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HOME GUIDE TO  
HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA

**Introduction**

Beloved, this year we are called to celebrate Holy Week and Pascha in a very different way, set apart from any year we have experienced. We are to be at home, with our loved ones, away from the corporate prayer we long for, and witness the resurrection from our home altars. There is a joyful sorrow hidden in all of this that I hope will bring us edification and mend parts of our spiritual lives that perhaps we have neglected. In a way, we are forced into a very beautiful position if we look at this time with humility. Our Lord voluntarily suffered this week alone. His life-giving Passion began in silence, darkness, and a secluded cell. We are now shut-in and must experience some of this lonesomeness with Him. We will not hear our most favorite hymns sung by our beloved church family and so many things about this week are stripped away from us. We are left with the bare-bones of prayer, which is very beneficial for us. Being alone, let us enter this week into the lonesome cell of Christ and take up the yoke of this week's rich services which nourish the soul. It will be a very tough year for us clergy, not seeing all your joyful faces illumined with the Paschal light. We must press on together mystically to the Cross, the Tomb, and glorious Pascha. You will all be carried in my heart and on my diskos, as always—but with greater zeal and feeling during this holy time.

Included in this outline is a guide through the days of Holy Week and Pascha and an appendix for how to do readers services using the Holy Week Book. The Holy Week Book will be sent out digitally in another e-mail, but if you require a physical copy please let me know and we will bring you one. Page numbers regarding services are from 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Holy Week Book (which is the digital version you will be getting).

In addition, links to streaming services will be provided throughout the week. Please watch these with reverence and a prayerful disposition. I still think that it is better to pray these prayers personally, but Holy Week services can be particularly long and hard to do on your own. I understand this. Just be sure to devote some time in silence and personal prayer with regards to the services.

May your journey through these Holy Days be profitable. I ask for your prayers!

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## Friday Before Palm Sunday

- Read the Small Compline service with the canon to the Raising of Lazarus, found [here](#).

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## Lazarus Saturday

- Morning:
  - Read the [Orthros Service](#)
  - Pray the [Typika](#) with the Hymns and the Gospel Reading for the feast.
- During the Day:
  - Make crosses with palms, blades of grass, or any plant you have in your home or yard. Strips of construction paper or plain paper will work too! Instructions: [How to Fold a Palm Cross](#)
  - Bake Lazarika! These are little sweet Lazarus cookies and very popular in many Orthodox countries. Recipe here: [Lazarika](#)
- Evening:
  - Read [Great Vespers](#) for Palm Sunday

*Things to listen to or watch:*

- Fr Thomas Hopko [On Raising of Lazarus](#)
- [“Rejoice O Bethany”](#)
- [Canon of Lazarus](#)

*Especially for Kids:*

- [“Orthodox Pebbles”](#) lesson plan for Raising of Lazarus
- Fold crosses and bake Lazarika as mentioned above!
- Video: [“Life of St Lazarus”](#)

*Further Study:*

- [Lazarus Saturday Resource Page](#): Links to various patristic homilies, information, and contemporary homilies.

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## Palm Sunday

- Morning:
  - Read the [Orthros Service](#)
  - Pray the [Typika](#) with the Hymns and the Gospel Reading for the feast.
  - After the Typika, process around your home with crosses, singing “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.”
- Evening:
  - Pray the Bridegroom Orthros (will be sent to you by e-mail).
  - Put up the icon of the Bridegroom prominently in your icon corner. (If you do not have one, [just print one](#)).

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!):*

- [“This Lock Down Lent Hides An Immense Spiritual Treasure”](#)
- [“Hell is Not a Parable” by Geronda Ephraim of Arizona](#)
- [“Behold the Bridegroom”](#) Hymn for Sunday Evening
- The [“Alleluias” of Holy Week](#)

*Especially for Kids:*

- [Virtual Sunday School](#) with lessons on Lazarus and Palm Sunday
- [Vessel of Grace: Life of St Paisios the Athonite](#)
- Process around your home!
- In the evening, put an icon of the Bridegroom out (link to a printable version above) and sing as many hymns as you are able.

*Further Study:*

- [Palm Sunday Resource Page](#): Links to various patristic homilies, information, and contemporary homilies.

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## Holy Monday

- Morning:
  - Pray your morning prayer rule and read the [Synaxarion of Holy Monday](#)
- During the Day:
  - Read the Parable of the Fig Tree (Matt 21:18-22) and think about the fruit that our Lord calls us to bear in our lives (Gal 5:22-25)
    - Read the parable explained by St Maximus the Confessor in his [Answer to Thalassios](#)
  - Contemplate and read the Life of St Joseph (Genesis 37, 39-47)
    - Read [“The Joseph Story”](#) by Fr Patrick Henry Reardon

- Evening:
  - Pray the Second Bridegroom Orthros (will be sent to you by e-mail).

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!)*

- [“Stop The Noise, Be Quiet and Listen”](#) by Fr Roman Braga (Former prisoner in Romanian concentration camps)
- [Chronicles of the Desert 1](#): St Anthony in the Tombs
- [“Behold the Bridegroom”](#)
- The [“Alleluias” of Holy Week](#)

*Especially for Kids:*

- Eat figs and talk about the parable! Our Lord wants us to bear fruit! Summarize Galatians 5:22-25 for them if they are young
- [With the Eyes of the Soul](#): Life of St Porphyrios

*Further Study:*

- [Holy Monday Resource Page](#): Links to various patristic homilies, information, and contemporary homilies.

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## Holy Tuesday

- Morning:
  - Pray your morning prayer rule and read the [Synaxarion for Holy Tuesday](#)
- During the Day:
  - Read the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1-13)
    - Read the parable [Explained by Three Fathers](#)
  - Read the [Life of St Kassiani the Hymnographer](#) (whose famous hymn is chanted the evening of Holy Tuesday)
- Evening:
  - Pray the Third Bridegroom Orthros (will be sent to you by e-mail).

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!)*

- [Hymn of Kassiani](#) for Holy Tuesday Evening (words are in the Bridegroom service for this evening)
- [“How to Say the Jesus Prayer”](#) by St Ephraim of Katounakia
- [Chronicles of the Desert 2](#): St Paul of the Desert (“Abba Paul”)
- [“Behold the Bridegroom”](#)
- The [“Alleluias” of Holy Week](#)

*Especially for Kids:*

- Light an oil lamp and discuss the meaning of the Parable!
  - The oil represents acts of mercy and virtue. We must always be practicing these things to keep our lamps full! The wick is the heart, which God illumines, but we must have our lamps full to keep the fire!
- [Harp of the Spirit](#): Life of St Ephraim the Syrian

*Further Study:*

- [Holy Tuesday Resource Page](#): Links to various patristic homilies, information, and contemporary homilies.

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## Holy Wednesday

- Morning:
  - Pray your morning prayer rule and read the [Synaxarion for Holy Wednesday](#)
    - Add to your prayer rule a petition for the sick (found in the little red prayer book and various other prayer books) and read a list of names of those who are sick which you have prepared.
- During the Day:
  - Read the about the Anointing of Jesus Feet: John 12:3-8; Mark 14:10-11
    - Read the Holy of St Ephraim on [The Sinful Woman](#)
  - Read the lives of the Unmercenary Healers and Wonderworkers of the Church: [St Panteleimon](#), [St Haralambos](#), [St Cosmas and Damian](#), [St Luke of Crimea](#)
- Evening:
  - Pray the Orthros for Holy Thursday (will be sent to you by e-mail).

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!)*

- [Short Life of St Luke of Crimea](#) (This has some scenes of martyrdom that may be too graphic for children or young people, parents should watch first)
- [Healing Fear](#): Movie About St Luke of Crimea
- [Chronicles of the Desert 3](#): St Bessarion (“Abba Bessarion”)

*Especially for Kids:*

- Talk about holy oil, pray for the sick together, read some of the biblical readings of the unction service (found in the Holy Week Book that will be distributed).
- Audio: [Life of St Panteleimon](#), [Life of St Luke of Crimea](#)
- [The Guardian of Jacob's Well](#): Life of St Philoumenos
- [Why Do We Use Incense?](#)

*Further Study:*

- [Holy Wednesday Resource Page](#): Links to various patristic homilies, information, and contemporary homilies.

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## Holy Thursday

- Morning:
  - Pray the Typika (will be sent in an email).
- During the Day:
  - Read through the Passion Gospels in the Holy Week Book:
    - First Gospel: Pg 398-404; Second Gospel: pg 406-408; Third Gospel: pg 411-412; Fourth Gospel: pg 414-416; Fifth Gospel: pg 419-420 (*After the fifth gospel is when the Cross is processed and elevated*); Sixth Gospel: pg 424-425; Seventh Gospel: pg 428-429; Eighth Gospel: pg 431; Ninth Gospel: pg 437; Tenth Gospel: pg 440; Eleventh Gospel: 444; Twelfth Gospel: pg 446.
  - Read "[On The Mystery of Christ's Obedience](#)" by Elder Aimilianos
- Evening:
  - Pray as much of the Orthros of Holy Thursday as you can. This is one of the longest services of the week because of all the readings. I recommend that you read the Gospels at different times during the day and pray some of the Orthros as you have the strength or follow on a live stream.
  - Stand a Cross up in your icon corner and put an icon of Christ crucified on it after the Fifth Gospel reading (pg 419-420). You can print out an [icon of the Corpus](#), cut it out, and tape it to a cross. Sing or play "Today He Is Suspended on a Tree" (link below)

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!)*

- Hymns for Holy Thursday Evening:
  - [Today He Is Suspended on a Tree](#)
  - [They Have Stripped My Garments](#)
- [The Cross is the Proof of God's Love](#) by Fr Dumitru Staniloe (a great modern theologian)

*Especially for Kids:*

- Virtual Sunday School on [Holy Week and Pascha](#) (Look at the activities and save them for the week!)
- Count out thirty coins and talk about how Jesus was betrayed for money. Read the gospel with them about the Mystical Supper and the Betrayal.
- Consider the possibility of washing one another's feet.
- In the Evening, read at least a few of the Gospel readings together, especially the Fifth. After the fifth, let your children help put up the cross with Christ on it (see the link above to print the Corpus) and take turns venerating as you would in church. They can gather leaves and flowers from outside to lay around the cross.

*Further Study:*

- [Holy Thursday Resource Page](#): Links to various patristic homilies, information, and contemporary homilies.

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## Holy Friday

- Morning:
  - Pray the Royal Hours from the Holy Week Book. In Church we pray these all at once, but they can be spread throughout the day to make it an easier service to do alone. Also, you can select one psalm in the beginning to read if you find it difficult to read all of them.
- During the Day:
  - At 3pm, pray the "Unnailing Vespers" and during the Gospel reading take the icon or corpus down from your cross, wrap it in a white cloth, fabric, or a pillow case and place it on your icon corner. (It is indicated in the Gospel reading in the book where to do this on pg 524). If you do not have the strength to do the whole vespers, read the gospel (from pg 521-524), take down the body of Christ, and wrap it in some fabric to place in your icon corner.
  - Print an [Epitaphios](#) and place it in your icon corner or a designated table near your icons and decorate it with flowers from outside. This will be your homemade "funeral bier." After you set the epitaphios down, read the special hymns of the aposticha on pg 529-530.
- Evening:
  - Pray as much of the Orthros of Lamentations. If you do not have the strength, at least read the main portions, particularly the "Lamentations" in front of the epitaphios.

- Take up the Epitaphios and process around your home singing “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal”
- Sprinkle your home with holy water

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!)*

- [The Noble Joseph](#)
- [The Poetry of Resurrection in Liturgical Texts](#) by Metropolitan Ephraim of Beirut
- Hymns for Holy Friday Evening:
  - Lamentations in English: [Stasis 1](#), [Stasis 2](#), [Stasis 3](#)
  - [Lamentations in Greek](#) (English Subtitles), [Lamentations in Arabic](#)
- Give Me The Stranger: [English](#), [Arabic](#)

*Especially for Kids:*

- Morning:
  - Consider these [Orthodox Pebbles “Learning about Pascha” activities](#), particularly the decoration of your own bier!
- Afternoon:
  - Allow your children to take down Christ from the cross during the Gospel Reading at 3pm and wrap him in a cloth that you have (directions above). You can lay the body of Christ on your icon shelf.
  - After you wrap Christ, print the epitaphios (link above), put it on a designated table, and read the aposticha verses as described above. Allow the children to decorate your homemade funeral bier.
- In the Evening:
  - Read/sing the lamentations together and allow the children to throw flowers, pedals, etc. on the Epitaphios.
  - Process together around your home with the Epitaphios.
  - When you return, put the epitaphios down the set your Bible on top of it, venerating the Bible.

*Further Study:*

- [Holy Friday Resource Page](#): Links to various patristic homilies, information, and contemporary homilies.

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## Holy Saturday

- Morning:



- Pray the Typika (will be sent in another email) and sing [“Arise O God!”](#) and throw flowers and leaves around your home to celebrate the destruction of Hades!
- During the Day:
  - Read the story of [St Iakovos and the Night of Pascha](#)
  - Dye Eggs and Prepare a Paschal Basket

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!)*

- [Why I Believe in the Resurrection](#)
- [For Christians, There is No Such Thing As](#) Distance by St Porphyrios
- [“Arise O God!”](#) a hymn of Holy Saturday Morning
- [“Let all Mortal Flesh”](#) a hymn of Holy Saturday Morning

*Especially for Kids:*

- Morning:
  - Sing [“Arise O God!”](#) and throw flowers and leaves around your home!
- Continue [Orthodox Pebbles “Learning about Pascha” activities](#)
- [Make Lillies](#)
- Dye eggs if you haven’t yet and make your favorite foods for the feast to eat on Pascha!

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## Holy Pascha!

- Saturday Evening:
  - Read and sing the “Rush Service” in the Holy Week Book with the lights of your home turned down very low (as dark as you are comfortable). At the end of the services, light your candles and process around your homes.
  - When you come back to your icon corner, read the Gospel (on Pg 670), then turn the lights on and begin to chant “Christ is risen!”
  - You can read the Typika Service (which will be provided in a separate e-mail), or you can follow along a streaming service!
  - Read St John Chrysostom’s Paschal Homily (on Pg 746)
- Sunday morning:
  - Read the [Paschal Office](#) (this service should replace your morning and evening prayers throughout bright week).
- Sunday Evening:
  - Do Agape Vespers as a Reader’s service.

*Things to listen to or watch (Good for Teens and Young Adults too!)*

- [It is the Day of Resurrection!](#)
- [Christ is Risen!](#) (English, Arabic, and Greek)
- [Orthodox Pascha Song:](#) Beautiful Serbian song



## Appendix A: Doing A Reader's Service

*Services in the Holy Week Book are made for priests and deacons to serve from. The following will give you directions on how to pray the services of Orthros and (Great) Vespers at home without a priest.*

In general, these are the rules one should follow in doing a reader's service:

1. All reader's services are to begin with the exclamation: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen."
2. All the priest's prayers and exclamations are omitted.
3. In place of the Great Litanies, the Augmented Litanies, and the Litany of Supplication, "Lord, have mercy" is said twelve times; in place of the Small Litany, three times; both followed by: "Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen."
4. The Gospel is not intoned, but read in an ordinary voice.
5. All other hymns, psalms and prayers are read or sung as when a priest serves.

FAQ's about reader's services:

1. *Is it proper to cense during the censings (i.e. "Lord I have cried" during vespers)?* Yes, it is permitted and encouraged using a small hand censer. Make the sign of the cross with the small censer as you walk through your home.
2. *What if I cannot sing?* That is ok, just intone or simply read the hymns. Do your best.