



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF DENVER

January 21, 2009

Protocol 09–1

The Pious Priests, Monastics, and Deacons
of the Holy Metropolis of Denver

As the holy season of Great Lent approaches, and you begin preparing schedules for the various special Lenten services, I ask that you abide by the following guidelines.

First, please schedule the Divine Liturgy and Memorial Service on the three Saturdays of the Souls (February 21, February 28, and March 7, 2009).

Second, hold the processions appropriate to the First and Third Sundays of Great Lent in a dignified meaningful manner.

Note that the Procession with the Holy Icons normally takes place at the end of the Divine Liturgy on the Sunday of Orthodoxy. It has sometimes also been held later on Sunday afternoon at Vespers but only when this is celebrated in the city as a Pan-Orthodox service.

The veneration of the Holy Cross on the Third Sunday of Great Lent, although specified to take place at the end of Matins, is also normally held at the end of the Divine Liturgy when a majority of the congregation is present. Please keep in mind that at this commemoration daffodils are traditionally used, not roses or carnations and certainly not basil.

Third, to increase participation in the liturgical cycle which has as its purpose the sanctification of time and of our temporal lives, all parishes throughout the Denver Metropolis should, as a minimum, offer the following services during Great Lent:

1. Monday evenings: Great Compline
2. Wednesday morning or evening: Ninth Hour and Presanctified Liturgy
 - a. You may additionally schedule the Presanctified Liturgy on Fridays either in the morning or immediately preceding the Salutations to the Theotokos.
3. Friday evenings: Salutations to the Theotokos (Akathist Hymn)

Fourth, the Holy Week services are the most important and compunctionate, and as a minimum the following services are to be scheduled

1. Lazarus Saturday: Vespers on Friday evening, Matins and Divine Liturgy (Chrysostom) on Saturday morning
2. Palm Sunday: Vespers on Saturday evening, Matins and Divine Liturgy (Chrysostom) on Sunday morning
3. Palm Sunday Evening: Bridegroom Matins of Holy Monday
4. Holy Monday* Evening: Bridegroom Matins of Holy Tuesday
5. Holy Tuesday* Evening: Bridegroom Matins of Holy Wednesday

6. Holy Wednesday Morning: Ninth Hour and Presanctified Liturgy; this is to be celebrated at 6:00 or 7:00 am so that those who work during the day can attend and receive Holy Communion
7. Holy Wednesday Evening: Mystical Supper Matins of Holy Thursday; the Icon of the Mystical Supper carried in procession rather than that of the Bridegroom.
8. Holy Wednesday Evening: Mystery of Holy Unction**
9. Holy Thursday Morning: Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil (Mystical Supper)***
10. Holy Thursday Evening: Crucifixion Matins
11. Holy Friday Morning: Royal Hours
12. Holy Friday Afternoon: Apokathelosis (Descent from the Cross) Vespers; this usually takes place at about 3:00 PM — but never before 1:30 pm
13. Holy Friday Evening: Lamentations Matins and procession with the kouvouklion containing the epitafion, or with only the epitafion inside the church during inclement weather
14. Holy Saturday Morning: Vespereal Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil (the "First Resurrection," or Resurrection of those in Hades)
15. Holy Saturday Night: Vigil, Matins, and Divine Liturgy (Resurrection)****
16. Pascha Sunday Afternoon: Agape Vespers on Pascha Sunday Afternoon; this usually takes place after 1:00 PM

Notes:

- * The Ninth Hour and Presanctified Liturgy may also be celebrated on Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday mornings according to the needs of the Parish.
- ** (1) The Mystery of Holy Unction is not to be repeated over the same oil, if two services are scheduled as is the practice in some of the larger parishes.

(2) The Mystery of Holy Unction could be celebrated earlier on Wednesday, and the Matins for Holy Thursday would be served later on Wednesday evening according to the needs of the Parish. If so, the anointing of the faithful may be given at appropriate intervals during, and at the end of, the Matins Service. The Matins for Holy Thursday, on Holy Wednesday evening, is the service with the Icon of the Mystical Supper carried in procession rather than that of the Bridegroom.

(3) Remember to reserve a portion of the Holy Unction in an appropriate, closed container so that it may be used during the following twelve months to anoint the sick during hospital calls, etc.
- *** (1) They who wish to receive Holy Communion on Holy Thursday should absent themselves from work or school on that morning. It is at this Divine Liturgy only that the Reserved Lamb is consecrated along with the Lamb for that Divine Liturgy, and is reserved

in the Holy Tabernacle for the duration of the year until the following Holy Thursday. The Lamb to be reserved should dry by natural means in a container that allows air to circulate.

(2) Remember to prepare a second Lamb for consecration to be reserved during the following twelve months to bring to the sick during hospital calls, etc.

**** The light of the Resurrection should never be given before midnight.

Fifth, in order to standardize the liturgical services in parishes throughout the Metropolis, please use the Holy Week – Easter service book prepared by Protopresbyter George Papadeas which has been widely used and accepted throughout our parishes for many years and which most of our laity possess. Although other translations have been prepared by various compilers and editors, the translation prepared by Father Papadeas is most faithful to the original language – despite certain typographical errors in the text, as well as syntactical difficulties. You may possess the other Holy Week translations for your personal use and reference but they should not to be used in the parish services.

Since the Matins of Holy Thursday is not in the Holy Week – Easter service book by Father Papadeas, the booklet published by Father Evagoras Constantinides specifically for this Service should be used. It is available from the Pittsburgh Metropolis Clergy Syndesmos; and you should each have received a flyer from Father Jerry Hall in Akron, Ohio. Alternatively, the English text from the *Lenten Triodion* by Mother Mary and Archimandrite (now Bishop) Kallistos Ware published by Faber and Faber may be utilized. Both the Holy Thursday Matins Service and the *Lenten Triodion* are available through the Holy Cross Bookstore in Brookline.

Sixth, the Holy Week services should not be abbreviated, but should be served in their entirety without deletion, innovation, or modification. If chanters and choirs are unfamiliar with some hymns, they can be read or intoned in plainchant as appropriate, but they must not be eliminated.

Seventh, the Divine Liturgies on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday may be scheduled at the regular parish time for a morning Liturgy (usually 9:00 or 10:00 AM). This way more people and the children will be able to participate.

Eighth, advise all of your parishioners that Holy Communion is always given during the Liturgy at the customary place and time — it is never to be given before, or after, the Divine Liturgy. You are forbidden to reserve the Eucharist "throughout the day," as has been done sometimes in the past especially on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday. The Holy Gifts are to be consumed immediately following the Divine Liturgy, and not kept for "latecomers." The Body and Blood of our Lord is given to those who have prepared themselves to receive Communion; it is not distributed as though it were "fast food" where people run into the church, "take their communion," and run back to their mundane concerns.

Ninth, encourage your faithful to express their freedom of religion and to request time off to attend and participate in these most-sacred holy days of the Orthodox ecclesiastical year. It may be argued by some that our faithful must work or attend school, but we should be honest and acknowledge that schools, businesses, and even Government agencies allow persons of other faiths, such as Jews and Moslems, to take time off for their high holy days. In this country which protects freedom of religion we must insist on our right to observe our most sacred holy days. Moreover, everyone takes time off from school and work for doctor appointments, errands, etc., and there is no logical reason to avoid

doing the same to participate in the divine services and especially to receive Holy Communion on Holy Thursday at the Divine Liturgy commemorating the Mystical Supper.

Tenth, no Memorial or Trisagion Services are permitted between the Saturday of Lazarus and the Sunday of Saint Thomas, inclusively. Marriages are not celebrated throughout Great Lent and during Holy Week; their celebrations resume after the Sunday of Pascha.

Eleventh, pastors should schedule times for the Mystery of Holy Repentance for the benefit of the people during the period of the Great Fast, beginning on Clean Monday. An excellent time for confessions to be heard is before or after Saturday evening Vespers and before or after the Sunday Vespers on the five Sunday evenings in parishes where these are celebrated. Times for confession should also be scheduled after each of the Great Compline Services on all Mondays of the Great Fast. Sadly, the Mystery of Holy Repentance has become a "forgotten sacrament" among our faithful, often because they do not know what confession entails, or even what one does in confession. In addition to scheduling times for confession, please offer clear and thorough instruction from the pulpit, in your periodic mailings, and in Bible study/inquiry classes regarding this important Mystery.

Twelfth, I have sent you translations and musical settings for the great Paschal Hymn, "Christ is Risen," and for the Kontakion of the Akathist Hymn, "To you the champion," as well as translations of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, the Prayer of Saint Ephraim, and the Paschal homily of Saint John Chrysostom. These are the only English versions that are to be sung or read in all parishes of the Metropolis of Denver. Please feel free to duplicate these translations in your parishes as necessary.

Thirteenth, if the Paschal homily of Saint John Chrysostom is read in Greek at the traditional part of the Divine Liturgy where the people respond – just before the Dismissal – it should also be read in English as a sermon immediately following the Gospel reading of the Divine Liturgy.

Fourteenth, the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, falls on a Wednesday in 2009. You will therefore not schedule or celebrate the Presanctified Divine Liturgy on that day. Instead, you should schedule Great Vespers on Tuesday evening, March 24, 2009, as well as Matins and the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom on Wednesday morning, March 25, 2009

Remember that March 25th is principally a celebration of the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel to the most holy Theotokos. In some parishes a commemorations may also be held on that date for Greek Independence day. During the Great Fast parishes may not permit in parish facilities and/or on parish property meals at which meat is served, nor festal celebrations at which there is drinking or dancing. This holds true on March 25th as well, although fish is allowed on that day since – just like Palm Sunday – it is one of the twelve great and holy feasts.

Unfortunately, the few who celebrate Greek Independence day with feasting and dancing ignore the solemnity of the Feast of the Annunciation to the Theotokos and violate the discipline of the Great Fast. Perhaps unbeknown to many in America, such celebrations also neglect the pious and long-standing tradition in Greece of commemorating their national sovereignty – which was proclaimed auspiciously on the Day of the Annunciation, symbolizing the freedom of the Greek People from centuries of foreign subjugation — with church services, parades, and patriotic lectures, but not with dancing and feasting, since the Greek people always respected the solemnity of the Feast of the Annunciation, the Great Fast, and Greek Independence. In regard to dances scheduled for the celebration of Greek Independence Day here in the United States, I am convinced that most people do so to have a good time and not because they have legitimate patriotic feelings for Greece.

Finally, all of us, clergy and laity alike, benefit by entering more easily into the spirit of the Lenten season through the additional Great Lent services and schedules. It is of utmost importance for the priests and the deacons to remember that the additional services and sacraments of this most-holy period greatly benefit the clergy as well as the laity. Even if few, or even none, of the laity attend a service, your prayers in the services are on their behalf and for their spiritual well-being. Do not be discouraged, but rejoice in worshipping God Whom we are privileged to serve as His priests.

May this coming Great Lent bring many spiritual benefits to all the reverend clergy, the faithful monastics, and the pious laity of this holy Metropolis.

With Paternal Blessings,



✠ Metropolitan Isaiah of Denver