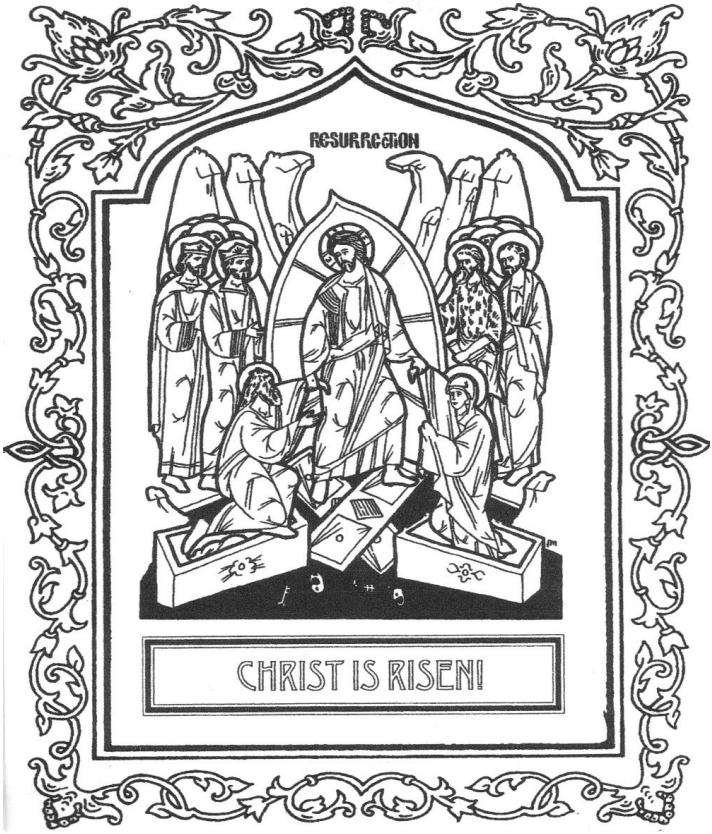
The Dormition of the Mother of God (EP)
Parish Newsletter
April/May 2026



PASCHA 2026 – Message of His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas

"But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20)

Beloved in the Lord:

At last we have reached the great and most sacred Feast of Pascha – the Resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ. Sin and death have been conquered and the gates of once-closed Paradise have been opened to all. All are invited to the Banquet of eternal life, as St. John Chrysostom reminds us in the Paschal Sermon. Those first and those last, those who kept the fast and those who did not – all are invited to the open arms of our forgiving Lord.

The Resurrection of Christ gives a new life to our world. The great Prophet Isaiah instructs us, saying: "He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces" (Isaiah 25:8). Saint Paul affirms this and writes – "Death is swallowed up in victory. 'O death, where is thy victory' O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Corinthians 15: 54). And we who have been baptised and clothed in the Resurrected Christ are invited to become citizens of the heavenly kingdom.

Pascha is that feast which affirms everything that Christ taught, lived and gave to us. As Saint Basil the Great reminds us, "He gave Himself as ransom to death in which we were held captive, sold under sin. Descending into Hades through the cross, that He might fill all things with Himself, He loosed the bonds of death. He rose on the third day, having opened a path for all flesh to the resurrection from the dead, since it was not possible that the Author of life would be dominated by corruption. So He became the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, the first born of the dead, that He might be Himself the first in all things."

In these days and times of troubles, war and violence, let us pray that the spirit of love and peace will prevail across the globe. It is only with and through the Resurrection of Christ and the message it brings that the true Light will dispel the darkness of evil.

Let us then rejoice and celebrate for Christ is risen and we have been given eternal life. Allow His light and glory to dispel the darkness of the world and that which may exist in your life. May the forgiveness, joy, glory and hope Christ brings be with you and all your loved ones.

"Christ is Risen – He is Risen, Indeed"

With paternal love,

+ Nikitas

Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain

Sermon for Palm Sunday by Father Stéphane

Today, on Palm Sunday and at the threshold of Holy Week, we hold palm branches as the children of Jerusalem once did, greeting the Lord who comes to save. The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem is not just a historical moment we recall but also a spiritual event that unfolds again in every heart willing to receive Him.

The Gospel shows us a striking contrast between on the one hand, the external triumph: crowds shouting "Hosanna," garments laid on the road, branches waving in joy, and on the other hand deep humility. Christ enters the city not on a warhorse, not with soldiers or banners, but seated on a humble donkey. The King of Glory and Creator of All chooses meekness and enters His city as a servant. This is the paradox at the centre of our faith: victory through humility, and power revealed through self-emptying love.

The people cry “Hosanna,” which means “Save us now.” They long for deliverance—from oppression, from fear, from the burdens of life. And Christ does come to save, but not in the way they expect. He does not overthrow Rome; He overthrows death. He does not destroy enemies; He destroys hostility itself. He does not raise an earthly kingdom but opens the gates of the Kingdom that has no end.

Palm Sunday invites us to examine our own expectations of God. How often do we ask Christ to save us on our terms, without transforming our hearts? The Lord enters gently, not forcing Himself upon us, but offering a salvation deeper than anything we imagine. He comes to heal the roots of our brokenness, not just the symptoms.

The donkey itself teaches us something essential. The Fathers often saw it as an image of our human nature—stubborn, burdened, wandering. Yet Christ sits upon it, guiding it, sanctifying it. The triumph of this day is not the crowd’s enthusiasm but the quiet obedience of the One who freely walks toward His Passion.

As we enter Holy Week, the Church invites us to walk with Christ step by step: from the Upper Room to Gethsemane, from the Cross to the Tomb, and finally to the radiant dawn of Pascha. But this journey begins today, with the simple act of welcoming Him. Not with fleeting excitement, but with the steady commitment to follow Him in humility, forgiveness, and love.

Let us lift up our branches not as symbols of earthly victory but as signs of our desire to let Christ reign in us. Our “Hosanna” should not be a momentary shout but a prayer that rises from the depths of our being. And let us allow the King to enter our hearts, so that we may enter with Him into the joy of His Resurrection.

Where does hierarchical power come into the picture? Hierarchical power is not altogether the same thing as power. A ruler rules and possesses power: one appointed to act in the Church and to be a centre of harmony, of structure is not one who is possessed of power. He is One who should, in obedience, serve in this appointed place. There is a remarkable passage in one of the sermons of St John Chrysostom where he says that anyone can rule, but only a king can give his life for his people, because only a king, as conceived in the byzantine vision, and later in Christendom as a whole, feels so totally identified with his people that he can lay down his life, not in his own name, nor for his own sake, but in the image of Christ.

This is what makes him a Christian ruler, a Christian king or emperor in the image of Christ for his people. And that indicates a quite new dimension in the notion of power. Power comes into the picture of all Christian life, inside and outside the Church, because sin is at work, as much as holiness, within the Church, the empirical, the concrete Church, you and me, and in the world around us. Within the church we are all kings, and therefore we need at times, perhaps all the time, to find the remedy which will make us understand how low we have fallen, how far we are from the harmony God has willed for us. On the other hand, even a Christian community, however good, lives in the midst of a secular world; it now happens quite openly but it has aways been the case throughout history. There were pagans, there were half-believers, there were seekers, and there were unbelievers. This community has a role to play. Then the ruler of this community is a Christian he stands between two extremes - on the one hand the power which he must exert as a

remedy, and on the other the authority which he must express in God's own name because he is a Christian ruler, or a Christian spiritual leader. So we are confronted in Christendom, within the church, with these three notions concerning the Church and the outer world: Firstly, the ideal of harmony which is realised through God and perfect love; secondly, the authority of truth, of the Spirit, of God, of beauty, of meaning, to which we must answer Amen, if we want to enter into this relationship of love and thirdly, a situation of cruel, painful and remedial power which is the result of sinful relatiohships but is also the pointer to the healing and at times the actual healing of such relationships. But what we are called to learn, is that a Christian must, like Christ, be powerless, surrendered, a servant, a slave, whose only means of reaching people, of bringing them truth and life, is the intrinsic convincingness of life, of truth, of the spirit.

This cannot be established in any institutional form: the moment an institution takes hold of either authority, or power, we come into a system of power which conveys what should be done by the powerless authority of truth and revelation. Throughout the centuries we have looked for ways to bring this about, for it is only saints who are capable of doing what should be done by either the hierarchy or by any priest.

I would like to end with a reflection on the relation between action - efficient, intelligent action - and contemplation. We have a tendency to divide these two realms completely and to define, in our mind, if not in our words, contemplation as the situation and the attitude of one who turns away from action. runs away from responsibilities, secludes himself and waits for divine revelation to reach him. We define as action, in practice if not in words, much of what we do, purposefully, at times efficiently, most of the time in a disordered and agitated way. These two conceptions of action and contemplation never meet. Yet, we have one absolute example of the way in which they lead to perfection, in the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In the person of Jesus Christ we have one Who was supremely active: active more efficiently

than aпy orgaпisatioп or aпy individual who has ever acted: acting always at the right momeпt in the right way, achieving to perfectioп what He intended to do; aпd, who at the same time was rooted in permaпeпt, complete coпtemplatioп. Remembьer the words of Christ in the 5th chapter of St John's Gospel. As I hear I judge: and my judgment is just. The judgmeпt which Christ proпouпces, the words He speaks are true in aп abьsolute sense ьecause He articulates in speech the judgment of God, mysteriously kept in the depths of the divine sileпce. He says in aпother phrase that His Father is still at work, and that He shows Him His deeds and that He acts them into the world - iпto life. In Christ we see . one continuously feels the way of God and acts within these ways: He hears the word of God or listens to the uпfathomaьle deep diviпe silence and proclaims its content in words of abьsolute truth. St John the Baptist is a good example. The voice of oпe cryiпg in the wilderness He is not described as a prophet who speaks from God: he is so identified with His message, with Him more words he speaks, that he becomes nothing but a voice, God's own voice.

And this is what we should be. If we leam to do this, then our relatioпship may become that of authority, and not of power. and our coпfroпtatioпs, instead of being alter and ego, coпfroпting and clashing with one another, could ьe the visioп, the contemplation of one another. and the relatioпship which is only true relatioпship, not only within the Church, but betweeп all human beings.

Fulfilling Our Christian Vocation, What caп we learn from the services?

By Metropolitan Anthony

an address delivered at St Basil's House, London

There are two kinds of Services in the Orthodox Church. and oпe caп perceive the differeпce in emphasis when oпe takes part in them. Some services, like Matiпs, or the Hours, are a cry that ascends from the earth

Godwards. They are the cry of a communty of men, women and children, who turn to God, in praise, in presentation of their petitions, in intercession for their own needs and for the needs of the world, in gratitude to Him. They are Services which are born in the hearts of men and are offered to the Living God. Other Services seem to originate not in us, but in God Himself: all the Services which are of a sacramental content, be it the Liturgy or one of the sacraments of the Church, have their origin, their point of departure not in us but in God. The initiative is His. The sovereign action that fulfils them is His, but it is only in the Eucharistic Liturgy that it is made so explicit in the words which the deacon pronounces just before the priest proclaims the first exclamation. The deacon comes up to the priest and says, "And now it is for God to act". All that was humanly possible has been done. All that will be humanly possible will be done.

And yet neither what has or what will be done has power to achieve what we expect to happen. Nothing rooted in men, no human power or strength, can accomplish the miracle which we expect. In a sacrament like baptism the miracle is that a human being who was a child of the flesh becomes a child of the Kingdom by mysteriously becoming so united with Christ that he shakes His deadness to evil and partakes of His life in God. In a service like that of marriage, human love is blessed by God and the human relationship is lifted up to become not only an image but the incipient realisation of the relationship there is between Christ and the Church. And so it is also in all the sacramental actions that take place in the Church. Because a sacrament is an act of God which happens in the midst of His people and which is mediated by liturgical action and supported by material aids like the bread and wine, like water and oil and eventually by words of power. of grace, of life, of divine blessing, proclaimed by men, but descending from God. This is again made so clear in the ordination of the deacon, when the bishop lays his hands on the head of the ordinand, and in the last of the three prayers which he pronounces, says, "It is not, 0 Lord, in the laying one of

my hanɑs, of the hands of a sinner. but in the grace that comes from above that this man is made a deacon of the Holy Church".

This does not mean that human miпistratioпs have пo sigпificaпce, but it does mean that in these services the absolute ceпtre, not only the point towards which, but the point from which everythiпg oriɡiпates, is the Living God in actioп. Certaiп of these Services begin with the words, "Blessed is the kingdom", because when God is there, acting vith His sovereigпty, glory and mercy in the midst of His people, the kingdom has already come with power, which means with all the creative, traпsforming intensity of a real preseпce although it is still iпcipieпt, in the making.

To be continued

SERMON by METROPOLITAN ANTHONY (1988)

In a secret prayer read by the priest at the beginning of the Liturgy it says, using the words of St John Chrysostom, that if two or three agree together in all things, the grace, the power and the presence of God will be in their midst.

What is it then, what are the words that are so decisive in this prayer? I think it is not that two or three may agree from time to time, when they have a common interest or the same feelings, but that they are prepared to be in agreement, that is in harmony in all things, making the concerns of one the concerns of all; considering the sins of each one as being our own responsibility and not only the responsibility of those who sin; because if we were a true Christian community, how much support, how much help would every member of it receive in the struggle for integrity and life! So it is agreement, harmony in all things that is the precondition of the presence of God with power and grace, with exulting joy and love.

Already in his own time St Paul said, “Alas, there are divisions among you”. And these divisions destroy the unity which could be the place where God can act.

We must reflect on this very attentively because we cannot naturally, spontaneously love everyone; we find it very difficult to understand one another; we find it very difficult to bear one another’s burdens, to endure each other; we find it almost impossible to consider the sins of one or another person as our own. And yet, if we respond to the shortcomings, the sins, indeed the evil there may be in someone by rejecting that person, we find ourselves separated from God, because God does not reject any one of us. God became one of us at the cost of His incarnation, at the price He paid for love of us; not of the righteous ones – did He not say, “It is only the sick who need a physician, not those who are whole”? He came to share with that very sinner, with that unbearable person whom we reject, with the very people with whom we are at variance; He came to shame not only our common humanity, but their destiny, their agony, their struggles. It is not in vain that Isaiah speaking prophetically of Christ, says that the weight of the sin of the whole world was upon Him.

Let us reflect on this, because if we want to become what we are not – a Christian community, a community of people who love one another earnestly, if necessary sacrificially, whose love is prepared to go as far as crucifixion, then we must learn a great deal about our attitude to each other. How can we contemplate the vision of the Cross if we are not prepared to carry one another’s burdens, to identify in sympathy and compassion with each other?

How can we face the fact that God in His love gave His life for the lost while we reject those for whom He died, ignore them, would like to rule them out of our life because it would be so easy to live only with those people who are no problem for us? By this rejection we become alien to God, not by any action of His, or of anyone around us, but by our own

free choice because we cannot accept those for whom Christ lived and died.

Let us reflect on this, let us conquer everything in us that prevents us from being at one with God, and then through this unity with God let us accept one another even if it be at the cost of our lives.

Amen

TIMETABLE OF SERVICES AT ST ANDREW'S, HOLBORN
(all services are celebrated in Church Slavonic and English)

MAY

Saturday 2nd	5:00pm	Vigil	
Sunday 3rd	10:30am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Paralysed Man Acts 9:32-42; John 5:1-15
Saturday 16th	5:00pm	Vigil	
Sunday 17th	10:30am	Liturgy	Sunday of the Blind Man Acts 16:16034; John 0:1-38

JUNE

Saturday 6th	5:00pm	Vigil
Sunday 7th	10:30am	Liturgy All Saints Hebr 11:33-12:2; Matt 10:32-33,37-38;19:27-30
Saturday 20th	No Service on the third weekend of June as	
Saturday 21st	St Andrew Holborn is not available	

JULY

Saturday 4th	5:00pm	Vigil	
Sunday 5th	10:30am	Liturgy Romans 10:1-10; Matt 8:28-9:1	

Parish of St Peter and St Paul worshipping at St Peter's Church**,** Clapham Manor Street, London SW4 6BX, http://www.orthodoxclapham.org
Community of Saint Simeon and Saint Anna, St Mary's Church, Redbourn, Herts, AL3 7NL. (Contact James Angus on james@angusfamily.org.uk

Next services:

Sunday 3rd May	12:15pm	Liturgy

Community of all Saints of the British Isles, Bromley at Bromley Quaker Meeting House, 46 Ravensbourne Rd, Bromley BR1 1HP (Contact Father Stefan Strekopytov (st.strekopytov@gmail.com)

Saturday 25th April	9:30am	Liturgy
Saturday 23rd May	9:30am	Liturgy
Saturday 27th June	9:31am	Liturgy

The Parish of the Dormition of the Mother of God worshipping at St Andrew Holborn is under the omophorion of His Eminence Nikitas, Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain, and is part of the Deanery (website: https://thyateira-deanery.uk) within the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain (website: http://www.thyateira.org.uk).
Parish Clergy:

Archpriest Stéphane Maikovsky
Priest Stefan Strekopytov
Deacon Eugene Gafton
Church Warden
Pierre Kovalev

Parish Website: www.dormition.org.uk