

# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY MONDAY

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## KEY THEME

# URGENT PREPARATION

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Behold, the Bridegroom is coming in the middle of the night; and blessed is the servant He shall find awake and watching; unworthy is the other He shall find being lazy. So beware, O soul of mine, be not overcome by sleep, so that you not be handed over to death and be shut out from the Kingdom. Come to your senses and cry aloud: Holy, holy, holy are You our God."

- *Troparion, Holy Monday*

"Jacob lamented the loss of Joseph; yet the courageous one sat on a chariot, honored as a king. For by refusing to be enslaved by the pleasures of the Egyptian woman, he was later glorified in return by Him who sees men's hearts and deals out the imperishable crown."

- *Kontakion*

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

Note, the Evangelist mentions 'it was not yet time for that fruit'...yet He withers it straight away! This is done to make us fear that we should not fail Christ when He is hungry, that we may always be in the season of fruit and not the preparatory season of leaves - *Augustine*

If we are vigilant and alert and imitate Joseph's self-control, then when temptation comes we too can say as he did "how could I do this wicked deed and commit sin in God's eyes (Gen. 39:9)" - *Chrysostom*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- The Barren Fig Tree & The Wicked Tenants  
(*Matt. 21:18-43*)

- The Patriarch Joseph  
(*Gen. Chapters 37-46*)



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY TUESDAY

## KEY THEME

# VIGILANCE & MERCY

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"I have been sleepy with idleness of soul, and therefore, O Bridegroom Christ, my lamp is not burning with virtue. I have been like those foolish maidens, roving about when it was time for work. O Master, I pray You do not close Your compassionate heart on me; but shake off this gloomy sleep from me, and raise me up, and bring me together with the wise virgins into Your bridal chamber, where the pure sound is of those who are feasting and unceasingly shouting, "Glory to You, O Lord."- *Idiomelon*

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

The virgins wished to go to meet the Bridegroom with all their heart, to eagerly await His coming...However the Bridegroom is coming at midnight, or the hour of complete unawareness. So the virgins who had to go with eagerness to meet Him are now sleeping. Be vigilant! The Bridegroom will come when you are least aware. - *Augustine*

The lamps are our souls...and are lit when one has the oil of the virtues and of mercy. Understand this, that every soul possesses a lamp and a light from God, and that all arise to meet the Lord, for all desire to meet and have communion with God. But after God has given light and a lamp, the foolish are shut out, having no good deeds with which to fuel the light in their lamps. - *Seraphim of Sarov*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- Litany of Woes: Pharisees, Scribes, Hypocrites (*Matt. 22:15-23:39*)

- Parable of the Wise & Foolish Virgins (*Matt. 24:36-26:2*)



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY WEDNESDAY

## KEY THEME

# FALSE RELIGIOSITY & TRUE REPENTANCE

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Lord, when the woman who had fallen into many sins perceived Your divinity, she assumed the role of a myrrh-bearing woman, and lamenting brought fragrant oils to anoint You before Your burial. "Woe is me," she says. "Accept the fountains of my tears, You who draw out from the clouds the water of the sea. Take pity on me, and incline to the sighing of my heart, You who bowed the heavens by Your ineffable self-emptying. I shall cover Your unstained feet with kisses, and wipe them dry again with the locks of my hair; those feet, whose sound at twilight in Paradise echoed in Eve's ears, and she hid in fear. Who can reckon the multitude of my sins, or fathom the depths of Your judgments, O my life-saving Savior? Do not despise me, Your servant, since without measure is Your mercy." - *Hymn of Kassiani*

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

This woman was unlike all the other women healed by Christ who publicly approached Him to be healed but held back knowing their uncleanness. She is remarkable because despite knowing her stain, she still approaches, not to be physically healed but to honor Him with oil and with no audience. - *Chrysosotom*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- Christ's Foretelling of His upcoming departure (*Jn. 12:17-50*)
- Jesus Anointed with Oil by Mary of Bethany (*Matt. 26:6-16*)



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY UNCTION

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## KEY THEME

# HEALING & WHOLENESS

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Illness and distress have worn us out. Being compassionate, O Savior, wash away the pain and trauma and suffering, in the river of Your tender love, O Christ, and also through Your priests, as they anoint us with holy Unction. Through this cleansing, O Lord, may we gain our health." - *Ode VIII*

"O Incomprehensible, look down from heaven, O Friend of man; seal our senses with Your divine invisible hand, O Lord, in Your great compassion, with Your holy Unction. And grant forgiveness of their sins to those who seek it and come to You with faith. And grant to them the healing and the health of body and soul alike, that with love they may glorify You, and Your power may be magnified" - *Stichera Prosomia of Unction Service*

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

"Anyone who is sick should seek the prayer of others, that they may be restored to health; that through the intercession of others the enfeebled form of the body and the wavering footsteps of our deeds may be restored to health... Learn, you who are sick, to gain health through prayer. Seek the prayer of others, call upon the Church to pray for you and anoint you with Holy Oil, and God, in His regard for the Church, will give what He might refuse to you" - *Ambrose of Milan*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- "Any among you sick?"...let the elders pray over him and anoint him in the Name of the Trinity (*James 5:10-16*)
- The Good Samaritan (*Luke 10:25-37*)



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY THURSDAY MORNING

## KEY THEME

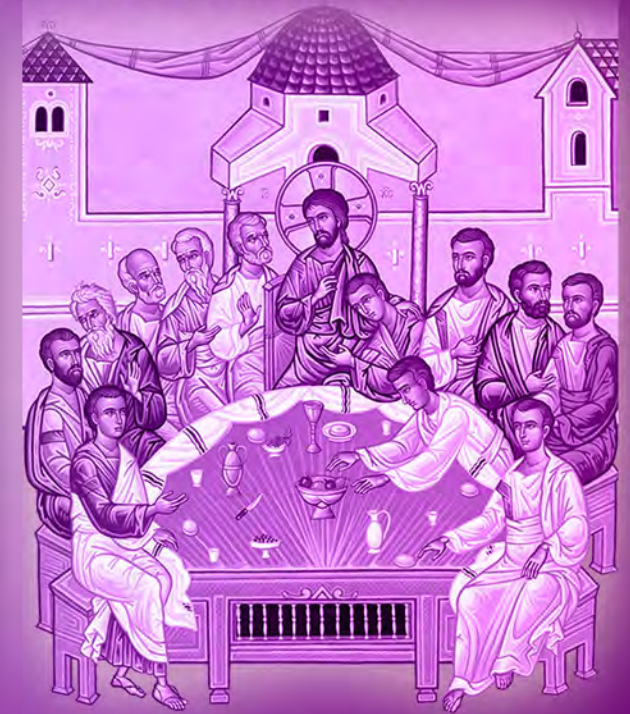
# COMMUNION WITH GOD

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Judas is truly a brood of those vipers who ate manna in the wilderness and murmured against the Provider; for while the food was still in their mouths, the ungrateful spoke against God; and he, the impious, holding in his mouth the heavenly Bread, plotted against the Savior, how to betray Him. O insatiable greed, and cruel daring! He sold the One who fed him. He kissed the Master and betrayed Him to death. Truly the transgressor is a son of theirs, and with them he has inherited perdition. But spare our souls from such inhumanity, O Lord, who alone are boundless in long-suffering" - *Doxastikon, Thursday Vesperal Liturgy*

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

"A lamb of the flock was killed to be the type until the True Lamb came to fulfill the Providence of God. This is fulfilled in us, who honor the worship that is superior to the law, even the true Pascha. Christ [the True Lamb] sanctifies us. He was made a holy sacrifice for us, by the offering of bloodless offerings and the mystical giving of thanks, in which we are blessed and enlivened...When we eat the holy flesh of Christ, the Savior of us all, and drink His precious blood, we have life in us. We are made one with Him, abide in Him, and possess Him in us." - *Cyril of Alexandria*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- The Last Supper  
(Luke 22:1-39)
- Judge not but self examine before Communion (1 Cor. 11:23-32)
- Washing Disciples' Feet (John 13:3-17)



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY THURSDAY EVENING

## KEY THEME

# REMORSE & REJOICING

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Today, He who suspended the earth in the waters is suspended on a cross. (3) The King of the Angels wears a crown of thorns. He who wraps the sky in clouds is wrapped in a fake purple robe. He who freed Adam in the Jordan accepts to be slapped. The Bridegroom of the Church is fixed with nails to the cross. The Son of the Virgin is pierced with a spear. We worship Your Passion, O Christ. (3) Show us also Your glorious Resurrection." - *15th Antiphon of the Services of the 12 Gospels (After the 5th Gospel)*.

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

"The very place of the Cross is in the middle above the grave of Adam, as the Hebrews truly argue. It was fitting that the beginning of death occurred where the first fruits of our life took place." - *Ambrose of Milan*

"A tree brought ruin to Adam, but another will bring you back into paradise. Take heart you will not be thrown out, do not fear the flaming sword because it stands in awe of its Lord." - *Cyril of Jerusalem*

"The Cross of Christ is the key to paradise. There is nothing between the Cross and paradise. The greatest of pains produces the greatest of rewards" - *Jerome*. Humanity's guilt now leads to our greatest gift.



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- The Passion Passages  
(John 13-19, Matt. 26-27  
Luke 23, & Mark 15)

- Sneak Peak at what's  
to come: the Resurrec-  
tion! (Matt. 27:62-66)



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY FRIDAY

## KEY THEME

# BRAVE SOLEMNITY

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Joseph took You down from the Cross after You had died, and prepared You, O Christ, for burial. Using myrrh, he wrapped you in a shroud, O Life of all. And constrained by his ardent love, he longed to embrace You, pressing to Your spotless body his own heart and lips. But restrained by fear and by reverence, joyously he cried to You, "Glory to Your condescension, Lord who love mankind."- *Apokathelosis Aposticha*

"Myrrh-bearers came and sprinkled sweet myrrh upon your tomb, Lord, at early dawn they come now" - *Third Stanza of Holy Friday Lamentations*

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

Joseph & Nicodemus, the secret disciples of the Lord were no longer hiding. They came and asked for the body of Christ "despite their fear. They buried Him, not as a criminal, but magnificently after the Jewish fashion, as some great and honorable person...Likewise, the women were waiting at the tomb so that if the madness of the civil authorities should relax, they might go and care for the body. Do you see their courage? The depth of their affection? Their noble spirit even unto death? Let us imitate these women and not forsake Jesus in times of trial (*ie. His icon in the least of those in need around us*)! - *Chrysostom*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- Foolishness of the wise, the Cross as a stumbling block (1 Cor. 1:18-31; 2:1-2)
- Dry Bones & Prophecy of Resurrection (Ezk 37:1-14)



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – HOLY SATURDAY

## KEY THEME

# PERPLEXING JOY

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Today, Hades groans and cries out, "My authority has been destroyed. I took One who died, as though He were mortal, but I am powerless to contain Him. Along with Him I lose all those, over whom I had ruled. I had held the dead from all ages, but behold, He raises them all." Glory to Your Cross and Your Resurrection, O Lord." - *Idiomelon of Holy Saturday*

"Arise, O God; judge the earth, for You shall inherit all the Gentiles" - *Alleluaria of Holy Saturday Vesperal Liturgy*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- Baptism Epistle Lesson (Baptized into His Death and Resurrection) - *Rom. 6:3-11*
- Jesus is Risen! (*Matt. 28:1-10*)

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

"Why did Mary turn back while speaking to the angels? I think that while she was speaking, Christ suddenly appeared behind her and struck the angels with awe. And when they saw their Ruler, they showed immediately by their attitude, their gaze, and their movements that they saw the Lord. This is what drew the woman's attention and caused her to turn around and see the man she thought to be the gardener. He did this not to terrify her at the first sight of Him. This is why He appears to her as the gardener and chooses to lead her mind to the higher matters not all at once but gently." - *Chrysostom*



# THE HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE – GREAT & HOLY PASCHA

## KEY THEME

# THE FEAST OF FEASTS

## HYMNOGRAPHY

"Resurrection Day! O peoples, let us brilliantly shine! Pascha, the Lord's Pascha! For Christ our God has out of death passed us over into life, and likewise from earth to heaven, as we now sing unto Him a triumphal hymn...This is it, the Day which is chosen and holy, Day One of the Sabbaths. It is the queen-day, the Lord's Day, and the Feast of all feasts, and the Festival above every festival, on which we extol Christ and bless Him to the ages"- *Katavasias Ode I & VIII*

"Christ is risen from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life" - *Apolytikion of Pascha*

## PATRISTIC COMMENTARY

"Enter into the joy of our Lord: first and second, share the bounty. Rich and poor alike, celebrate together. Sober or heedless, honor the day. Those who fasted and those who did not, rejoice today. The table is full, everyone fare sumptuously. The calf is fatted; no one go away hungry. Everyone, savor the banquet of faith; relish the riches of His goodness. No one need lament poverty, for the kingdom is seen as universal. No one need grieve over sins; forgiveness has dawned from the tomb. No one need fear death; the Savior's death has freed us from it." - *Chrysostom*



## BIBLICAL REFERENCES

- Empowered Disciples preparing to be sent out (*Acts 1:1-8*)
- The Coeternal nature of the Son of God (*John 1:1-17*)