



# HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX Parish Church RESTON Newsletter

Future Site: Potomac View Road (behind NoVa).

May ~ 2011

OVER 50 DAYS THE CHURCH REFLECTS ON THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS AND HER LIFE IN CHRIST

MAY—DAY 14 HOURS, NIGHT 10

- 1 Sun** SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE PASCH [OF THE CROSS], ANTIPASCHA —  
Gospel: Thomas (*John 20.19–31*)  
**10:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Smith**
- 8 Sun** THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE PASCH [OF THE CROSS],  
Gospel: The Myrrh-Bearing Women (*Mark 15.42–16.8*)  
**10:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Wayland**
- 15 Sun** FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE PASCH [OF THE CROSS]  
Gospel: The Paralytic (*John 5.1–15*)  
**10:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Adams**
- 21 Sat** *Food Pantry—Leesburg: 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.*
- 22 Sun** FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE PASCH [OF THE CROSS]  
Gospel: The Samaritan Woman (*John 4.4+*)  
**10:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Belinsky**
- 29 Sun** SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE PASCH [OF THE CROSS]  
Gospel: The Man Born Blind (*John 9.1+*)  
**9:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Busenberg**

JUNE—DAY 15 HOURS, NIGHT 9

- 1 Wed** EVE OF ASCENSION  
**7:00 p.m.** *Vespers with the Divine Liturgy (at St. Luke's Serbian) followed by a potluck meal*
- From the first Sunday [after Holy Friday, "Pasch of the Cross"—Ed.] count 40 days, then on Thursday celebrate the feast of the Assumption of the Lord [today we say Ascension—Ed.]. —Apostolic Constitutions, Syria (ca. 380 A.D.)
- 2 Thu** FORTIETH DAY: ASCENSION OF THE LORD
- 5 Sun** SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE PASCH [OF THE CROSS]  
Gospel: The Message Entrusted (*John 11.47–52*)  
**9:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Doyle**
- After 10 days of the [Ascension], when the 50th day from the first Sunday arrives, you are to have a great feast; for on it, at the third hour, the Lord Jesus sent us the gift of the Holy Spirit... —Apostolic Constitutions, Syria (ca. 380 A.D.)
- "I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened for me, and there are many adversaries." —1 Corinthians 16.7–8 (57 A.D.)
- Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus... for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost [58 A.D.]. —Acts 20.16
- 12 Sun** FIFTIETH DAY: PENTECOST SUNDAY — PARISH FEAST  
**9:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy — **Coffee Hour: Ellmore**  
**5:00 p.m.** *Vespers of Pentecost evening (at St. Luke's Serbian) followed by a parish celebration.*
- 13 Mon** *Monday of the Holy Spirit — Begin the Weeks of Matthew*
- 18 Sat** *10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Food Pantry Leesburg*

Lord, remember your Church, deliver her from all evil and perfect her in your love, gather her up from the four winds sanctified for your kingdom which you have prepared for her. For yours is the power and the glory unto the ages. Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosannah to the God of David. If any be holy, let him come, if any be not, let him repent. *Marána thá. Amen.*

—Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, x.5,6

## Marána thá explained.

*Marána thá* is an Aramaic phrase which means, Our Lord, come! It appears in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, the so-called *Didache*, (above) which dates from the middle of the first century, and in 1 Corinthians 16.22 in Paul's own hand. Unlike alleluia (hal-lelu-yah), hosannah, and amen, *marána thá* didn't survive in liturgical useage in Aramaic. Its proper context is the Eucharist. It is behind the talk one hears at our Liturgy in these Fifty Days in the Prayer over Bowed Heads after the Our Father, before communion: "...It is you who choose to reveal yourself to us in the Breaking of the Bread, and we implore you: *Come to us. Open our hearts to your presence....*" Such talk concludes the Apocalypse or Revelation to John (22.20), itself a reflection on the Lord's Day Eucharist: The One who gives this testimony says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

## FOOD PANTRY WISH LIST

Canned items—Peanut butter, Jelly, Juices (100% fruit), Vegetables, Canned fruit, Canned beans, Tomato products, Stews, Soups. Boxed Items—Macaroni and cheese, Cereal, Pasta, Rice, Potatoes, Crackers. Other Items—Sugar, Powdered milk, Coffee, Tea bags, Dry beans. Needs for the Homeless—Pop-top canned foods, Individual serve items, Can opener. Infant Needs—Diapers (all sizes), Baby personal hygiene. Personal Hygiene—Deodorant, Shampoo and conditioner, Bath/hand soap, Tissues, Tooth paste, Toothbrush, Laundry soap, Women's hygiene products, Shaving cream and razors. Distribution Center Supplies—Ziploc bags (all types), Paper towels, Disposable gloves, Disinfectants, Bleach, Window cleaner, Antibacterial hand soap, Copy paper (white and colors), File folders.

**Liturgy moves to 9:00 a.m.  
May 26**



## FRIENDS OVER SEAS

### TOURS & TRAVEL

*The official travel agency of the 16<sup>th</sup> All American Council*

#### *AIR TRANSPORTATION*

Alaskan and American Airlines are the official air carriers for the 16th All-American Council, and offer substantial savings for Council participants.

#### *ALASKAN AIRLINES*

Alaskan Airlines is providing members with a 7% discount on any published or promotional fare for qualifying passengers when booking online. The discount does not apply to internet fares. Visit the Alaskan Airlines website: [www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com) and enter promotional code: ECCM92234. The promotional code must be entered to receive the discount. Travel dates: valid from October 28 – November 07, 2011. The special discount code is not valid for travel from Canada, Mexico, and Hawaii. For complete information on baggage allowance and other travel details please visit: [www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com).

#### *AMERICAN AIRLINES*

American is offering Council members a 5% discount on any published or promotional fare for qualifying passengers. The discount does not apply to internet fares. Visit the American Airlines website: [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com) and enter the authorization code: ZSH1R1. The authorization code must be entered to receive the discount. Travel dates: valid from October 28 – November 07, 2011. For complete information on baggage allowance and other travel details please visit: [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com).

#### *HOTEL INFORMATION*

The official hotel of the 16<sup>th</sup> All American Council is the Hyatt Regency Bellevue. A block of rooms has been reserved and is on a first-come, first-served basis. The hotel is offering Council members special rates – single or double occupancy from \$129 and for triple occupancy from \$154 per night plus the applicable taxes of 14.4%. These rates are valid 3 days prior to and 3 days after the Council meeting dates based on availability. Please call 1-888-421-1442 or log on to: [https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome\\_ci\\_new&eventID=3097532](https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ci_new&eventID=3097532).

#### *ADDITIONAL INFORMATION*

These discounted fares are available exclusively through FOS Tours & Travel, Inc. or by calling the airlines directly – you will incur a ticketing fee of \$20.00 from FOS Tours, American Airlines and Jet Blue for purchasing your tickets. Air Canada: 1-800-361-7585; American Airlines: 1-800-433-1790; JetBlue 1-888-538-2583 #4. You may also book your flights at each participating carrier's website – and enter the corresponding meeting number in their promotional code box for the discount. Certain restrictions may apply and seats are limited.

Call FOS Tours for tickets:

1-800-367-3650 or 516-937-7757 or by e-mail to [fostours@earthlink.net](mailto:fostours@earthlink.net)



# ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

## 16th All - American Council

### October 31 - November 4, 2011

#### Seattle, Washington

March 4, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We enter this year in anticipation of the 16<sup>th</sup> All-American Council to be held on October 31 to November 3, 2011. Once again the Orthodox Church in America will gather in meetings, fellowship and prayer. This All-American Council will be the first to be held in the Pacific Northwest. We are particularly thankful for the Diocese of the West and the local committee in the Seattle area for sponsoring this Council.

The Council will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bellevue, which is in a suburb just east of Seattle. Flights to and from the Council are through Seattle-Tacoma Airport. The hotel is 30 minutes from the airport with convenient public transportation to Bellevue. We encourage you to look at the new Council website at <http://aac16.org>, which will provide detailed Council information including the distribution of all Council materials. The website will also be helpful in orienting you to the region.

As has been reported, there will be a special pilgrimage to Sitka, following the Council, for the consecration of the new bishop of Alaska. FOS Tours will also be handling the arrangements for this wonderful event; you can contact FOS Tours and check with the Diocese of Alaska website at <http://dioceseofalaska.org> for detailed information. To simplify your travel arrangements, a package deal with FOS Tours is available for the All-American Council and the Sitka trip.

There will be some cost-saving changes regarding the distribution of the study materials and reports for delegates; they will only be available online for attendees to download. Each delegate is expected to bring these downloaded materials with them to the Council. Binders and dividers will be provided at Council registration. These unnecessary printing and transportation costs represent a considerable savings and will help in keeping the Council assessments manageable.

Registration material as well as calls for resolutions and statute changes will be made available this spring. There will be a change to the registration process in that each delegate will be asked to preregister for a specific *working group* which will meet for two sessions during the Council. These working groups are based on a recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee and will continue the ongoing discussions of the Strategic Plan that was mandated by the last Council. The recommendations that will come out from these working groups will then be presented to the Council's general assembly to determine initiatives.

We all look forward to the upcoming Council. Please continue to check the OCA and the All-American Council websites for further announcements and materials. We look forward to seeing everyone in Seattle as we gather as the "Household of Faith." I remain

Yours in Christ,

Archpriest Eric G. Tosi  
Secretary  
Orthodox Church in America

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All-American Council Website  
[www.aac16.org](http://www.aac16.org)

## Was Easter Borrowed from a Pagan Holiday? The historical evidence contradicts this popular notion.

Anthony McRoy

[This article was sent by a correspondent up North. Anthony McRoy is a Fellow of the British Society for Middle East Studies and lecturer in Islamic studies at Wales Evangelical School of Theology, U.K.]

Thursday, April 2, 2009

Anyone encountering anti-Christian polemics will quickly come up against the accusation that a major festival practiced by Christians across the globe—namely, Easter—was actually borrowed or rather usurped from a pagan celebration. I often encounter this idea among Muslims who claim that later Christians compromised with paganism to dilute the original faith of Jesus. The argument largely rests on the supposed pagan associations of the English and German names for the celebration (Easter in English and Ostern in German). It is important to note, however, that in most other European languages, the name for the Christian celebration is derived from the Greek word Pascha, which comes from *pesach*, the Hebrew word for Passover. Easter is the Christian Passover festival. Of course, even if Christians did engage in contextualization—expressing their message and worship in the language or forms of the local people—that in no way implies doctrinal compromise.

Christians around the world have sought to redeem the local culture for Christ while purging it of practices antithetical to biblical norms. After all, Christians speak of “Good Friday,” but they are in no way honoring the worship of the Norse/Germanic queen of the gods Freya by doing so. But, in fact, in the case of Easter the evidence suggests otherwise: that neither the commemoration of Christ’s death and resurrection nor its name are derived from paganism.

### A celebration with ancient roots

The usual argument for the pagan origins of Easter is based on a comment made by the Venerable Bede (673–735), an English monk who wrote the first history of Christianity in England, and who is one of our main sources of knowledge about early Anglo-Saxon culture. In *De temporum ratione (On the Reckoning of Time, ca. 730)*, Bede wrote this: In olden times the English people—for it did not seem fitting that I should speak of other nations’ observance of the year and yet be silent about my own nation’s—calculated their months according to the course of the Moon. Hence, after the manner of the Greeks and the Romans, [the months] take their name from the Moon, for the Moon is called *mona* and the month *monath*. The first month, which the Latins call January, is *Giuli*; February is called *Solmonath*; March *Hrethmonath*; April, *Eosturmonath*.... *Eosturmonath* has a name which is now translated “Paschal month” and which was once called after a goddess of theirs named *Eostre*, in whose

honour feasts were celebrated in that month. Now they designate that Paschal season by her name, calling the joys of the new rite by the time-honoured name of the old observance.

The first question, therefore, is whether the actual Christian celebration of Easter is derived from a pagan festival. This is easily answered. The Nordic/Germanic peoples (including the Anglo-Saxons) were comparative latecomers to Christianity. Pope Gregory I sent a missionary enterprise led by Augustine of Canterbury to the Anglo-Saxons in 596/7. The forcible conversion of the Saxons in Europe began under Charlemagne in 772. Hence, if “Easter” (*i.e.*, the Christian Passover festival) was celebrated prior to those dates, any supposed pagan Anglo-Saxon festival of “Eostre” can have no significance. And there is, in fact, clear evidence that Christians celebrated an Easter/Passover festival by the second century, if not earlier. It follows that the Christian Easter/Passover celebration, which originated in the Mediterranean basin, was not influenced by any Germanic pagan festival.

### What’s in a name?

The second question is whether the name of the holiday “Easter” comes from the blurring of the Christian celebration with the worship of a purported pagan fertility goddess named “Eostre” in English and Germanic cultures. There are several problems with the passage in Bede. In his book, *The Stations of the Sun*, Professor Ronald Hutton (a well-known historian of British paganism

and occultism) critiques Bede's sketchy knowledge of other pagan festivals, and argues that the same is true for the statement about Eostre: "It falls into a category of interpretations which Bede admitted to be his own, rather than generally agreed or proven fact."

This leads us to the next problem: there is no evidence outside of Bede for the existence of this Anglo-Saxon goddess. There is no equivalent goddess in the Norse Eddas or in ancient Germanic paganism from continental Europe. Hutton suggests, therefore, that "the Anglo-Saxon *Estormonath* simply meant 'the month of opening' or 'the month of beginnings,'" and concludes that there is no evidence for a pre-Christian festival in the British Isles in March or April. There is another objection to the claim that *Eosturmonath* has anything to do with a pagan goddess. Whereas Anglo-Saxon days were usually named after gods, such as Wednesday ("Woden's day"), the names of their months were either calendrical, such as *Giuli*, meaning "wheel," referring to the turn of the year; meteorological-environmental, such as *Solmónath* (roughly February), meaning "Mud-Month"; or referred to actions taken in that period, such as *Blótmónath* (roughly November), meaning "Blood Month," when animals were slaughtered. No other month was dedicated to a deity, with the exception (according to Bede) of *Hrethmonath* (roughly March), which he claims was named after the goddess *Hrethe*. But like *Eostre*, there

is no other evidence for *Hrethe*, nor any equivalent in Germanic/Norse mythology

Another problem with Bede's explanation concerns the Saxons in continental Europe. Einhard (ca. 775–840), the courtier and biographer of Charlemagne, tells us that among Charlemagne's reforms was the renaming of the months. April was renamed *Ostarmanoth*. Charlemagne spoke a Germanic dialect, as did the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, although their vernacular was distinct. But why would Charlemagne change the old Roman title for the spring month to *Ostarmanoth*? Charlemagne was the scourge of Germanic paganism. He attacked the pagan Saxons and felled their great pillar *Irminsul* (after their god *Irmin*) in 772. He forcibly converted them to Christianity and savagely repressed them when they revolted because of this. It seems very unlikely, therefore, that Charlemagne would name a month after a Germanic goddess.

#### **Spring holiday**

So why, then, do English-speaking Christians call their holiday "Easter"? One theory for the origin of the name is that the Latin phrase *in albis* ("in white"), which Christians used in reference to Easter week, found its way into Old High German as *eostarum*, or "dawn." There is some evidence of early Germanic borrowing of Latin despite that fact that the Germanic peoples lived outside the Roman Empire—though the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were far removed from it. This theory presumes that the

word only became current after the introduction of either Roman influence or the Christian faith, which is uncertain. But if accurate, it would demonstrate that the festival is not named after a pagan goddess. Alternatively, as Hutton suggests, *Eosturmonath* simply meant "the month of opening," which is comparable to the meaning of "April" in Latin. The names of both the Saxon and Latin months (which are calendrically similar) were related to Spring, the season when the buds open. So Christians in ancient Anglo-Saxon and Germanic areas called their Passover holiday what they did—doubtless colloquially at first—simply because it occurred around the time of *Eosturmonath*/*Ostarmanoth*. A contemporary analogy can be found in the way Americans sometimes refer to the December period as "the holidays" in connection with Christmas and Hanukkah, or the way people sometimes speak about something happening "around Christmas," usually referring to the time at the turn of the year. The Christian title "Easter," then, essentially reflects its general date in the calendar, rather than the Paschal festival having been re-named in honor of a supposed pagan deity. Of course, the Christian commemoration of the Paschal festival rests not on the title of the celebration but on its content—namely, the remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection. It is Christ's conquest of sin, death, and Satan that gives us the right to wish everyone "Happy Easter!"