

**St. Mary's Orthodox Church
(Dormition of the Mother of God)**

187 Justin Lane Bluefield, WV 24701

www.stmarysbluefield.org---email: fathermark677@yahoo.com

www.ACROD.org YouTube: ACRODDIOCESE and ACROD Facebook

Rev. Mark Tyson, Pastor

(304) 323-2648 Cell: (304) 888-4576 Farm: (276) 988-3921

Sunday April 23, 2017

Thomas Sunday—Anti Pascha

Great-martyr George, Victory-bearer (or Trophy-bearer) and Wonder-worker; Martyrs Anatolius and Protleon, soldiers converted by witnessing the martyrdom of Saint George; Martyr Alexandra the Empress (see also April 21); Martyrs Glycerius, Athanasius the Magician, Valerius, Donatus, and Therinus at Nicomedia; Blessed George of Shenkursk, Fool-for-Christ; New-Martyr George of Ptolomais; New-Martyr Lazarus of Bulgaria who suffered at Pergamus; New-Martyr Priest Egor (George) of the Spas-Chekriak village; Saint Myrtidiotissa of Kleisoura; Saint Ethelbert, King of Wessex; Saint Ethelred, King of England; Hieromartyr Adalbert, Bishop of Prague

Services for the week of April 23

There will be no weekday services until after May 18. Look for Typika services (and possibly a liturgy or more) on the following Sundays: May 7, 14 and 21. Please pray for Fr. Mark and Nicholas as they travel...

Parish News

WELCOME: to all of our guests today. We are so glad that you have come to enjoy our Orthodox worship. We invite you to come for coffee and sweets in our church hall and to enjoy fellowship with us. May God bless you!

OFFERING: April 16: \$3575.00

FATHER MARK and his family would like to ask you for your prayers as he travels with his son, Nicholas in Russia. Please be assured that our parish and parishioners will be remembered at all the holy sites that they are blessed to visit. Christ is Risen!

MAY GOD CONSOLE the Chizmar family, whose husband, father and grandfather, Ernest Alexis, reposed on Great Friday and was buried on Bright Tuesday. May his memory be eternal! Christ is Risen!

PLEASE REMEMBER Janet Mikel and Martha Smith as they prepare for medical procedures in the upcoming weeks. May God strengthen and protect them. May His will be done in them!

We are forgiven, we are saved, we are redeemed. Christ is Risen! These words say everything: they are the foundation of our faith, hope, and love; of our Christian life; of all our wisdom and enlightenment; of the Holy Church, heartfelt prayer, and our entire future. These words destroy all human calamity, death, and evil; they give life, blessedness, and freedom! What miraculous power! Can one grow tired of repeating them? Christ is Risen! Can we ever have enough of hearing them? Christ is Risen!

But do we all understand the true meaning of these words: Christ is Risen? What does this mean: Christ is Risen? After all, Christ was risen neither today, nor yesterday, but many, many centuries ago. Who in our time can doubt that Christ indeed rose on the third day following His death? No one! In that case, to what are we witnessing when we respond to the greeting “Christ is Risen!” with the words “Truly He is Risen”? Are we witnessing only to our faith, or to something else as well?

Christians should participate in the very Resurrection of Christ. The Apostle Paul says: *And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins* (1 Corinthians 15:17). It follows that we are celebrating the greatest Christian feast day, the feast of all feasts, for Christianity itself is founded upon the Resurrection of Christ. But should our celebration be limited to observing the church rubrics and to our presence in church? Where is the inner, spiritual meaning of this feast? Can remembrance alone of the great and global event of the Resurrection of Christ bring us salvation?

No, Christians should participate in the very Resurrection of Christ! Participate how? Through the Mystery of Confession and the Communion of the Holy Body and Live-Giving Blood of the Savior. During the days of Great Lent – the days of repentance, cleansing, and rebirth – we should renew our hearts in order to rise with Christ. Therefore, whoever has not participated in the very Resurrection of Christ has not understood and does not have within himself the true meaning of the words “Christ is Risen!” and the reply “Truly He is Risen!”

Likewise, the reply “Truly He is Risen!” alone does not demonstrate that we have the Resurrection of Christ in us and in our hearts. It is confirmed by joy in the Lord and demonstrated by love for Christ. Whoever loves, remembers God’s love and has no doubt in it. But remember, beloved brothers and sisters, how in your recent confession you repented for sometimes murmuring against God and for doubting His mercy; remember how you accused the Lord for your undeserved sorrows and unbearable sufferings; and even for the unwillingness to hear your prayers!

Remember how, living in sin, you were inclined to think the Lord merciless, both deaf and blind to your woes and needs! But now, having united with Christ, do you recognize that He is a God of love and mercy, and not of punishment? If you have indeed recognized this truth, then you have undoubtedly understood God in His designs and loved the Lord with a pure heart. Then Christ is risen in you, and you can now consciously reply to the joyful Christian greeting “Christ is Risen!” with the words “Truly He is Risen!” Amen.

