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The National Herald

April 7, 2007

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Happy Easter

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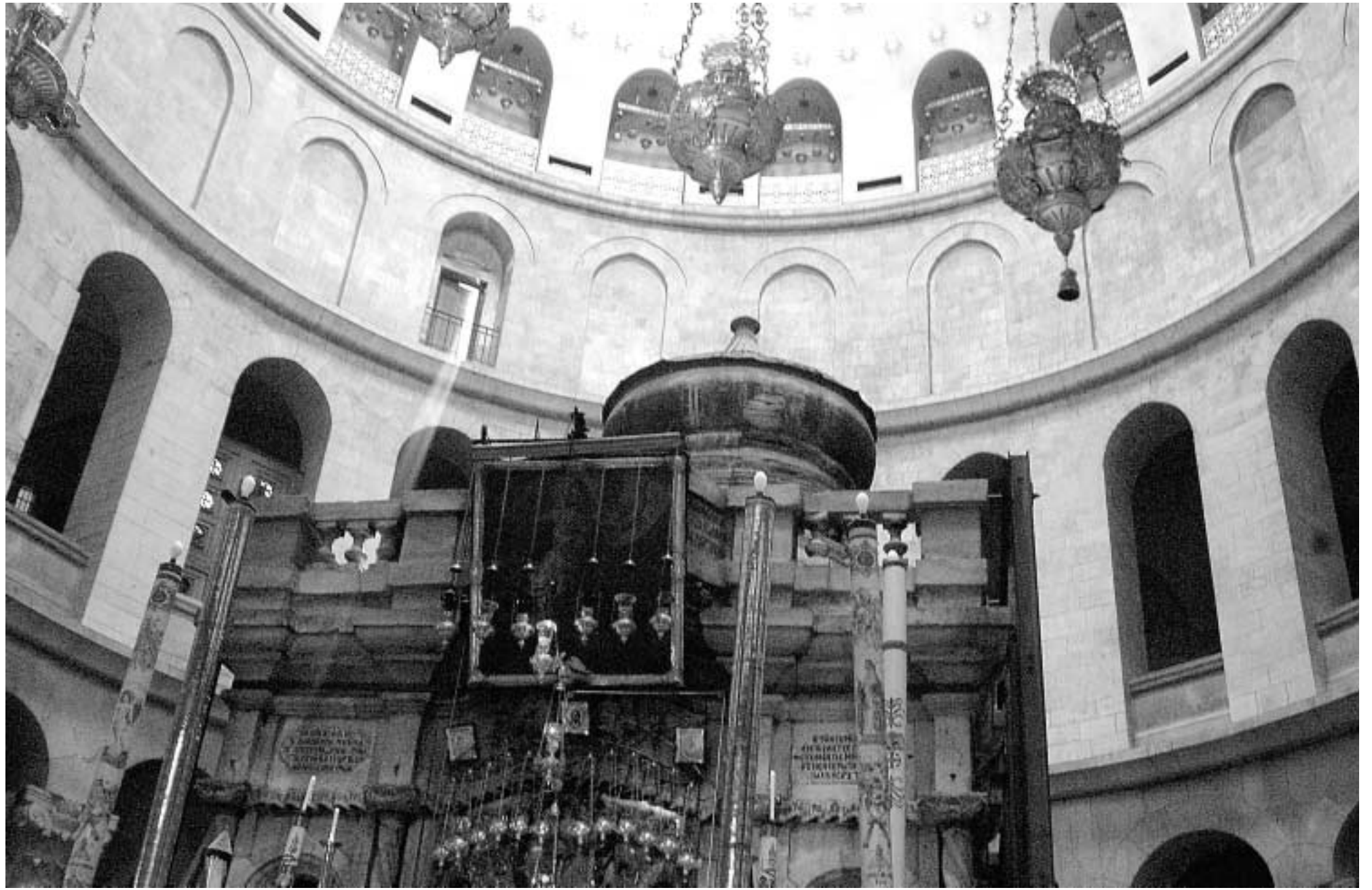
The Church of the Holy Sepulchre: The Center of the World

Dr. Andre Gerolymatos
Special to The National Herald

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is uniquely linked with the celebration of Passover (Easter) and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to Eusebius (Life of Constantine) at first it was simply a place of veneration for the Christian community in Jerusalem. Originally it was a site for a temple dedicated to the ancient goddess of Venus (Aphrodite in Greek). In 325 AD (this is approximate), the Emperor Constantine the Great ordered the destruction of the pagan temple and directed Saint Macarius, Bishop of Jerusalem, to raise a Christian church in its place. However, the emperor's mother, Helena (beatified as Saint Helena), is also part of the story of the church. Helena went to Jerusalem at this time to construct a series of churches celebrating the life of Jesus Christ. In this context the Constantine and Helena built the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem to honor the birth of Christ and the Church Holy Sepulchre to commemorate his end.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was constructed on the hill of the Crucifixion but in fact was actually three interconnected churches raised over the three different holy sites, including a great basilica (the Martyrium), an enclosed colonnaded atrium (the Triportico) built around the traditional Rock of Calvary, and a round structure called the Anastasis ("Resurrection") that included part of the cave that Helena and Macarius had identified as the interment site of Jesus. All the surrounding rock was removed and the Tomb was encased in a structure called the Edicule (Latin for small building) or the Kouvouklion (Greek, shrine) in the center of the building. Eventually a dome was added to the new structure near the end of the 4th century. 614 AD this part of the church complex was damaged by fire when the Persians under Khosrau II invaded Jerusalem and captured the Cross. In 630, Emperor Heraclius recaptured Jerusalem and restored the True Cross to the rebuilt Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

In 638 AD the Patriarch Sophronius surrendered Jerusalem to Caliph Umar and thus ensuring that the city's sacred sites were spared a siege and certain destruction. Under the Muslims, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre remained a Christian place of worship. Indeed, the early Muslim rulers protected the city's Christian places and afforded pilgrims access to all of the holy land. Occasionally, the Christian's faced



The Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre (The Tomb of Christ) with the dome of the rotunda visible above.

some degree of persecution and after a riot in 966 AD the doors and roof of the Church were burnt.

On 18 October 1009, the "mad" Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered the complete destruction of the original building right down to its foundations and only the north and south walls survived. As the news of the destruction of the church cascaded across Europe the religious establishment and local authorities looked for nearby scapegoats. The Clunaic monk Raoul Glaber blamed the Jews, which eventually triggered a series of pogroms in France. Jews were expelled from Limoges and other

French towns. However the lingering memory of the outrage committed by the mad caliph was a contributing factor to the First Crusade.

Half a decade later in 1048 the Muslim authorities permitted Constantine IX Monomachos to construct several small chapels on the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In July 1099 the First Crusade captured Jerusalem and the knights took position of all the holy sites. Indeed a critical task and a defining moment for all the Crusaders were to pray on the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This act symbolized the role of the Crusader both as a soldier of God and a pilgrim.

The influence of the Church was so powerful to medieval Christians that Godfrey of Bouillon, one of the Crusader leaders, who became the first monarch of Jerusalem, decided not to use the title "king" but chose instead *Advocatus Sancti Sepulchri*, "Defender of the Holy Sepulchre." According to the chronicle of William of Tyre in the middle of the 12th century, the Crusaders began to renovate the church in a Romanesque style and added a bell tower. These additions unified the holy sites and were completed during the reign of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem in 1149. The church became the seat of the first Latin Patri-

archs, and was also the site of the kingdom's scriptorium.

The First Crusade succeeded in part because the Muslim world was divided and had not been able to organize a coherent defense. Almost a century later the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem and the surrounding Christian statelets such as Tyre and Acre were in decline. Many of the knights who had fought in the First Crusade returned home, while the Kingdom of Jerusalem failed to secure fresh manpower from Europe. Towards the end of the 12th century the Muslims were unified by the Saladin and in 1187 re-captured Jerusalem.

Christian Europe counterattacked with the Second Crusade, which achieved little, but the equally failed Third Crusade led to a treaty that permitted Christian pilgrims to visit the holy land. There were further Crusades and for a brief time Emperor Frederick II re-captured Jerusalem but to no avail the city and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre remained under Muslim control until the 20th century.

Over the next seven centuries the church underwent a series of additions and modifications including a major renovation by the Franciscan

Continued on page 4



The Resurrection, fresco from the Chapel of the Christ Mosaic, Monastery of Constantinople.

PASCHA 2007

*"Come, receive the light from the unwaning light,
and glorify Christ who has risen from the dead!"*

Tonight we hold aloft the bright Paschal candle,
and going forth into the midnight darkness
we illumine the world around us,
we brighten the faces of our neighbors
with the joyous Paschal light, triumphantly proclaiming
the glory of the Risen One and chant as with one voice:

*It is the day of Resurrection, let us shine forth in splendor for the Festival
and embrace one another; let us say, brothers, even to those who hate us,
'Let us forgive everything in the Resurrection!'*

**CHRIST IS RISEN!
TRULY THE LORD IS RISEN!**

With my warmest Paschal wishes
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**JOHN AND MARIA
PAPPAJOHN
ARGYRIS AND ANN
VASSILEIOU**



Detail: Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Schedel Hartmann, German, 1440-1514. Liber cronicarum. Nuremberg, 1493. Woodcut, hand colored, 25.3 x 53.1 cm. Osher Collection.



The structure called the Edicule (Latin for small building) or the Kouvouklion (Greek, shrine) in the center of the building.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre: The Center of the World

Continued from page 2

monks in 1555. In 1808, a fire severely damaged the church causing the dome of the Rotunda to collapse and smashing the Edicule's exterior decoration. A year later, the architect Komminos of Mytilene rebuilt both the Rotunda and the Edicule's exterior in the so-called Ottoman Baroque style. Fortunately, the fire did not reach the interior of the Edicule, and the marble decoration of the Tomb originates from the 1555 restoration, although the current dome dates from 1870. Extensive modern renovations began in 1959, including a restoration of the dome from 1994-1997. Over the years, the cladding of red marble applied to the Edicule by Komminos has eroded severely and is detaching from the underlying structure; since 1947 it has been held in place with an exterior scaffolding of iron girders installed by the British Mandate. So far there are no plans have been agreed upon for its renovation.

During the Ottoman period and following, control of the church move back and forth between the Catholics, represented by the Franciscans, and the Greek Orthodox, depending on which community could

secure the support of the sultan in Constantinople.

For the next two centuries the various Christian denominations struggled for sole possession of the church. By the middle of the 18th century, the Orthodox and Catholics could also appeal to their co-religionists in Russia and France respectively, thus elevating the fate of the church into an international problem. In 1767, the Ottomans were not only weary of the fighting and violence over the church, but did not wish to invite foreign intervention and sultan decreed that the administration of the church be shared amongst the claimants. In 1852 another decree made this arrangement permanent by allocating a part of the church to each of the Christian communities.

As a result of this, the primary custody was awarded to the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian Apostolic and Roman Catholic churches. In the 19th century, the Coptic Orthodox, the Ethiopian Orthodox and the Syriac Orthodox acquired lesser responsibilities, which include shrines and other structures within and around the main church building. Each religious denomination is now assigned a specific time and place for each

place of worship in the common areas of the church.

Unfortunately, the Ottoman division did not prevent the occasional violent confrontation, a spectacle that still mars relations of the Christians in the holy land. Examples of violent acts by the various denominations are inexplicable as they are seemingly trivial. In 2002, the Coptic monk who is maintains guard on the roof of the church to ensure Coptic claims to the Ethiopian territory moved his chair from its agreed spot into the shade. The Ethiopians interpreted this deviation as a hostile move by the Copts. The disagreement degenerated into a brawl that sent eleven monks to the hospital.

Another incident took place in 2004 during Orthodox celebrations of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. A door to the Franciscan chapel was left open, which was taken as a sign of disrespect by the Orthodox and a fistfight broke out. Some people were arrested, but no one was seriously injured.

Under the rules of the Ottoman arrangement, no part of what is designated as common territory may be so much as rearranged without consent from all the Christian stakeholders. This situation often leads to the

neglect of badly needed repairs when the communities cannot come to an agreement among themselves about the specifics of a restoration project or modifications. For example, all the parties continue to disagree over the renovation of the edicule, because any alteration in the structure might result in a change to the status quo disagreeable to one or more of the communities.

A trivial, but excellent, insight of the uncompromising attitude adopted by all the religious denominations, is the example of the window ledge over the church's entrance. A wooden ladder was placed there a few years before 1852, when the status quo defined both the doors and the window ledges as common ground. The ladder remains there to this day, in almost exactly the same position as can be seen in one hundred-year old photographs and engravings.

Remarkably no one religious group has responsibility over the main entrance. In 1192 century, after he captured Jerusalem, Saladin appointed two neutral neighboring Muslim families: the Nuseibeh and Joudeh as the custodians of the key to the single door, which is unlocked

at set times in cooperation with one of the communities on a rotating schedule. Today, a member of the Joudeh family brings the key of the church to his counterpart in the Nuseibeh family who unlocks and locks the door.

This narrow way of access to such a large structure has proven to be hazardous at times. For example, when a fire broke out in 1840, dozens of pilgrims were trampled to death. On June 20, 1999, the communities agreed to install a new exit door in the church, unfortunately this is still pending.

The church is a remarkable structure that includes several sites that are integral to the Christian faith. Immediately past the entrance is the Stone of Anointing, this is where it is assumed that Jesus' body was prepared for burial. To the left of this spot (west) is the location of the Rotunda of the Anastasis that is just below the larger of the church's two domes, in the center of which is the Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre itself.

Under the status quo arrangements by the Ottomans the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Armenian Apostolic Churches all have rights to the interior of the tomb itself, and all three denominations cel-

ebate the Divine Liturgy or Mass there daily. It is also the site for other ceremonies on special occasions, such as the Holy Saturday ceremony of the Holy Fire celebrated by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem. Behind the tomb within a chapel constructed of iron lattice-work upon a semicircular stone base, is the altar used by the Coptic Orthodox. Beyond that to the rear of the Rotunda is a very rough hewn chapel believed to be the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea in which the Syriac Orthodox celebrate their Liturgy on Sundays. To the right of the sepulcher on the southeastern side of the Rotunda is the Chapel of the Apparition that is reserved for the Roman Catholics.

On the east side across from the Rotunda is the part of the church built by the Crusaders that houses main altar also known as the Greek Orthodox cathicon. The second, smaller dome sits directly over the center of the transept crossing of the choir where the compass (or omphalos in Greek) is located. In antiquity and in the medieval period it was generally believed to be the center of the world. East of this site is a large

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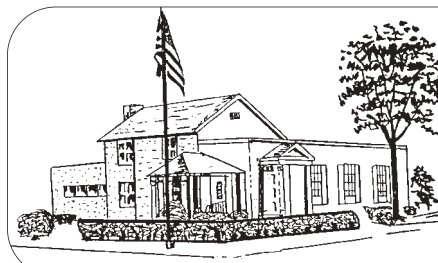
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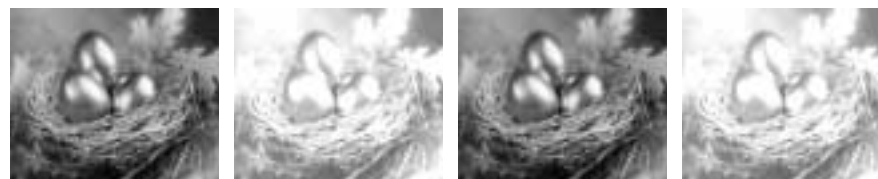
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in our hearts now and forever more

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3917/566

Perspectives on the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The death and resurrection of Jesus are two events in the New Testament in which Jesus is crucified on one day (the "Day of Preparation," i.e., the day before the Sabbath, the last day of the week), then resurrected on the third. These two events are commemorated by Christians, the death by crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday and the resurrection of Jesus on every Sunday, but especially on Easter Sunday. These two events are a crucial part of the core doctrines of the Christian faith.

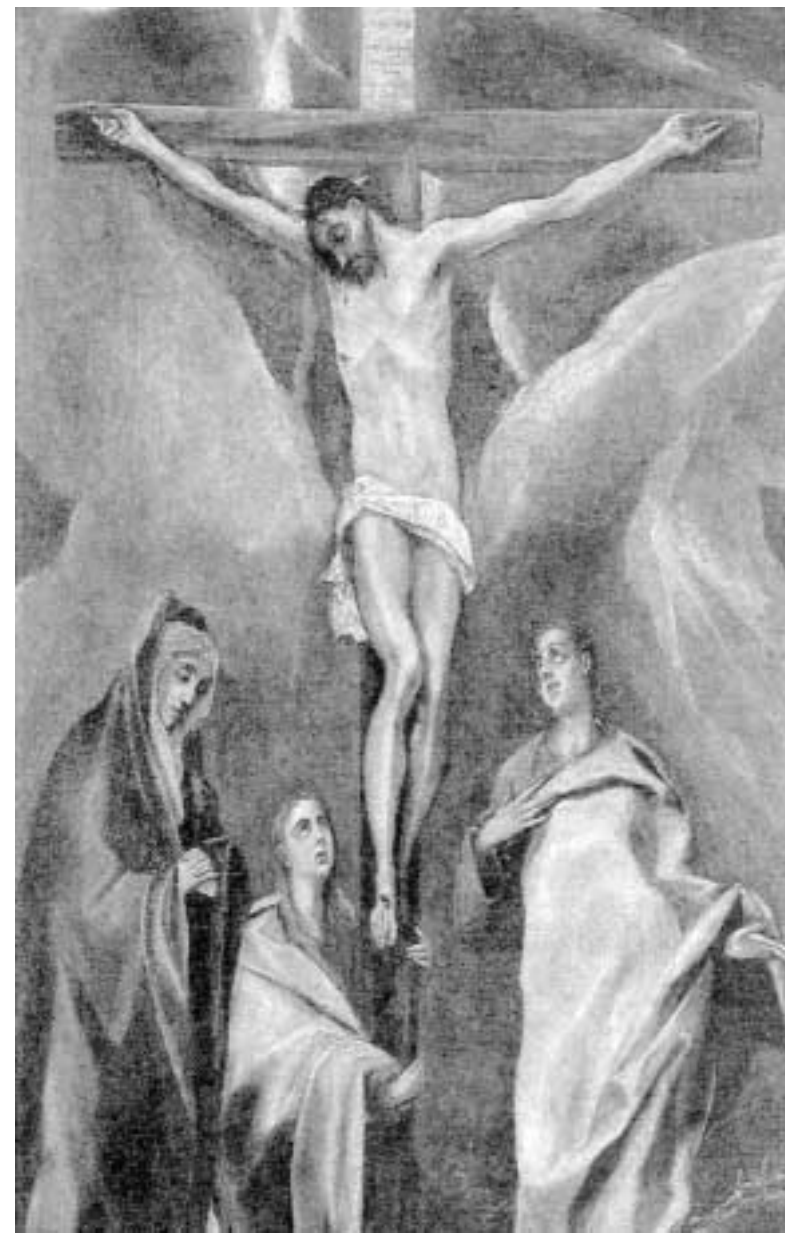
From the earliest times Christians have celebrated the resurrection every Sunday, as Justin Martyr described in the mid-second century. Much later, in the year 321, Roman Emperor Constantine I made Sunday a public holiday.

A disproportionate attention was given the Resurrection by comparison with the consideration given to the cross. About one-fourth of the material in the four Gospels deals with the cross. The cross never was considered more important than the Resurrection, but the significance of the cross was more difficult to explain. The death of Christ came as a shock even to his closest followers. To them it was a major problem to faith that Jesus is the Messiah. Paul spoke of the "scandal" of the cross (1 Corinthians 1:23).

However, the Resurrection only had to be announced by those who saw the risen Lord. No elaborate resurrection narrative or defense was required. The New Testament alludes to about ten separate appearances of the risen Christ, but no one New Testament writer lists all ten. In 1 Corinthians 15:6 the Apostle Paul states that there were still at the time of writing (about the year 57) some hundreds to whom Jesus "had appeared," after he had been raised.

The path to Resurrection begins with the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. According to the biblical narrative, following the death of Jesus on the cross, the sky is "darkened for three hours," from the sixth to the ninth hour (noon to mid-afternoon). The synoptic gospels state that the veil of the temple split at this point, and Matthew says that there were earthquakes, splitting rocks, and dead saints were resurrected.

The synoptics report that the centurion in charge, seeing how Jesus had breathed his last (Mark) or seeing the events that followed



(Matthew, Luke) said: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15:39; or "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54); or "Surely this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47).

All four Gospels state that, on the evening of the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus, and that, after Pilate granted his request, he wrapped Jesus' body in a linen cloth and laid it in a tomb. This was in accordance with Mosaic Law, which stated that a person hanged on a tree must not be allowed to remain there at night, but should be buried before sundown.

In Matthew, Joseph was identified as "also a disciple of Jesus"; in Mark he was identified as "a re-

spected member of the council (Sanhedrin) who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God"; in Luke he was identified as "a member of the council, good and righteous, who did not consent to their purpose or deed, and who was looking for the Kingdom of God"; and in John he was identified as "a disciple of Jesus".

Mark stated that, when Joseph asked for Jesus' body, Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead, and he summoned a centurion to confirm this before dispatching the body to Joseph. John recorded that Joseph was assisted in the burial process by Nicodemus, who brought a mixture of myrrh

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The Hellenic Orthodox Church of Lowell Holy Trinity

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 you partake
 of the joy
 of His Resurrection
 both now and forever

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Perspectives on the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

Continued from page 10

and aloes and included these spices in the burial cloth as per Jewish customs.

The synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) described the burial as occurring on the "Day of Preparation", with Mark providing the explanation of this as the day before the Sabbath. The synoptics described the tomb as "hewn out of the rock", i.e. a sepulchre, with Matthew, Luke, and John stating that it was new (i.e. no one else had been buried there before), and with Matthew stating that the tomb belonged to Joseph. John stated that the tomb was located in a garden near the site of the crucifixion.

The synoptics stated that women saw where Jesus was buried; Matthew named "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary", Mark named "Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus", and Luke simply gave "the women who had

Since the only mention in John of the tomb having any content describes it only as having grave clothes, this paucity of evidence for anything more than the body being stolen would make the Beloved Disciple rather gullible if it was a resurrection he suddenly believed in. A question also arises as to why, according to John, the Beloved Disciple doesn't tell Peter and them about this. A long line of major scholars including Augustine of Hippo and John Calvin have thus argued that the Beloved Disciple simply came to believe Mary Magdalene's story that the body was gone.

After the discovery of the empty tomb, the Gospels indicate that Jesus made a series of appearances to the disciples, with the most notable being to the disciples in the upper room, where Thomas did not believe until he was invited to put his finger into the holes in Jesus' hands and side (John 20:24-29); along the road to Emmaus, where people talked about their failed hopes that Je-

come with him from Galilee." Matthew gave an account of the chief priests and Pharisees requesting that Pilate secure the tomb, lest Jesus' disciples should steal the body and proclaim Jesus to be risen from the dead, whereupon Pilate said, "you have a guard of soldiers, go, make it as secure as you can" - after which they secured the sepulchre by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

The Resurrection of Jesus is the critical core to New Testament faith. The act of Jesus rising to life from a state of death is not narrated at all in scripture. Rather the first sign of the Resurrection of Jesus is simply the tomb being found empty by the women—which may be the most significant affirmation of women in the New Testament.

Despite the unanimity of the Gospels that Jesus appeared first to women after his Resurrection, Paul does not mention the women being the first witnesses to the Resurrection (corinthians 15:3-7). It can only be surmised that the most likely reason was that Paul, along with the rest of the church, stressed only the appearances to men as the "official" witness of the early church. The witness of a woman was not recognized in Jewish courts of the time. "Whereas others found woman not qualified or authorized to teach, the four Gospels have it that the risen Christ commissioned women to teach men, including Peter and the other apostles, the basic tenet of the Christian faith"—that he is risen.

Mark's account (which in the earliest extant manuscripts) ends abruptly and claims that the women told no one. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark do not present any further involvement at the tomb. Luke describes Peter as running to the tomb to check for himself, and John adds that the Beloved Disciple did so too, the beloved disciple outrunning Peter. There is some scriptural variation in whom the women told and it what order they were told. Curiously, Mary also addresses Jesus as Lord.

John describes the beloved disciple only as making a cursory glance at the linen, Peter is described as carefully examining the scene. After making their examination, and the Beloved Disciple apparently drawing a conclusion.

Jesus would be the messiah before recognizing Jesus (Luke 24:13-32); and beside the Sea of Galilee to encourage Peter to serve his followers (John 21:1-23). His final appearance is reported as being forty days after the resurrection when he ascended into heaven, where he remains.

The Jewish perspective is that the body of Jesus was removed in the same night, see also Stolen body hypothesis. Apologists see this as an acknowledgment that the tomb was empty, with an attempt to explain it away. The Toledoth Yeshu, however, dates from mediaeval times, and is not an early source. It was a conflation of the Talmud accounts of multiple people named Yeshu. None of the Talmudic Yeshu accounts are in any way flattering, or refer to any supernatural abilities, and many refer to people named Yeshu who lived in time periods significantly before or after the lifetime of Jesus.

The Islamic perspective that Jesus was not crucified, but someone who looked like Jesus died in his place. This view is also given in the uneconomical Gospel of Barnabas that identifies Judas as the one crucified. The fate of Judas Iscariot recorded in the Bible can be considered contradictory on some details, although both writers state he died an untimely death. (Matthew 27:5, Acts 1:18). There are other claims, which endorse the idea that Judas was crucified. The Gospel of Barnabas generally conforms to the Islamic interpretation of Christian origins and is considered by the majority of academics to be a late, pseudo-epigraphical and a pious fraud.

Documents found by Russian historian Nicolai Notovitch claim that Jesus was resuscitated and lived the remainder of his life in Kashmir, where there exists a possible tomb for Jesus, under the name Yuz Asaf. This is also the belief of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement.

Today, there are over two billion Christians worldwide, many of whom openly claim to have a personal relationship with Jesus, and more who testify to the coming of the Holy Spirit; by Christian theology, these are made possible by the Resurrection.

(With contributions from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia)

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Continued from page 4

iconostasis demarcating the Greek Orthodox sanctuary in front of which is the location of the Patriarchal throne and a throne for visiting Episcopal celebrants. On the south side of the altar via the ambulatory is a stairway leading to the Chapel of Calvary, or Golgotha, the site of Jesus' crucifixion and the most undoubtedly the most lavishly decorated part of the church. Here the main altar is assigned to the Greek Orthodox, while the Roman Catholics have an altar to the side. Further to the east in the ambulatory are the stairs descending to the Chapel of Saint Helena, which is under the dominion of the Armenians. From there, another set of stairs leads down to the Roman Catholic Chapel of the Holy Cross. This is the site

that many faithful believe is where Saint Helena found the three crosses of the crucifixion and by a miracle was able to identify the cross (True Cross) of Jesus Christ.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is an integral part of Christianity and has been a center of worship for millions of pilgrims over one thousand years. It is a key feature of not only Christian faith but also of Christian history. It is from the church that the festivities of Easter Sunday are initiated with the miracle of Holy Fire that signifies the resurrection.

Dr. Andre Gerolymatos is a professor of History and is the Chair of Hellenic Studies at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. He has made a pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Best wishes for a blessed and joyful Easter



to His Eminence Archbishop
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Greek Orthodox Easter

By Anna Lombardos
Special to The National Herald

Easter is the most significant holiday in the Greek Orthodox faith. This holiday is filled with symbolic gestures, physical and spiritual preparation, and a deep appreciation for renewal and redemption. We keep old customs, sometimes add new ones, and celebrate the Resurrection of Christ fundamentally in the same way in North America as in Greece. We attend church services, pass down our traditions through our children and God-children, and take the opportunity to re-examine the beliefs that are such a great part of our being. At the same time, our cultural offers us an opportunity to integrate religious and secular celebrations and combine them to elements of spring such as bunnies, flowers, and Easter egg hunts. We appreciate the knowledge and respect the diversity.

Easter or Pascha, meaning pass over, is the oldest and the most greatly honoured feast in the Greek Church. Unlike Christmas, the exact date fluctuates each year and is based on the old Julian calendar. This long and very important period of several weeks starts with a three week period where people prepare for Pre-Lent, Great Lent, and Holy Week. This "Triodion" is followed by Easter, and Bright week (after Easter). In North America we have kept most of the traditions and essence alive for many generations. Pre-Lent, which begins with "apokria" meaning abstinence from meat, and marks the beginning of the great self-examination period to follow. Many people still observe the forty day fast of Lent as they strive to achieve a level of inner peace and cleansing. Church services include readings that suggest the values of humility and unquestionable faith. Each week has its own inherent meaning, taking us on a journey of deep introspection, remembrance, and repentance. During this time we remember our loved ones that have deceased and pray for them. We prepare for Great Lent; we eat "lagana" bread, and begin fasting. This is a time dedicated to prayer, communion, and confession. Social events are avoided and the church forbids wedding and baptisms during this time.

The weeks before Holy week are also important. Each carries a significant piece of information leading to the meaning of Easter. The Pre-Lent period prepares the worshipper. This period includes the

readings from the parables, meat week (last week to eat meat), Saturday of the souls (prayers for the dead), Cheese Week (last week to eat any animal products), followed by readings about forgiveness. Lent begins with Clean Monday (the great cleansing). Here, of course, we do not celebrate it by going away to the country side or flying kites as in Greece, nor is it a national holiday. But, we do buy lagana bread and halva. We eat in moderation: salad, shellfish, taramosalata. We say kali sarakosti to one another and we know that this marks an important beginning in our preparations. Among the many important events in our church are two popular services where believers often participate: Sunday of Orthodoxy (with a procession of all icons in church) and the Annunciation of the Mother of God (on March 25), after that Holy week becomes a more prevalent part of our preparations.

Holy week carries great symbolism as we relive the events leading up to Easter day. It is a solemn week. We experience and remember the last week of Christ's life through our church services as we symbolically strive to achieve the greatest level of closeness to God in order to appreciate and understand the basis of our faith—that we will be reborn and we will believe in resurrection. From Palm Sunday to Good Friday, church services take us on a journey of everything Jesus endured—a series of symbolic proceedings define and clarify the reason Easter is so important to us. The parables that are read remind the people that where there is love and light and repentance, there is hope. The priest recounts various events every day and on Wednesday, we are invited to take a part of that symbolism home as a tangible token of our faith. We are offered the sacrament of holy unction, as a sign of mental and physical healing through the oil, called efcheleon. On Thursday, parishioners witness the reenactment of the crucifixion; we mourn the pain and suffering and death of Jesus. This is also the day we dye our eggs red, to signify the blood of Christ. Although many people today also colour and decorate multicoloured eggs for Easter, they will usually include the red ones as a reminder of their implication. Good Friday is a day of mourning for the Greeks and although, for example, we may not see flags at half-mast and it is not a national holiday, we still hear the

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Happy Easter



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Happy Easter

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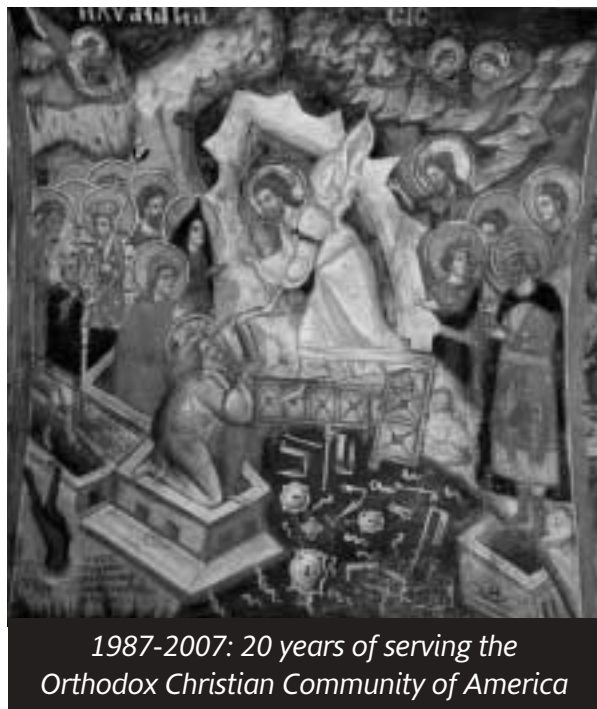
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To all Orthodox Christians
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3789/589

Sips for the Easter Feast

By Fotios Stamos
Special to The National Herald

Considered as one of the most sacred holidays in the Greek Orthodox faith, Easter is the day we prepare the biggest and most memorable feast with our family and friends. Every household takes special care and attention to the offerings that will be served and featured that day. By the same token, I have prepared for you with the wine offerings for our special Easter feast.



As we depart from church after the acknowledgment that "Christ has risen" on Saturday night (the night before Easter), we make our way home to officially kick off our Easter feast with the customary Easter lamb soup also known as mageiritsa, which translates to small cooking. As noted in the cookbook, "The Olive & The Caper", mageiritsa is a soup that is only prepared for Easter. It is made with small morsels of lamb combined with an egg-lemon froth. The soup is hearty but light enough to restore energy to the faithful worshippers that are weak from fasting during lent. The choice of wine that best suits this flavorful soup is none other than the traditional selection of retsina. Yes, retsina, a light and crisp wine with tints of aromatic pine, pairs well with the combination of the silky structure and lemon accents from the soup. The retsina to select is from the winery Malamatina that is based in Thessaloniki. Malamatina retsina has been producing retsina

for over a century and it has become the staple wine of Northern Greece. Malamatina is a very pleasant white wine, with a fading presence of resin to give it that perfect balance for a retsina.

As we wake up Easter morning, feeling refreshed and restored from last night's commencement, we greet each other with a red-dyed egg in hand and hit each other's point to point while saying, "Christ has risen". As this beautiful day progresses, family members crowd in the kitchen and begin to prepare

meat would be from the Varvaki Distillery.

The grand table that will host the feast is decorated with Greek Easter bread or tsoureki. Tsoureki is a sweet bread baked and decorated with red-dyed eggs that symbolize the blood of Christ. Mezedakia are prepared and ready ahead of time to keep everyone going until the lamb is ready. Specialty dishes including a variety of different cheeses, such as kefalotyri, kefalogaviera, lathotiri, kopanisti, and many others are accompanied by a plethora of olives to be sipped with a refreshing white wine from the varietal roditis. The wine of my choice would be the production from the Gaia Estates winery called 'Notios'. This young white wine is full of life and very vibrant.

It's a great sipping wine that will pair nicely with our cheese and olives.

You will also find a variety of different salad dishes and pitas that every household will have depending on the region of Greece they are from. Some of the most popular salads are eggplant and yogurt with red onion and olives, roasted sweet pepper salad, taramasalata, and many others. Along with the salads, there are also platters of grilled meats, such as lamb bites, homemade sausages, and even liver. The wine offering with these choices will be a fruitful rose wine from Palivos Estates. This rose wine is made from 100% Agiorghitiko grape and has a strawberry and jam aroma on the nose with great structure of softness and crispness to signify we are sipping a light but flavorful rose.

The anticipation grows immensely for our traditional Easter lamb that has been long awaited. The day has been full of joy and happiness as we rekindle with family and friends over one of the most appealing cuisines along with some of the finest selections of wine. Finally, the main feature is pulled off the spit and prepared on an enormous platter that makes it way to the grand table. As the stuffed lamb is settled at the center of the table it is surrounded by dishes of rice prepared with ground beef, roasted vegetables, roasted potatoes, and all of the over mezedakia that were mentioned earlier. At the table for the feast I will suggest two red wines to be offered that compliment all of the selections. Since there will be typically more people at the table, we need to make sure we provide a couple of wine choices to satisfy the different taste buds and also the different dishes. The

first red selection will be a lighter style, produced from the Xynomavro grape, Greece's version of a Pinot Noir. I am going to suggest the selection from the Kir-Yianni Estates winery, called 'Raminsta'. This wine is a very soft and light bodied red wine that has great fruit flavors with a touch of tannins that will be very suitable for our guests who prefer a light red wine. The

second selection that I highly recommend is a Rhone-style red from the Manousakis Winery in Crete called 'Nostos'. This full-bodied red selection has great fruit flavor and is robust with dark cherries in every sip. This wine is the prize selection to have with our trophy lamb that brings together great flavors for an ultimate dining experience. Nostos is produced from all

estate grown Syrah, Grenache, Mouverde, and Roussane. It has great balance and a long finish.

Once again, there is plenty of great food and great wine throughout this wonderful day. We finish off the evening with a room full of sweet offerings and desserts that range from cookies, pies, cakes, and Greek sweet wine from Samos. "HRISTOS ANESTI"

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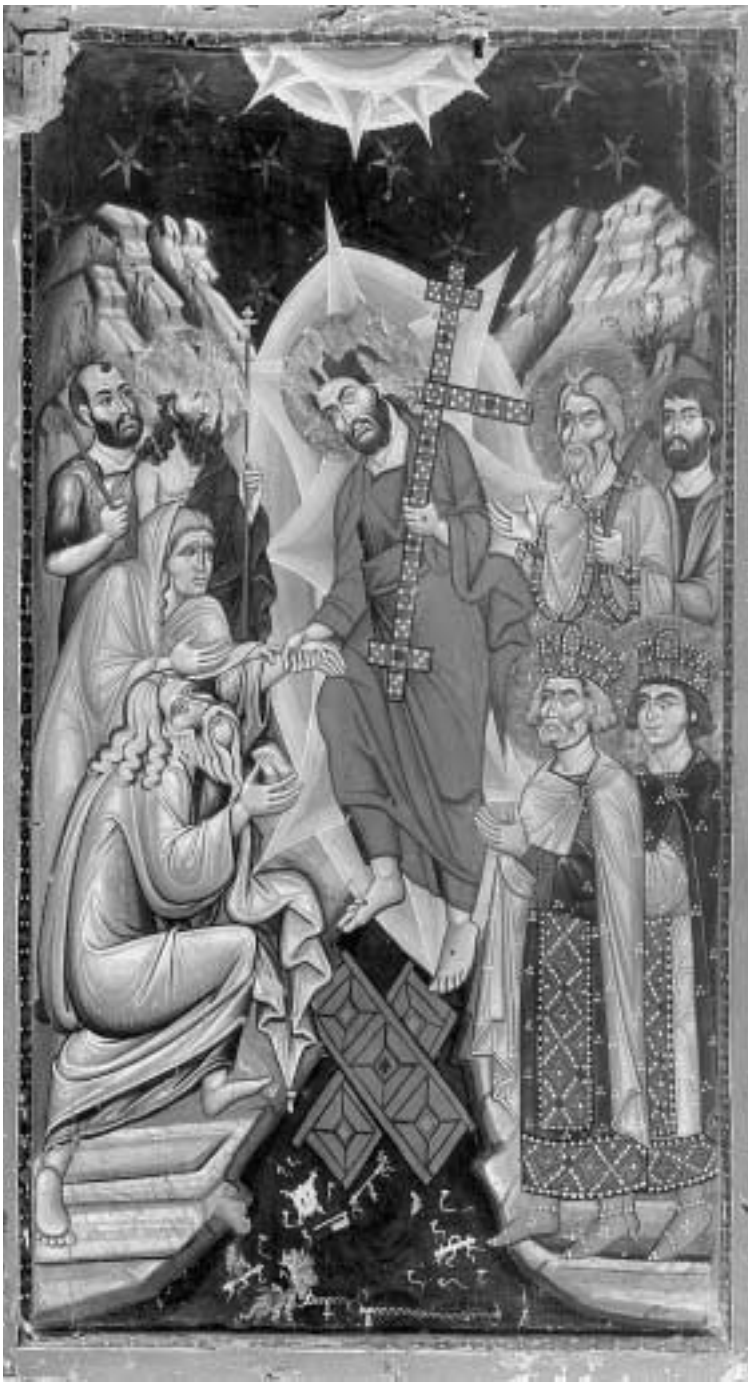
"Happy are those who can give
without remembering
and take without forgetting."

(Anonymous)

Christos Anesti!

With much respect and love
we express our gratitude
to His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios,
to the Philoptochos Women,
and to all faithful in the Metropolis of Boston
and throughout America who manifest their faith
and love for Christ by opening their hearts to us
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Υμνούμε και προσκυνούμε την Ανάσταση του Κυρίου, διότι κατέστη το κέντρο της Ορθοδόξου Χριστιανικής Θεολογίας. Γιορτάζουμε το Πάσχα διότι καθώς μας διδάσκει ο Απόστολος Παύλος, «ει Χριστός ου εκ εγήγερται ματαία η πίστις ημών, κενόν άρα και το κήρυγμα ημών».

Ο Υιός της Παρθένου, το δεύτερο πρόσωπο της Αγίας Τριάδος, γίνεται «ο εκ νεκρών και ζώντων της εξουσίαν έχων», ο νικητής της φθοράς και του θανάτου αφ' ενός, και αφ' ετέρου γίνεται ο ελευθερωτής του ανθρωπίνου γένους από την «πλάνην του εχθρού», δηλαδή, από την αμαρτία και τα οψώνια αυτής, τον αιώνιο θάνατο.

Νέα λοιπόν ζωή μάς χαρίζει η Ανάσταση του Κυρίου. Ας θελήσουμε να ανοίξουμε τις θύρες των καρδιών μας και ας αφήσουμε τη λάμψη του ανεσπέρου φωτός που ανέτειλε από τον τάφο της αιώνιου Ζωής, να μας φωτίσει και να μας θερμάνει. Σαν άλλοι Απόστολοι, ας θελήσουμε να γίνουμε κήρυκες της αληθείας και της ζωής.

Βαπτισμένοι και λουσιμένοι στο ανέσπερο Φως της Αναστάσεως, ας ζούμε ως πνευματικοί άνθρωποι ώστε το φως της χριστιανικής μας ζωής να φωτίζει και τους συνανθρώπους μας προς δόξα του Αναστάντος Ιησού.

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Greek Easter Egg Tradition

By Vagelis Theodorou

The preparations for the Greek Orthodox Easter begin well in advance of this holiest of feasts. According to tradition, the Easter eggs, which will be cracked among friends and relatives after the Holy Resurrection are dyed on Maundy Thursday. How do we dye the eggs and how do we decorate them? Below is some useful advice and tips on how to dye your eggs, as well as ways on how to make the most of any leftover eggs. However, since coloring eggs is an age-old tradition, we will also provide a brief history, so you can impress everyone at Easter. First and foremost, though, it is worth mentioning the nutritional value of eggs, erasing any misconceptions for the food that is accused of creating cholesterol. Eggs contain vitamins (A, Band E), minerals (iron, calcium and iodine) and trace elements (phosphorus, zinc and selenium).

A LITTLE BIT OF HISTORY

The tradition of dyed eggs can be traced back to the 5th century in China and the 10th century in Egypt. Tracing their origins we find that both Christians and Muslims used them around the 17th century in Mesopotamia and Syria and later on in Persia and the Aimos Peninsula. Many believe that the red Easter eggs probably originated from the ancient Persian New Year's custom, which began in Egypt and eventually flourished to all corners of the world.

According to popular tradition, when the Resurrection of Christ was proclaimed, nobody believed it. A woman who was holding a basket full of eggs cried out, "Can these eggs become red?" And by a miracle, the eggs turned red.

Tradition has it that the eggs symbolize the start of new life, while the red color either has its roots in pre-Christian gods of death, or in the blood of Jewish sheep, or in the blood of Christ.

The accepted Orthodox interpretation attributes the custom to the excess of eggs owing to the Lenten fast and the increase in poultry hatching. The eggs were stored until Easter and given to the children either on March 1, or at Easter.

PREPARATION

The first step is to ensure that you choose fresh eggs. You can't determine the age of an egg just by looking at it. Here is a tried and true method of determining whether the eggs are fresh or not. To make sure they are fresh, fill a glass with water and add a pinch of salt. If the egg floats, then it is not fresh.

Coloring eggs requires a specific process. It's best to choose white eggs, without any blemishes or cracks.

Take them out of the fridge 24 hours before you dye them, so they

will be at room temperature when boiled. They must also be thoroughly washed, to remove all dirt or even any feathers.

To avoid breaking the eggs, dip them in lukewarm water before boiling, in order to further reduce the temperature difference. You can also put a metal spoon in the pot while they are boiling. The metal protruding from the pot absorbs the extra heat, reducing the possibility of cracking.

TASTEFUL DECORATIONS

A long time ago, "vatrzi", a type of red wood, was used to dye the eggs. Today, food dyes have made things simpler. In order to dye your eggs, you will need to use an old pot and fill it with water (approximately two and a half liters). As soon as the water comes to a boil, empty the contents of two sachets of dye (for 50 eggs) and add half a cup of vinegar.

Carefully place as many eggs as you can fit in the pot, to cover the bottom, making sure that they are completely immersed in the water. Turn down the heat, so that they don't break. When they are hard-boiled, remove them from the pot using a straining ladle and leave them to dry on a level surface. The last step is shining the eggs. Wipe them, using a soft piece of cloth and a bit of olive oil.

If you wish to dye eggs the old way, you can make natural prints. Choose leaves and flowers and place them on the eggs. Then wrap the eggs in old socks and secure them with thread. Dip the eggs in cold water dye: you will have eggs with shapes of leaves and flowers on them.

If red is not your favorite color, or if you want to break tradition, then you can opt for a more ecological solution. You can use onions peels (light brown), parsley (green), saffron (red) and violets (purple). In this case cover the eggs with one of the above and wrap them in tulle or an old sock, following the same process we discussed earlier using the natural prints.

You can also enlist the help of the kids, who can paint the eggs with non-toxic colors. In addition, you can even tie little bows or decorate the eggs with dried flowers.

AFTER THE FEAST

After Easter, most homes have a surplus of leftover red eggs. Here are some tips on how to use them. Boiled eggs can be kept in the fridge for up to a week, even if they have been cracked. You can make a cold egg salad, by adding salt, pepper, oregano and a bit of olive oil or even some type of salad dressing.

You can also use them in pies or meatloaf.

A more culinary option is to serve them as hors d'oeuvres, cut in slices over toasted bread. You can also add a bit of caviar and decorate them with finely chopped onion or a thin slice of lemon.

Greek Orthodox Easter

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mournful toll of church bells when passing a Greek church and cemeteries are filled with people honouring the dead. We are aware of the magnitude of this day and every symbolic effort is made to preserve its sanctity. Women take flowers to church (as the women prepared Christ's body for the tomb) and decorate the "Epitaphio" (the bier of Christ). In the afternoon, worshippers observe the priest take the body of Christ down from the cross, and pay our respects as we would in a viewing of a deceased loved one and finally at night there is a procession of the Epitaphio for everyone to follow.

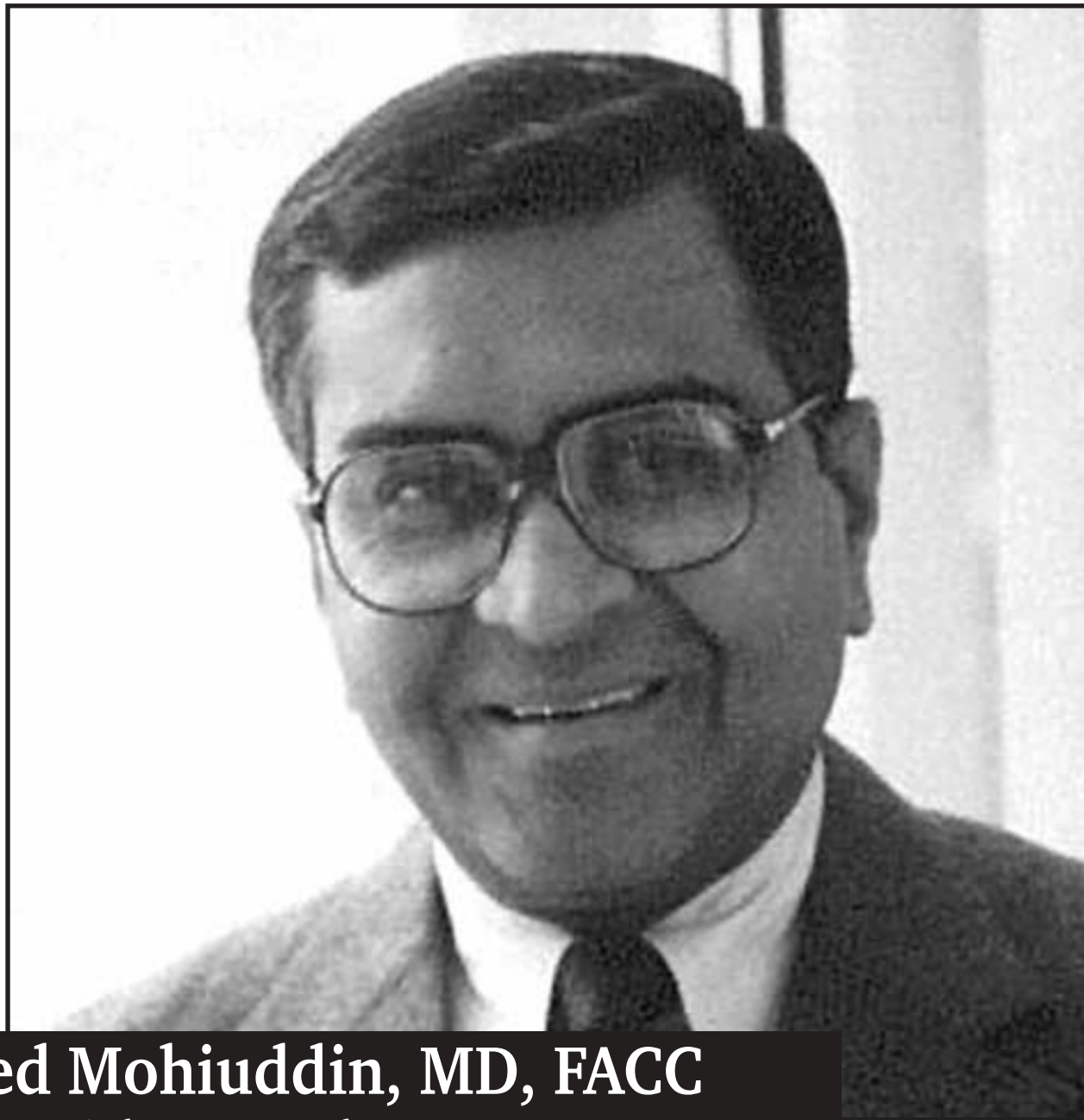
On Saturday the heavy sorrow is lifted. Christos Anesti, is heard from everyone and with this everything finds meaning and purpose. We will greet one another with these words and continue to do so for forty days after Easter. This will remind us of the culmination of all pain, sorrow, and the triumph over death. It will speak to us of hope, light, and love. So, for those living

far away from Greece, for those who will not observe the forty day fast or perhaps all the preparations; for those who will integrate some new social traditions, or witness more than one "Easter" holiday in a year, the meaning remains the same. We may attend school and go to work. We may not have a long holiday as we do at Christmas; we may not even live near a Greek church. That is all secondary to the greater significance and fulfillment of our values. We will roast a lamb and spend precious time with family. We will hold candles during "anastasi" and bring candles, or lambada, to our Godchildren. We will pass the tradition on to them through our gifts of new clothes or shoes, our red eggs—we will continue the faith in renewal and rebirth.

Anna Lombardos is a senior writer for *Elegant Wedding Magazine* and *Perfect Match Marriage* (French spelling). She is also a freelance writer who has published both fiction and non-fiction works.



*Best Wishes
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and Joyous Easter
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Greek Easter Memories

By Paul Papadeas
Special to The National Herald

...And then I heard footsteps and my mother's SCREAM. She yelled my name in a rattled pitch shrill - similar in intonation to the weeping Iranian elders mourning for the dead. All I remember is going black and being dragged by the feet somehow. I enjoyed the gliding sensation, as if I were being whisked away into another world through the Milky Way. I slowly opened my weary eyes and witnessed an intimidating fresco of Christ hovering from the interior of the church dome. A Styrofoam cup found its way to my lips as the bubbling liquid revived me. It was cold Seven-up.

I noticed two older, gray haired Greek men in suits standing over me, a forced concern plastered on their wrinkled faces. A middle aged lady was administering the carbonated liquid. As I regained consciousness, I was slowly lifted, and there to my dismay was the entire congregation, packed to the rim within the limited pews and holding melting candles - all staring at me as if I were a resurrected Lazarus.

Regrettably but without remorse, my gaze drifted immediately toward the unattainable girl that I liked, standing next to her rich stoic mother and bored father. She was expressionless. How I wish she had administered the Seven-Up!

To make matters worse, I was dressed in an Altar Boy's uniform. And yes, I was only fourteen, slightly plump, and awkward with a southern mullet.

"Not enough air, the poor boy couldn't breath", whispered a few solemn ladies behind me.

Finally, I was escorted outside,



where upon my exit the swooning organ and cacophony of noises emanating from the choir began as the humored priest was able to commence with the liturgy.

This was the moment that I will always remember from Easter Service at the cozy Greek Orthodox Church in Fayetteville, North Carolina. I lament the fact that I will forever be remembered as the kid who fainted, banged his forehead against the tomb of Christ and then fell pancake style onto the tacky red carpet. I'm glad that my long candleholder or whatever one might call this medieval instrument of torture did not start an accidental fire.

Every year since that memo-

orable event, I've learned to bend my knees incessantly and avoid that sweet smelling siren mist of incense like the plague.

But let's get back to the wonderful and awe-inspiring time that is Easter.

It has so many meanings for a Greek such as the resurrection of Christ which is the ultimate day of renewal, the quintessential rituals such as that of the red eggs and the famous late night egg fights and sweet bread smorgasbord after the long fast.

As with all things Greek, our rituals and culture is laden with heavy symbolism. The cracking of the eggs is meant to symbolize Christ breaking from the Tomb. The



person whose egg lasts the longest is assured good luck for the rest of the year.

Easter for a Greek is a hybrid of cultural and religious customs. It is difficult to separate them. What I look forward to each year is the actual ceremony leading up to the resurrection. This would be on Holy Saturday. People gather at the church by eleven at night for the Easter Service holding a lampada, or large white candle. At midnight, proceeding the moment of truth, the church lights grow dim, the altar doors close and everything falls into pitch darkness. The priest begins a haunting chant and then the candles are lit one by one - slowly illuminating the room with a warm

glow.

The church bells toll and the priest announces, "Christos Anesti" or Christ is Risen! The crowd answers with the "Alithos Anesti" which translates to Truly he is risen.

Greek Easter celebrations begin two months before with a kind of Carnival called an Apokria, where in Greece they burn an effigy of Judas through the night and have fireworks and festivities which leads into the next day. Unfortunately, we did not really partake in this fun pagan exercise choosing instead to have parties in the church hall or attend a cookout at a different Greek friend's home.

The next day is "Kathari

Deftera", otherwise known as Clean Monday or Ash Monday. This is one of the most festive holidays of the year and is a precursor to Lent and Holy Week which resumes from there. Every night of the week there is a church service.

On Friday, The Procession of the Epitaphios of Christ mourns the death of Christ on the Cross with the symbolic decorated coffin and in Greece is traditionally carried through the streets by the faithful. This scene is similar to the "Tomb of Christ" that I alluded to earlier and is usually carried around the outside of the church, smothered in carnations and other flowers.

And the next day is Easter Sunday and there is an all day picnic or celebration with a whole lamb roasted on a spit over a fire as everyone dances and eats until spontaneous combustion.

In retrospect, I owe much of my own cinematic influence and flair for melodrama to Greek Easter services. The communal gatherings, the symbolic manifestations of the exalted highs and lows of Christ's death and rebirth, all encapsulated within various coordinated set pieces would make the most astute of famous movie directors' blush with rapture.

Most importantly, the connection to one's own indigenous roots are invaluable and key to the maintenance and perpetuation of our cultural heritage and why whether one is in Fayetteville or Los Angeles or Melbourne or Athens - Greeks across the globe continue to maintain one of the oldest ancient traditions in their own unique way.

Paul Papadeas is a Greek American freelance writer and independent filmmaker based out of Los Angeles, California.

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