



The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd

Campbell, OH 44405

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



MARCH Bulletin Sponsor- OPEN

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, March 2

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy followed by Forgiveness Vespers / Social / Choir Rehearsal

Monday, March 3

9:00 AM: Lenten Hours & Morning Prayers

6:00 PM: Canon of St Andrew of Crete w/ Compline

Tuesday March 4

9:00 AM: Lenten Hours & Morning Prayers

6:00 PM: Canon of St. Andrew of Crete w/ Compline

Wednesday, March 5

9:00 AM: Lenten Hours & Morning Prayers

6:00 PM: Canon of St. Andrew of Crete w/ Compline

Thursday, March 6

9:00 AM: Lenten Hours & Morning Prayers

6:00 PM: Canon of St. Andrew of Crete w/ Compline

Friday, March 7

9:00 AM: Lenten Hours & Morning Prayers

6:00 PM: Liturgy of Pre-sanctified gifts followed by Lenten meal and spiritual talk by sub-deacon Donald (Please fast from noon the latest)

Saturday, March 8

9:00AM: Spiritual Retreat for new Council

6:00 PM: Vespers

NOTE: CHANGE CLOCKS AHEAD 1 HOUR

Sunday, March 9

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Swearing in of new Council / Procession of Icons / Social / Choir Rehearsal / Council Meeting

5:00 PM: Sunday of Orthodoxy Vesper Service @ Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox- Campbell

CONFESSIONS

Please make an appointment to come to Confession during the times posted.

Confessions will be heard -

- ♦ before and after Vespers and all Lenten Services (except Pre-Sanctified Liturgy).
- ♦ only be heard before the Pre-sanctified Liturgy.

The last day for confessions will be Lazarus Saturday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy.

PRAYER OF SAINT EPHREM

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk. *(Full prostration- If you physically can't, then deep bow)*

But give rather the Spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. *(Full prostration- If you physically can't, then deep bow)*

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. *(Full prostration- If you physically can't, then deep bow)*

O God, cleanse me a sinner (12 deep bows)

Then:

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk. *(No Prostration)*

But give rather the Spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. *(No Prostration)*

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Full prostration- If you physically can't, then deep bow)*

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<https://www.stjohnthebaptist-campbell.org/>

padrebartek@gmail.com

PLEASE KEEP OUR ELDERS OF THE CHURCH & SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Send a “Thinking of You” card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please contact Fr. Andrew.

Spiritual Children of St. Tikhon Gather to Commemorate 100th Anniversary of His Repose

A large and historical gathering brought together the Diocese of the Midwest and the Mid-America Diocese of the Russian Church Outside of Russia to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the repose of St. Tikhon of Moscow, Enlightener of North America. As previously announced, the feast was held on February 22, the uncovering of the saint’s relics, and was also historically significant as this was the first time that the two diocese worked together and celebrated for such an occasion.

His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest presided over the divine services and was joined by priests and deacons of the two diocese. The responses were sung antiphonally by the Virgin Mary Protection Cathedral Choir, under the direction of Michael Gill, and the Chicago Deanery Choir by Reader Philip Sokolov.

Following the Divine Liturgy, Archbishop Daniel offered a homily on the efforts of St. Tikhon as the missionary of the North American continent.

Following the dismissal, the clergy and faithful enjoyed the hospitality of the two diocese at a festive meal. Prior to the meal, the Virgin Mary Protection Cathedral Choir sang a few musical pieces as part of the afternoon program.

Metropolitan Tikhon Welcomes Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk to the OCA Chancery Office

On Tuesday, February 18, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon welcomed Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk to the temporary Chancery office of the Orthodox Church in America in Springfield, VA.

Fr. Daniel, who serves as the Dean and Representative of the Representation Church of St. Catherine the Great Martyr in Moscow, provided an update on his work. Also present for the meeting was Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Acting Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America.

During their discussion, Fr. Daniel shared updates on the ongoing renovation at St. Catherine’s, including the anticipated completion of a new iconostasis, which is expected to be ready before the end of the year.

He also spoke about the life of the parish community and his role as the OCA’s representative within the Patriarchate of Moscow. Additionally, he provided insights into his collaborative work with representatives of other autocephalous Orthodox Churches, underscoring the importance of inter-Orthodox relationships in maintaining unity and fostering stronger ties across different churches.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon expressed his gratitude for Fr. Daniel’s dedicated service and his efforts in representing the Orthodox Church in America in Moscow.

PRAYER LIST– Updated 2-14

PARISHIONERS: Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Helen Colaluca / Joan Cross / Ann Cvercko / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Gianna Hryb / Sue Kennedy / Heidi Kuzemchak / Matushka Helen Psinka / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Melanie Yannitto / Marion Zwinski

HIERARCHS & CLERGY: AB Alexander from Dallas / AP James Gleason (Fr.) / AP Michael Rustic / AP Emil Hutyay / Fr. Deacon James Hryb / Fr. Matthew Nyumu & his family & parish

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Diane Caban (Sirilla) / George Caban (Sirilla) / Donna Chiarelli / Karen Debiec / Paul Demkosky (Fr.) / Trudy Ellmore / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Bruce Harris (Sabol) / Paula Kennedy / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / James Malchisky (Fr.) / Mea Mahan / Mary Mahan / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Matushka Raisa (Nicoloff) / Teri Petroff (Fr.) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Diane Ruff / Julia Shirilla / Bob Smrek (Sirilla) / Emilia Yanitto / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / Brian (Shirilla) / David (Willison) / Drew (Willison) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Ellen (Clark) / Ellen (Kessler) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Karen (Vansuch) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Katie (Garrity) / Paul (Kolesar) / Paula (Voytilla) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Richard (Tusinac)

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive & Metropolitan Arseny imprisoned / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - <i>February</i>	2024	2025
1st Week		
Feast Vespers for 3 Hierarchs	No record	6
Feast Liturgy for 3 Hierarchs		14
Feast for Meeting Vespers	6	7
Liturgy for Meeting	10	50 / 34
2nd Week		
Vespers	9	No Vespers
Liturgy	60 / 46	40 / 28
3rd Week		
Vespers	8	5
Liturgy	54 / 34	38 / 22
Vespers	7	10
Liturgy	70 / 47	49 / 33
5th week		

Sunday of Cheesefare: Expulsion of Adam from Paradise Commemorated on March 2

As we begin the Great Fast, the Church reminds us of Adam’s expulsion from Paradise. God commanded Adam to fast (Gen. 2:16), but he did not obey. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve were cast out of Eden and lost the life of blessedness, knowledge of God, and communion with Him, for which they were created. Both they and their descendents became heirs of death and corruption.

Let us consider the benefits of fasting, the consequences of disobedience, and recall our fallen state. Today we are invited to cleanse ourselves of evil through fasting and obedience to God. Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: “Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit....”

MARCH Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

NOTE: If anything is missing from the Sponsorships please contact Fr. Andrew ASAP

Bulletin: OPEN

Wine: In memory of sub-deacon William Livosky on the occasion of his 10th Anniversary of repose– Given by Linda Lovosky and family

Incense: In memory of sub-deacon William Livosky on the occasion of his 10th Anniversary of repose– Given by Linda Lovosky and family

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: In memory of George Kolesar– Given by Joann Sirilla & Stacy & Vince Donofrio

Altar Candles: In memory of Andrew Cvercko on the occasion of his birthday- Given by Ann Cvercko

Tetrapod Candles: OPEN

St. Herman Candles: Commemorating all who participate in the maintenance of the church, the teachers, singers and those who participate in social events. Praying for everyone to love one another.

St. Panteleimon Icon Candles: OPEN

Protection Icon Candles: OPEN

St. John the Baptist Candles: OPEN

Flowers: OPEN

<u>\$50 per month</u>	<u>\$30 per month</u>	<u>\$25 per month</u>
*Wine	*St. Herman candles	Incense
*Bulletin	*St. Panteleimon Icon candles	
*Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light	*Protection Icon candles	Flowers - \$50 for 2 weeks at a time– <i>Updated</i>
*Altar Candles	*St. John the Baptist candles	
*Tetrapod Candles		

MARCH Celebrations

Birthday

- 2- Lori Batura
- 4- Kaitlyn Kuzemchak
- 6- AP John Steffaro
- 9- Kevin Koval
- 11- Cindy Ferrick
- 14- Reader Matthew Vansuch
- 15- Natalia Simko / Patty Tubic
- 16- Paul Bojan / Claudia Zile / Diana Konik
- 18- Thomas Zelinsky
- 17- Christine Koval
- 20- Gianna Hryb / Jacob Hryb
- 22- Helena Kalantzis
- 24- Anne Jesko
- 25- Ephraimia Andrews
- 28- Tracy Rusnak / Dennis Tubic
- 30- Tom Hull

Anniversary

NONE

Names Day

- 4- AB Daniel of Chicago & the Diocese of the mid-west / His Grace Bishop Gerasim of Forth Worth
- 10- Patty Thompson
- 14- His Grace Bishop Benedict of Hartford & New England
- 17- AB Alejo of Mexico City & Mexico / His Grace Bishop Alexis of Sitka & Alaska
- 30- Beth Hull / Elizabeth Willison

SOCIALS FOR MARCH

- March 2 'O' Club sponsoring Cheesefare Sunday
- March 9 Currently no one has offered to sponsor this Sunday
- March 16 In memory of George Kolesar by Barbara
- March 23 In Memory of Sub-deacon William Livosky by Linda Livosky
- March 30 Council will sponsor this Sunday
- NOTE: 'O' Club Kolachi Baking (March 31-April 5)
- NOTE: All socials are to be strict fast during the Great Fast.

March CHARITY

For the Cleveland Deanery

MONTHLY CHARITY FOR 2025

- January: OCMC:** \$900 + \$300 from the church
Total \$1,200
- February: CA Fire Relief:** \$524 + \$300 from the church
Total \$824

MARCH Reposed List

- 1- Anna Rago (1920) ©
- 1- Konstantin Pavchula (1933) ©
- 1- Spiros Psaromatis (1936) ©
- 1- Johnny Basala (1995)
- 2- Gerasimakis Mikes (1930) ©
- 4- Theodora Anos (1963) ©
- 4- Marie Feltovich (2004) ©
- 5- Emily Vasilchek (1970) ©
- 5- Mary Bilchik (1923) ©
- 5- Milan Milasav (1926) ©
- 6- Joseph Libertyn (1989) ©
- 6- Joseph Macala Jr (1993) ©
- 6- Eva Nedostup (1921) ©
- 6- Mike Korfia (1932) ©
- 6- Alexander Tsvetanoff (1949) ©
- 8- Helen Konik (1925) ©
- 8- Olga Sweda (1995) ©
- 9- Rampo Nikoloff (1957) ©
- 9- Stephen Feltovich, Jr. (2015) ©
- 10- David Joseph Wargo (1977) ©
- 10- Mary Durshaw (1980) ©
- 11- John Kostrounis (1924) ©
- 11- Nicholas Sivachko (1934) ©
- 11- Christine James (1959) ©
- 11- Helen Kalafut (1962) ©
- 11- Olga (Dr Nicoloff cousin) 2023
- 12- Metropolitan Nicholas (2011)
- 12- Margaret Krause (2009) ©
- 12- Eli Maystevovich (1951) ©
- 13- George Malchisky Sr (1980)
- 13- Steven Gozur (1993) ©
- 13- Robert Ferdericks (2023)
- 14- Steven Nosik (1987) ©
- 14- Nikita Meris (1933) ©
- 14- John Furin (1933) ©
- 15- Tatianna Muc (1931) ©
- 15- Mary Furin (1996) ©
- 16- Mary Grubich (1931) ©
- 16- Catherine Kovchuiak (1947) ©
- 18- Sub-deacon William Livosky (2015) ©
- 18- Vladimir Conkich (1924) ©
- 18- Still born Sabastinak (1924) ©
- 18- John Furin (1934) ©
- 19- Manthas Geanakakis (1956) ©
- 21- Tai Whitham
- 21- Sava Yovansvich (1920) ©
- 21- Michael Barol (1965) ©
- 22- Matthew Pacak (1969) ©
- 22- Anna Sweesy (2010) ©
- 22- Theodore Boldosh (1931) ©
- 23- John Olesko (1971) ©
- 23- Andrew Zlatfoff, Sr. (1975) ©
- 24- Mary Bolina (1988) ©
- 25- Pani Janette Moriak (1997)
- 25- David Chikerotis (2019)
- 26- Joseph Krause (1998) ©
- 26- Michael Urchak (2005) ©
- 26- Irene Homulos (2005) ©
- 26- Vasili Spirtos (1925) ©
- 26- George Konstaudinidis (1943) ©
- 26- Tony Deligeorge (1957) ©
- 26- Dan Barbus (1958) ©
- 27- Darlene Hryb (2017) ©
- 27- Bogan Bolgar (1927) ©
- 27- Evdokia Vasilika (1932) ©
- 27- George Britven (1957) ©
- 28- Anthony Fojcik (1920) ©
- 28- John Patellis (1926) ©
- 29- Trofin Melnik (1931) ©
- 30- Nicholas Aasta (1921) ©
- 30- George Andras (1999) ©
- 31- Helen Homulas (1974) ©
- 31- James Malli (1925) ©
- 31- Katherine Hamanzi (1946) ©

Romans 13:11-14:4 (Epistle)

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to dispute over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Matthew 6:14-21 (Gospel)

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

2025 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Nancy Tusinac, President
(Sub-committee Chairman for all social events)
Phone- 724-456-7366

Cindy Ferrick, Treasurer
(Sub-committee Chairman of the Sunshine Club)
Phone 330-531-1119

Joann Sirilla, Financial Secretary
(Sub-committee Chairman on all fundraisers)
Phone 330-881-6775

Sub-deacon Dr. Donald Tamulouis, Vice President
(Sub-committee Chairman on all Maintenance issues). He will be working with Michael Simko
Phone 330-774-8860

Sherrie Fredericks, Secretary
(Sub-committee Chairman on sending articles & pictures of events to the Diocese)
Phone: 330-881-5087

Natalia Simko, Council Member
(Sub-committee Chairman on all Cemetery issues)
Phone- 330-980-3033

David Konik, Council Member
(Sub-committee Chairman on Welcoming Cmte)
Phone: 330-717-6714

David Dionisio, Council Member
(Sub-committee Chairman on all organizational issues in the church (including safety issues)
Phone: 425-241-7825

Maintenance Issues:
Michael Simko - 330-565-0084
Michael Centofanti - 330-544-3518

NEW COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEES

You will note, each Council member is in charge of keeping order in their respective areas. If there are any issues in a particular area, please contact the responsible Council member.

They are responsible to find a solution to the reported issue. That may include seeking your or another person's help. This will allow more organized response and avoid one person being burdened with everything.

Sunshine Club – This new club is responsible for sending out birthday, anniversary and get well cards.

FINAL FEBRUARY FINANCIALS

Expenses	\$22,387.95
Income	\$24,524.44
TOTAL	\$2,136.49

(IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

- ◆ *Due to the Kolachi income, we are in the black .*
- ◆ *Without that income, we would be in the red by \$4,363.51*
- ◆ *We were in the red for over \$10,000 in January. This fundraising income is a blessing.)*

Weekly Tithe	\$16,583.70
Weekly Candles	\$392.00
Altar Candles	\$50.00
Tetrapod Candles	\$30.00
Unneeded Gifts	\$335.00
Bulletin	\$50.00
Christmas Card	\$20.00
Cemetery Reimbursement	\$563.74
Kolachi	\$6,500.00

Monthly Charity Collection: CA Fire Relief
\$524+\$300 from the church= \$824 Thank You!

February / March 2025 Reader Schedule

March 2– Reader Matthew Vansuch
March 9– Reader Nick Vansuch
March 16– Sub-deacon Donald Tamulonis
March 23– Robert Willison
March 30– George Horodnic Jr.

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

March 2– His Beatitude AB Anastasios of Albania
March 9 – Aleksandra & Olivia Ter & all those who lost their lives in the Washington, DC & Philadelphia plane crashes
March 23– George Kolesar

LOCAL MISSION TO BE HELD HERE

On Sunday, March 30 the local clergy Association will be having the vespers here @ 5:00pm Please plan to attend. There will be a Lenten meal provided by our parish Further information to follow.

GI Bill Benefits Restored at St. Tikhon's Seminary

After a year-long struggle with the Veterans Administration, St. Tikhon's Seminary is happy to report that Veterans Benefit use is being restored at the seminary!

The previous Presidential administration restricted such benefits to only schools registered for Title IV funding, which the seminary has never had, for numerous reasons.

While an exception clause was written into the law, the VA refused to grant such waivers. Seminary Dean, Fr. John Parker, worked through numerous channels and multiple Congressional offices seeking clarifications and a waiver during the last 12 months. The waiver was denied two times in that process.

Eventually, he obtained correspondence from Congress' Committee on Veterans Affairs written to the head of the VA, indicating clearly that the VA itself was misinterpreting Congressional intent of the law. He used this correspondence to continue to fight for the use of benefits hard-earned by Orthodox Christian veterans to be able to be used at St. Tikhon's, as they have for many, many years.

On January 3, President Biden approved a Law, which in part clarified the intentions of the Title IV question, in line with Congress' stated intent.

St. Tikhon's reapplied for the waiver a third time, which was promptly granted under the new law without an expiration date.

We are happy to announce that veterans will be able to employ their GI Bill benefits with the new academic year if all things go smoothly. Mrs. Katherine Cardell is working diligently to renew the seminary's credentials, which we anticipate completing before Pascha.

While the loss of such benefits was completely out of the seminary's control, we are sorry that it prevented veterans from applying last year. We look forward to doing so immediately moving forward.

For more information, please write dean@stots.edu.

Pre-Conciliar Commission Meets in Preparation for the 21st All-American Council

On February 12, 2025, the Pre-Conciliar Commission of the Orthodox Church in America met to continue its preparations for the 21st All-American Council, which will take place on July 14-18, 2025, in Phoenix, AZ. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon opened the meeting with prayer and offered his gratitude to the Commission members for their work as the Council approaches.

A key focus of the meeting was finalizing the schedule to facilitate travel arrangements for delegates. The first plenary session of the AAC will take place on Monday, July 14, at 6:00 PM, and the final plenary session will conclude on Friday, July 18, at 11:00 AM. A fuller schedule will be published in due time.

Additionally, plans for the youth program at the AAC were reviewed. The program will feature daily activities, with mornings dedicated to teaching and the presentation to the AAC, followed by various outings and events in the afternoons.

Download the Youth Schedule

The PCC also heard several updates including details on logistical, registration, local committees, and FOCA, amongst others. The 21st AAC will have the unveiling of a newly commissioned icon of the saints of North America and an icon of St. Olga of Alaska in connection with her canonization. Hymns in honor of St. Olga will be sung for the first time at the Council.

The Commission reviewed and approved the proposed Council agenda. The approved agenda will now be submitted to the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod for their respective approvals.

For further updates on the 21st All-American Council, please visit the All-American Council Website.

Great and Holy Monday / Commemorated on April 14

Holy Week: A Liturgical Explanation for the Days of Holy Week

3. MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY: THE END

These three days, which the Church calls Great and Holy have within the liturgical development of the Holy Week a very definite purpose. They place all its celebrations in the perspective of End Times; they remind us of the eschatological meaning of Pascha. So often Holy Week is considered one of the "beautiful traditions" or "customs," a self-evident "part" of our calendar. We take it for granted and enjoy it as a cherished annual event which we have "observed" since childhood, we admire the beauty of its services, the pageantry of its rites and, last but not least, we like the fuss about the Paschal table. And then, when all this is done we resume our normal life. But do we understand that when the world rejected its Savior, when "Jesus began to be sorrowful and very heavy... and his soul was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death," when He died on the Cross, "normal life" came to its end and is no longer possible. For there **Con't next pg**

Great & Holy Monday con't from previous pg

were “normal” men who shouted “Crucify Him” who spat at Him and nailed Him to the Cross. And they hated and killed Him precisely because He was troubling their normal life. It was indeed a perfectly “normal” world which preferred darkness and death to light and life.... By the death of Jesus the “normal” world, and “normal” life were irrevocably condemned. Or rather they revealed their true and abnormal inability to receive the Light, the terrible power of evil in them. “Now is the Judgment of this world” (John 12:31). The Pascha of Jesus signified its end to “this world” and it has been at its end since then. This end can last for hundreds of centuries, but this does not alter the nature of time in which we live as the “last time.” “The fashion of this world passeth away...” (I Cor. 7:31).

Pascha means passover, passage. The feast of Passover was for the Jews the annual commemoration of their whole history as salvation, and of salvation as passage from the slavery of Egypt into freedom, from exile into the promised land. It was also the anticipation of the ultimate passage—into the Kingdom of God. And Christ was the fulfillment of Pascha. He performed the ultimate passage: from death into life, from this “old world” into the new world into the new time of the Kingdom. And he opened the possibility of this passage to us. Living in “this world” we can already be “not of this world,” i.e. be free from slavery to death and sin, partakers of the “world to come.” But for this we must also perform our own passage, we must condemn the old Adam in us, we must put on Christ in the baptismal death and have our true life hidden in God with Christ, in the “world to come....”

And thus Easter is not an annual commemoration, solemn and beautiful, of a past event. It is this Event itself shown, given to us, as always efficient, always revealing our world, our time, our life as being at their end, and announcing the Beginning of the new life.... And the function of the three first days of Holy Week is precisely to challenge us with this ultimate meaning of Pascha and to prepare us to the understanding and acceptance of it.

1. This eschatological (which means ultimate, decisive, final) challenge is revealed, first, in the common troparion of these days:

Troparion—Tone 8

Behold the Bridegroom comes at midnight, And blessed is the servant whom He shall find watching, And again unworthy is the servant whom He shall find heedless. Beware, therefore, O my soul, do not be weighed down with sleep, Lest you be given up to death and lest you be shut out of the Kingdom. But rouse yourself crying: Holy, Holy, Holy, are You, O our God! Through the Theotokos have mercy on us!

Midnight is the moment when the old day comes to its end and a new day begins. It is thus the symbol of the time in which we live as Christians. For, on the one hand, the Church is still in this world, sharing in its weaknesses and tragedies. Yet, on the other hand, her true being is not of this world, for she is the Bride of Christ and her mission is to announce and to reveal the coming of the Kingdom and of the new day. Her life is a perpetual watching and expectation, a vigil pointed at the dawn of this new day. But we know how strong is still our attachment to the “old day,” to the world with its passions and sins. We know how deeply we still belong to “this world.” We have seen the light, we know Christ, we have heard about the peace and joy of the new life in Him, and yet the world holds us in its slavery. This weakness, this constant betrayal of Christ, this incapacity to give the totality of our love to the only true object of love are wonderfully expressed in the exapostilarion of these three days:

“Thy Bridal Chamber I see adorned, O my Savior And I have no wedding garment that I may enter, O Giver of life, enlighten the vesture of my soul And save me.”

2. The same theme develops further in the Gospel readings of these days. First of all, the entire text of the four Gospels (up to John 13: 31) is read at the Hours (1, 3, 6 and 9). This recapitulation shows that the Cross is the climax of the whole life and ministry of Jesus, the Key to their proper understanding. Everything in the Gospel leads to this ultimate hour of Jesus and everything is to be understood in its light. Then, each service has its special Gospel lesson :

On Monday:

At Matins: Matthew 21: 18-43—the story of the fig tree, the symbol of the world created to bear spiritual fruits and failing in its response to God.

At the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts: Matthew 24: 3-35: the great eschatological discourse of Jesus. The signs and announcement of the End. “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away....”

“When the Lord was going to His voluntary Passion, He said to His Apostles on the way: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, And the Son of Man shall be delivered up As it is written of Him. Come, therefore, and let us accompany Him, With minds purified from the pleasures of this life, And let us be crucified and die with Him, That we may live with Him, And that we may hear Him say to us: I go now, not to the earthly Jerusalem to suffer, But unto My Father and your Father And My God and your God, And I will gather you up into the heavenly Jerusalem, Into the Kingdom of Heaven....” (Monday Matins)

by: The Very Reverend Alexander Schmemmann