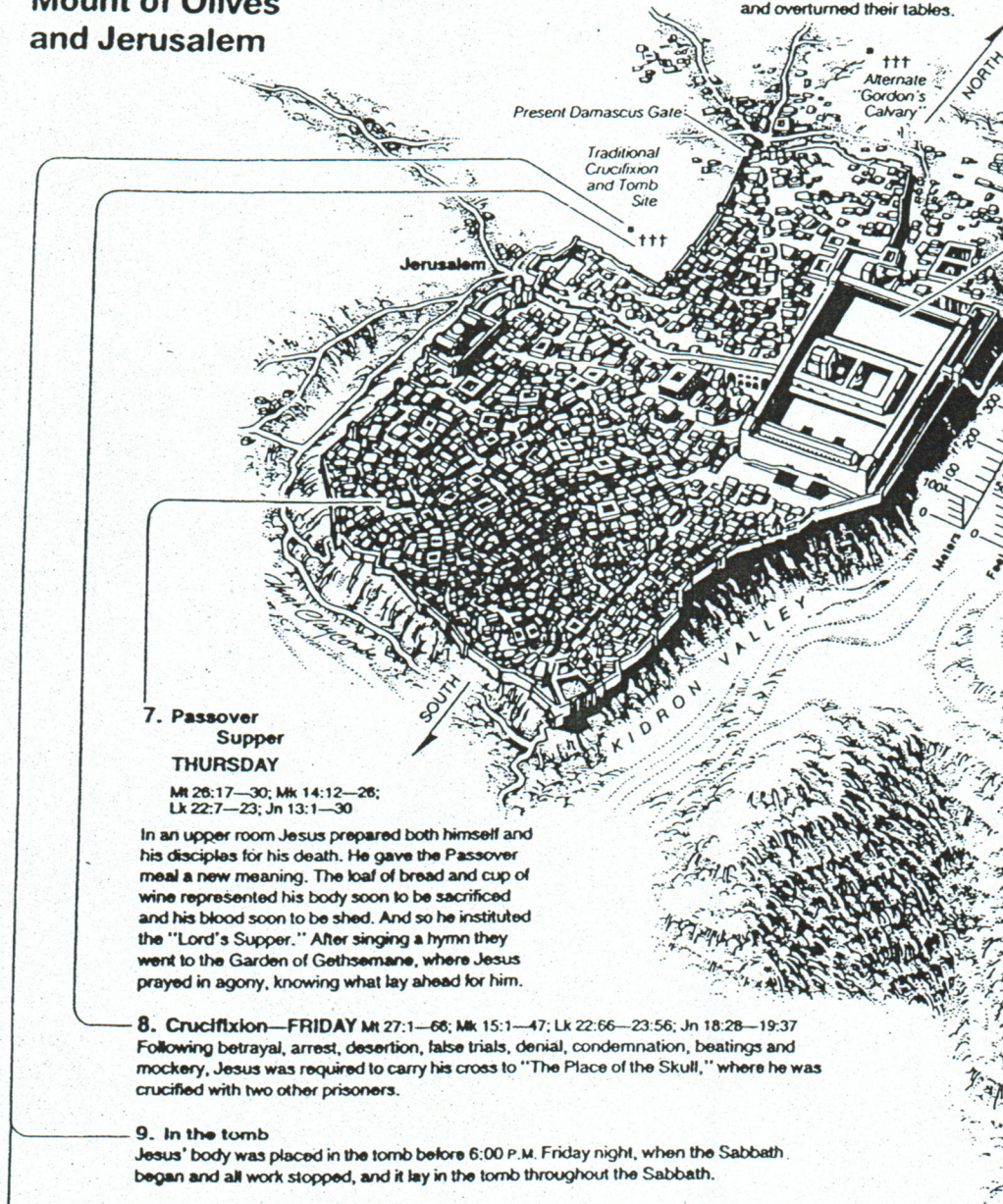
Passion Week

Bethany, the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem

4. Clearing of the temple MONDAY

Mt 21:10—17
Mk 11:15—18
Lk 19:45—48

The next day he returned to the temple and found the court of the Gentiles full of tables and money changers making a large profit as they gave out Jewish coins exchanged for "pagan" money. Jesus drove them out and overturned their tables.



7. Passover Supper THURSDAY

Mt 26:17—30; Mk 14:12—26;
Lk 22:7—23; Jn 13:1—30

In an upper room Jesus prepared both himself and his disciples for his death. He gave the Passover meal a new meaning. The loaf of bread and cup of wine represented his body soon to be sacrificed and his blood soon to be shed. And so he instituted the "Lord's Supper." After singing a hymn they went to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed in agony, knowing what lay ahead for him.

8. Crucifixion—FRIDAY Mt 27:1—66; Mk 15:1—47; Lk 22:66—23:56; Jn 18:28—19:37
Following betrayal, arrest, desertion, false trials, denial, condemnation, beatings and mockery, Jesus was required to carry his cross to "The Place of the Skull," where he was crucified with two other prisoners.

9. In the tomb

Jesus' body was placed in the tomb before 6:00 P.M. Friday night, when the Sabbath began and all work stopped, and it lay in the tomb throughout the Sabbath.

10. Resurrection—SUNDAY

Mt 28:1—13; Mk 16:1—20; Lk 24:1—49; Jn 20:1—31
Early in the morning, women went to the tomb and found that the stone closing the tomb's entrance had been rolled back. An angel told them Jesus was alive and gave them a message. Jesus

appeared to Mary Magdalene in the garden, to Peter, to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and later that day to all the disciples but Thomas. His resurrection was established as a fact.

5. Day of controversy and parables

TUESDAY Mt 21:23—24:51;
Mk 11:27—13:37; Lk 20:1—21:36

IN JERUSALEM

Jesus evaded the traps set by the priests.

ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES OVERLOOKING JERUSALEM (Tuesday afternoon, exact location unknown)

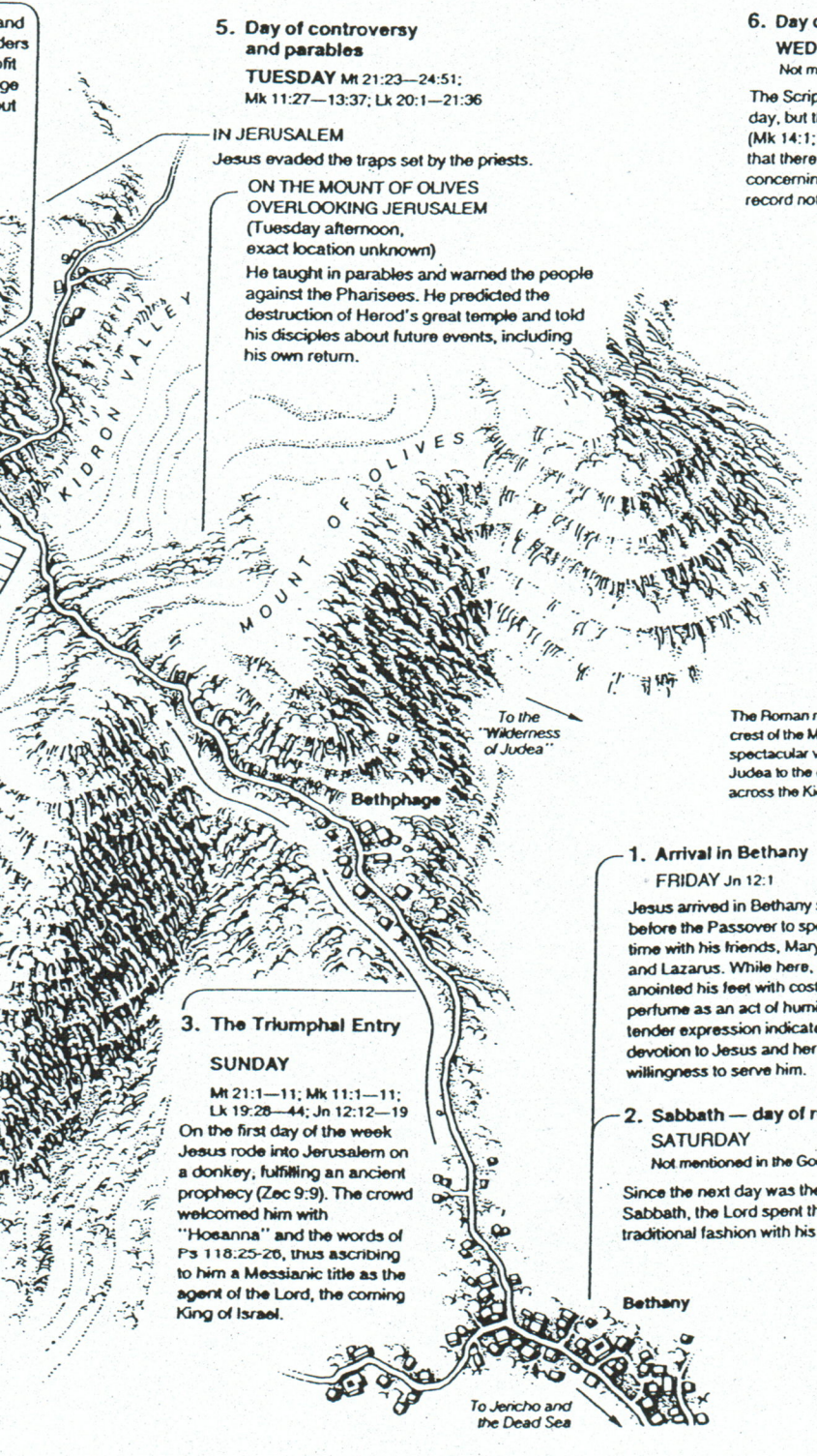
He taught in parables and warned the people against the Pharisees. He predicted the destruction of Herod's great temple and told his disciples about future events, including his own return.

6. Day of rest

WEDNESDAY

Not mentioned in the Gospels

The Scriptures do not mention this day, but the counting of the days (Mk 14:1; Jn 12:1) seems to indicate that there was another day concerning which the Gospels record nothing.



The Roman road climbed steeply to the crest of the Mount of Olives, affording a spectacular view of the Desert of Judea to the east and Jerusalem across the Kidron valley to the west.

3. The Triumphal Entry

SUNDAY

Mt 21:1—11; Mk 11:1—11;
Lk 19:28—44; Jn 12:12—19

On the first day of the week Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, fulfilling an ancient prophecy (Zec 9:9). The crowd welcomed him with "Hosanna" and the words of Ps 118:25-26, thus ascribing to him a Messianic title as the agent of the Lord, the coming King of Israel.

1. Arrival in Bethany

FRIDAY Jn 12:1

Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover to spend some time with his friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. While here, Mary anointed his feet with costly perfume as an act of humility. This tender expression indicated Mary's devotion to Jesus and her willingness to serve him.

2. Sabbath — day of rest

SATURDAY

Not mentioned in the Gospels

Since the next day was the Sabbath, the Lord spent the day in traditional fashion with his friends.

Bethany

To Jericho and
the Dead Sea

JOEL The Apocalyptic Prophet

It is not always easy to understand what the prophets are trying to tell us in their writings. They wrote long ago and in styles that are no longer used. Those who adopted the style of writing called apocalyptic or predictive of the future, are especially difficult to decipher. The images they use are strange, and most of the action described in their books is symbolic. One is never quite sure what is to be taken literally and what is merely figurative. The Book of Revelation in the New Testament is another example of this style.

Joel is one of the prophets of the Old Testament who used the apocalyptic style of writing. Because of this, it is most difficult to figure out what he meant to say. The first two chapters of his short book, for example, speak of an invasion of locusts that would devastate the land. It is not clear if he wants us to understand this as actual locusts or something else. He could be talking about some terrible invasion by a foreign army whose troops seemed as numerous as locusts and whose destruction left the land as if it had been eaten bare by locusts. Even if this is an army, we could still interpret the passage two different ways. It might be an actual historical army that marched or would march through the Holy Land or it might be an army of the forces of the Lord that would come in the end times.

Given this uncertainty about its meaning, what can we say for sure about the prophecy of Joel? It is clear that Joel believed God had sent or was sending a disaster to force His people to repent. Joel called upon the people "to rend your hearts and not your garments" Joel 2: 23. When they would turn back to God, they would be forgiven and He would remove the chastisement which was brought upon them. The enemies of God's people, however, would not escape so easily. They preyed upon the chosen people when He was angry with them, and they became arrogant in their evil practices. For this God would grievously afflict them.

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and your men shall see visions" Joel 3: 1. St. Peter repeated these same words on Pentecost (Acts of the Apostles 2: 17) for Jesus was the judgment come into the world calling on all to decide for all times to live for or against God.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Blessed Is He Who Comes in the Name of the Lord!

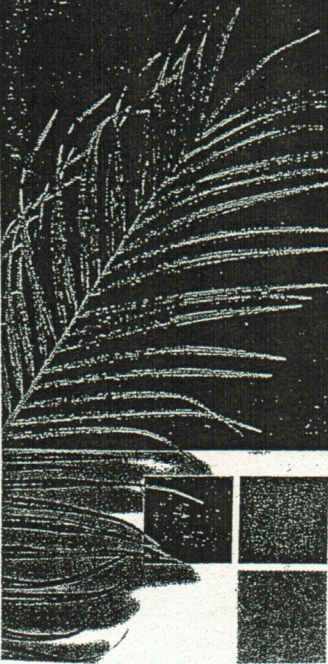
**"EVERYONE IN JERUSALEM,
CELEBRATE AND SHOUT!
YOUR KING HAS WON A
VICTORY, AND HE IS COMING
TO YOU. HE IS HUMBLE
AND RIDES ON A DONKEY;
HE COMES ON THE COLT
OF A DONKEY."
ZECHARIAH 9:9**

For many of us, the story begins with Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem one week before his execution on a cross. He was traveling with his disciples to celebrate the Passover feast, and as they approached the holy city, he told them to go to a nearby village and borrow a donkey for him to ride. It may seem a bizarre turn of events—but it was orchestrated to fulfill yet another prophecy about the Messiah.

Zechariah told everyone to "celebrate and shout" because their savior would come to Jerusalem, humble and riding on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9). Much fanfare greeted Jesus upon his arrival in Jerusalem. The waving of palm branches and the shouts of "Blessed

is the king who comes in the name of the Lord," echoed the words of Psalm 118:26-27.

The Gospel accounts of the triumphal entry take on a deeper meaning when we understand the significance that the donkey, the celebration, and the setting would have held for those watching. They were signs that the one riding on the donkey was indeed their Messiah. Jesus acknowledged the importance of this moment when he confidently rebuked the Pharisees who found the whole scene rather blasphemous. Jesus told them that the very rocks would cry out if the people were silenced.



**"GOD BLESS THE ONE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF
THE LORD! WE PRAISE YOU HERE IN THE HOUSE
OF THE LORD. THE LORD IS OUR GOD,**

Two Sides of Same Coin

...count it pure joy when you are involved in every sort of trial James 1: 2.

Temptations and trials are two sides of the same coin, for a single Greek word conveys both ideas. In God's revelation to us we are told to rejoice when we fall into various circumstances simply because we can then witness to our own fidelity to God's values in our life. We are also taught and reminded rather plainly, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God' for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he himself tempt anyone" James 1: 13.

Whatever circumstances we encounter in life, our equanimity of faith response should be the same. The Lord is our God and we are his faithful followers. We must distinguish between being tempted and being tried. The former word conveys the idea of appealing to the worst part of man, his least common denominator, with the wish that he may yield and do wrong. The latter means an appeal to the better part of man, with the desire that he should stand and conquer, thus strengthening and improving himself. Temptation has its source in the evil one, the devil himself who desires our destruction. Trials are permitted by our heavenly Father for our perfection and spiritual advancement. Both are inevitable in the life of man; unfortunately far more stumble to temptation than are advanced by trials because they fail to practice serious introspection to discern the hand of God in our lives.

Temptation says, "Do this appealingly pleasant thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is wrong and immoral." The trial or opportunity for spiritual advancement says, "Do this right and honorable and noble thing; do not be hindered by the fact that it is perhaps painful."

Our heavenly Father uses trials to make us "...perfect and complete, lacking nothing" James 1: 4. And He promises a "...crown of life" James 1: 12 to those who endure by his grace. So when we are going through a trial or when temptation comes, let us remember what our God is accomplishing in us. It will help us avoid the lure and trap of yielding to temptation. The implicit admonition from heaven is to stand firm in our faith response to God, to be victors in whatever encounters meet us in life's path.

When tested from without or tempted from within, rely on the Lord for strength to help you turn from sin. We are tempted by satan to bring out the worst in us; but God tests us to bring out the best. Let the best always show!

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES ...

What a triumphant entrance our Lord made into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. Throngs of people lined the streets of the Old City, hoping to catch a glimpse of the One they felt must be their long-awaited Messiah. Their cry of "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest" was readily associated with this messianic expectation. It was recited daily for six days during the Feast of Tabernacles, and seven times on the seventh day of the festival as branches were waved. The symbolism of these words and the actions of spreading branches and clothes in Christ's path as He passed by was not lost on the Pharisees and chief priests. Indeed, they knew these actions were reserved for the coming of a king! Moreover, Matthew's Gospel tells us that these religious leaders of the Jews were highly indignant that the children were joining in this revelry. When they confronted Jesus about this, here was His reply: "Have you never read: "Out of the mouths of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise?"

Christ's words bring to light the true joy and sorrow of Palm Sunday. The "perfect praise" of the children in Jerusalem was innocent and fitting. It came from hearts filled with pure love. In contrast, the rousing reception our Lord received from the adults carried earthly expectations and personal agendas — they were looking for someone to save them from the oppression of Rome, not someone who would save them from their sins. When these selfish hopes were not fulfilled by Christ, His so-called followers deserted Him and watched Him be put to death. While scribes and elders could not recognize Him, small innocent children were able to proclaim Christ as our Saviour.

The Church reminds us today to imitate the children of Jerusalem. Glorify Christ with the same spirit of innocence. Seek from Him only that which He gladly offers: the true path to salvation.

Icon by Nataliya Zharsky from The Prosopon School of Iconology

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