APRIL 5, 2020 — SUNDAY OF SAINT MARY OF EGYPT

THE FOLLOWING CHURCH SERVICES ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC:

- Sunday, April 5 ~ 8:45 am Orthros and 10:00 am Divine Liturgy
- Monday, April 6 ~ 6:00 pm Great Compline
- Tuesday, April 7 ~ 6:00 pm Parish Council Meeting via Teleconference
- Wednesday, April 8 ~ 5:30 pm Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts
- Saturday, April 11 ~ 9:00 am Divine Liturgy—LAZARUS SATURDAY
- Sunday, April 12 ~ 8:45 am Orthros and 10:00 am Divine Liturgy—PALM SUNDAY

Please note that the blessing of the Palms takes place during Orthros.

7:00 pm ~ Nymphios (Bridegroom) Service

Services can be viewed online using the following link:
http://www.facebook.com/HolyTrinityCathedralNOLA/

LEN TEN FLOWERS SPONSOR

The floral decorations that adorned the Panagia icon during the Akathist Hymn on Friday, April 3, were generously donated by an Anonymous Family. May God bless them.

LIGHT A CANDLE/VIRTUAL TRAY NOW ONLINE

Want to have a candle lit on your behalf, place a donation in a virtual tray, or do both? Now, you can. Simply click on the new link, Light a Candle/Virtual Tray, at the bottom of the Cathedral website homepage and make your selection. Your gift will be most helpful during the current crisis.

OFFER OF ASSISTANCE FOR HOMEBOUND PARISHIONERS

Homebound parishioners needing someone to pick up items during this health crisis can call the Cathedral to get details on community members, who are available to assist.

SUPPORT A MISSION PRIEST PROJECT ENDS TODAY

Today, Sunday, April 5, is your last opportunity to participate in the Philoptochos special spring project to help an Orthodox Priest in the mission field. For $600 a priest can be taken care of for a whole year. The Ladies Philoptochos Society is sponsoring this meaningful program of the Orthodox Mission Center in St. Augustine, Florida, known as “Support A Mission Priest” or SAMP. Please make your check payable to Philoptochos and send c/o Holy Trinity Cathedral – 1200 Robert E. Lee Boulevard – New Orleans, LA 70122. Your donation will be greatly appreciated.

Message from Father George

THE TIME TO REPENT IS NOW

In today’s Gospel lesson our Lord tells His disciples what He was facing, saying: “the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise.” Jesus knew that He was going to Jerusalem to face His death, yet out of obedience to the Will of God, He went.

The disciples James and John said to Jesus: “we want You to do for us whatever we ask.” “Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory.” These simple fishermen perhaps did not fully appreciate the horrifying series of events that Jesus was facing.

The Lord then tried to metaphorically slap these two brothers across the face to wake them up by insisting to them: “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They said to Him, “We are able.” So, Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized.

With the exception of John the son of Zebedee, all of Christ’s disciples died a similar death. John the Evangelist, the author of a Gospel, Epistles, and of the Book of Revelations, was the only one of thirteen disciples who died peacefully. The rest were martyred for their Master. They indeed “drank the cup that Jesus drank.”

These men were very human, and each willingly gave up their livelihood and their life for Jesus Christ. And they eventually would carry the Cross of Jesus - some literally and some figuratively.

There was another follower of our Lord who also was very human yet recognized that the Cross of the Lord would be the only path in life, namely, Saint Mary of Egypt. For seventeen years she led a sinful life and caused many more men to sin with her. One day she was confronted by God’s power and love, and she finally examined her life and repented. Her heart was touched by God; she decided that she must change her sinful ways, accepting God’s mercy through penitence.

Her way of life changed from that moment on. She retreated to the desert just over the River Jordan, where she lived a life of solitude as a hermit. She spent the rest of her life in the wilderness beyond the Jordan in solitude, thirty-seven years in all.

We are all sinners who need repentance. The time to make ourselves right with God is in this life. The example of the lowly sinner Mary of Egypt should comfort us as we are reminded that God’s Grace is a mystery, and it is available to all of us. May we be like Mary of Egypt as she recognized the sins in her life and changed to lead a life for Christ.
The resurrection of Lazarus has an important place in the Church’s calendar with the approach of Passion Week. But this story, with its elements of love, devotion, sickness, death and final glory, touches a tender spot in the human heart. It is no wonder that in many churches this event is recalled during funerals.

Our vivid icon portrays what is written in the 11th chapter of John’s Gospel. The majestic Figure of Christ is shown at the cave, depicted beyond the wall of Bethany. Several groups of figures are identifiable in the scene. With Christ are the Apostles who had accompanied the Lord to the grave. At the feet of Christ are the sorrowful sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, who had appealed to Jesus to come. They poured out their sorrow saying: “Lord, if You had been here, our brother would not have died.” Near the cave are other people who are about to witness this miracle of restoration.

The figure of Lazarus, bound with burial clothes, is depicted in the icon. The burial garments are clutched by one of the figures, in obedience to the command of the Lord: “Loose him and let him go.” Another figure is involved with the removal of the stone at the door of the cave.

Death obeys the command of the Lord of Life and releases Lazarus. The words of our Saviour ring out: “Lazarus, come forth!” And so we have a preview of the Lord’s victory over death in His own resurrection. It is also a preview of the “resurrection on the last day,” when all who have believed and loved the Lord will be restored.

Word spread quickly of this glorious miracle. However, as it is with human nature, there still were unbelievers. As the coming week will prove, from that day on they plotted our Saviour’s death.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin ............ Vestal, Clifton, New Jersey ............ Litho in U.S.A.

HTC FAMILY EMAILS
Please share information received via email with family and friends, whom you know do not receive messages electronically. Also, have them contact the Cathedral office, if they wish to be included in the HTC email list.

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Resurrection Apolytikion
Tone 1
The stone had been secured with a seal by the Judeans, and a guard of soldiers was watching Your immaculate body. You rose on the third day, O Lord and Savior, granting life unto the world. For this reason were the powers of heaven crying out to You, O Life-giver: Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ; glory to Your kingdom; glory to Your dispensation, only One who loves mankind.

Apolytikion of St. Mary
Plagal Tone 4
In you, O Mother, is preserved undistorted what was made in the image of God; for taking up the cross, you followed Christ and by example taught, that we should overlook the flesh, since it passes away, and instead look after the soul, since it is immortal. And therefore, O devout Mary, your spirit rejoices with the angels.

Apolytikion of the Holy Trinity
Plagal Tone 4
Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who made fishermen all-wise, sending upon them the Holy Spirit and, through them, netting the world. O Loving One, glory to You.

Kontakion
Tone 2
O Protection of Christians that never falls, intercession with the Creator that never fails, we sinners beg you, do not ignore the voices of our prayers. O good Lady, we implore you, quickly come unto our aid, when we cry out to you with faith. Hurry to intercession, and hasten to supplication, O Theotokos who protect now and ever those who honor you.
THE EPISTLE

St. Paul’s Letter to the Hebrews 9:11 – 14

Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we hope in You.

Rejoice greatly in the Lord, O righteous ones; praise is fitting for the upright.

BRETHREN, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

THE GOSPEL

Mark 10:32 – 45

At that time, Jesus taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant of James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
God knows everything!

Have you ever wished you could know the future? Who you’d meet, where you’d live, where you’d work? Or maybe you just wondered who would win a ballgame. Wouldn’t it be great? And if you knew the future, would you do anything differently today?

We have just two weeks until Pascha (Easter), and today, we read a Gospel passage that shows that Jesus really did know the future. The Gospel tells us, “At that time, Jesus took his twelve disciples, and he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes... and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise.’” Jesus knew where He was going. He knew what would happen to Him. Jesus knew the future!

Our Lord knew the future, and He knew He would be crucified. But did He do anything differently? Maybe He could have hidden. Maybe He could have told the authorities that He didn’t really mean what He had said.

Our Lord knew the future and how it would give Him a lot of pain. But He chose to do it anyway. He chose to be crucified and to die for us. He chose to do this because He loves us so much! Jesus chose to save us!
Have you ever wanted something very much... but you couldn’t have it? Sometimes we might think of little things like toys or candy, and we really think we are missing out! But today, on the 5th Sunday of Great Lent, we remember a saint who wanted something big very much... and she couldn’t have it for a long time.

As a young woman, Saint Mary of Egypt made a lot of mistakes in her life. But one day, she tried to go to church, and the doors would not open! Then, Mary realized she needed to change her bad ways. So she spent many years in the desert, praying and asking God for forgiveness. She focused on God and tried to grow closer to Him.

After many, many years, Saint Mary finally met a priest in the desert. He gave her Holy Communion, something she had wanted very much... but that she couldn’t have for a long time. God had forgiven her, and she died in peace and close to God.

Today, maybe we understand Saint Mary just a little bit more. We want to go to church too, but we can’t. We want to receive Holy Communion, but we can’t. Let’s ask Saint Mary to give us patience. Let’s ask her to help us use this special time to grow close to God, even if we aren’t at church. St. Mary of Egypt, pray for us!