

# Magnificat

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News from  
HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE  
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Pascha/Pentecost  
2014

This is the day of the Resurrection.  
Let us be enlightened by this triumphal Feast,  
embracing one another and calling Brethren  
even those who hate us;  
because of the Resurrection,  
let us forgive all things,  
and let us sing:

**Christ is risen from the dead,  
trampling death by death  
and to those in the grave  
bestowing life.**

From the Paschal Hymns

We are a Catholic Monastery of the Byzantine Rite, under the jurisdiction of the Eparchy of Chicago, and belonging to the Ukrainian Metropolis in the United States of America, which is in union with the Pope of Rome, supreme pastor of the universal Church. We embrace Evangelical poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability of life, according to the Rule of Saint Benedict and the traditions of the Christian East. In our skete at Jacob's Falls, on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, we devote ourselves to a common life of prayer and work for the praise, love, and service of God and for the upbuilding of His Kingdom through the arts.

# Paschal Brightness

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the central tenet of the Christian faith. It manifests His divinity, confirms the truth of His teaching, and points to our own bodily resurrection at the end of days. As St. Paul argues in his first letter to the Corinthians (15: 16-20), without Christ's Resurrection our faith is in vain and we are the most pitiable of men. But, since Christ is truly risen, we are filled with an overflowing abundance of grace and joy.

Compared with their long, detailed Passion narratives, the Evangelists' depictions of the Resurrection are brief and rather sketchy. Jesus' suffering and death were matters of common knowledge; many had witnessed the events, and the experience was all too familiar. But no one had seen the Resurrection, and the evidence was all negative: an empty tomb, an abandoned shroud. *He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him.* (Mk. 16:6) The report stirred the heart and was a source of wonder, but few *saw and believed* (Jn. 20:8).

Only through their encounters with the risen Christ – in the garden (Mt. 28:9; Jn. 20:14-18), on the road to Emmaus (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-25), in the Upper Room (Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-29), at the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:1-19), and

on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-5) – were the Disciples able to grasp the reality of the Resurrection. In His presence, seeing and hearing Him, breaking bread and sharing meals with Him, touching His wounded and now resplendent flesh, they came to believe His triumph over death and to know that He is truly God. *You have believed, Thomas, because you have seen Me. Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed* (Jn. 20:29).

[We believe]  
 in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
 Son of God, the only begotten,  
 born of the Father before all ages:  
 Light of Light,  
 True God of True God;  
 begotten, not made;  
 of one substance with the Father,  
 through whom all things were made;  
 Who, for us men  
 and for our salvation,  
 came down from heaven  
 and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit  
 and Mary the Virgin  
 and became man;  
 He was also crucified for us  
 under Pontius Pilate,  
 suffered, died, and was buried;  
 on the third day He rose again  
 according to the Scriptures;  
 He ascended into heaven  
 and sits at the right hand  
 of the Father;  
 He will come again with glory  
 to judge the living and the dead,  
 and of His Kingdom  
 there will be no end.

From the Nicene Creed

reception is not an intellectual proposition to be apprehended, but, rather, a reality that must be lived and experienced. Down through the ages, the Church proclaims this truth and, through her liturgical life, offers entrance into the experience.

The conviction and knowledge engendered by their experience of the Risen Lord during the forty days He remained with them (cf. Acts 1:3) and the zeal imparted by the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4) enabled them to preach the Good News throughout the world. Through them and their successors we, too, although we have not seen, have come to believe. The announcement of the Resurrection is also for us a source of joy and wonder. We accept in faith what our minds cannot grasp.

Pascha, the celebration of the Lord's Passover from death to life, is not merely one feast among many. It is the very center of the Church's life and worship, the summit to which everything leads, and the source from which everything derives meaning. The Sunday Services each week reiterate its proclamation of joy, and fully a third of the year is devoted to the preparation and celebration of the Feast, itself.

The Gospel readings prescribed for the four Sundays preceding Lent present us with themes of repentance and humility, of judgment and forgiveness. The parable of the Publican and the Pharisee (Lk. 18:10-14) reminds us that boasting of our accomplishments wins no favor with God, but that He hears the humble and contrite of heart. *Everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled; and he who humbles himself shall be exalted.* From the parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32) we learn that God is a loving Father, always ready to receive, forgive, and reward repentant sinners, and that we must all share His joy at their conversion and return. *We must celebrate and rejoice, for your brother was dead and has come to life again, he was lost and has been found.* After commemorating all the faithful departed and being reminded of the fragility of this life and of our own coming demise, we hear Jesus' description of the Last Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46) – an event we will contemplate again in the context of Holy Week – and we tremble at His words: *"What you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me."* *And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.*

Then, having been exhorted (Mt. 6:14-21) not to fast for the acclaim of men, but to fast in secret so as to receive reward from God, and having been admonished, *If you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours, but if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your offenses,* with a service of mutual forgiveness, we set out upon the course of the Great Fast.

Lent is a pilgrimage, a forty-day journey to a known destination. Already at daily Divine Liturgy during the two weeks preceding its outset,

we have heard the Passion narratives of St. Mark and St. Luke; our goal is a worthy celebration of these saving events in their fullness at Holy Week. We pray our asceticism along the way will turn us away from sin, move us to repent of our failings, and see us to our destination well disposed to contemplate its holy mysteries.

The fast is severe, and, on the weekdays, we are deprived of the Divine Liturgy, indeed, of any reading from the New Testament, as well. Instead, we read daily from Genesis, Proverbs, and Isaiah; on Wednesdays and Fridays we console ourselves with Holy Communion and the beauties of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts; and the poetic texts of the Offices each day bring many remembrances of the Gospels of the preceding weeks.

On Saturdays and Sundays the Divine Liturgy returns, as do the sweet words of the New Testament, and the fast is mitigated with wine and oil – symbols of joy and mercy. Strengthened by the respite, we resume our journey, marking its progress, and begging the Lord to see us through successfully, repentant and ready to witness the events that wrought our salvation. In due course, having persevered with the Lord's help, we come to the resurrection of Lazarus (Jn. 11:1-45) and our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. We hear St. Matthew's (21:1-11, 15-17) account of the event at Matins and, at Divine Liturgy, that of St. John (12:1-18). And we plunge into the intensity of Holy Week.

The Gospels, silent during the week throughout the six weeks of Lent, now dominate the daily Services. Extensive Gospel readings at Bridegroom Matins and the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday – mostly from Matthew, but also supplemented by Luke and John – insert us into the midst of Our Lord's last days before His Passion. Additionally, following Eastern monastic custom, we hear on these days a continuous reading of the Gospels – through the twelfth chapter of St. John's account – at the Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours.

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At Matins on Holy Thursday we hear St. Luke's account (Lk. 22:1-39) of the Last Supper, and at the Vesperal Liturgy of the Lord's Supper, through the words of a Gospel Cento, drawn from St. Matthew, St. Luke, and St. John, we walk with the Lord through the final hours before He is handed over to Pilate. The Twelve Gospel readings on the morning of Good Friday manifest for us in sequence every detail of Christ's Passion and death as recounted by each of the Evangelists. The Gospels of the Royal Hours (Mk. 15:16-41; Lk. 23:32-49; Jn. 18:28-19:37) bring us again, more briefly, to Jesus' trial before Pilate and His crucifixion.

At the Vespers of the Entombment on Good Friday evening the Gospel Cento again bears witness to the events in the words of St. Matthew (27:1-61) augmented by St. Luke (23:39-43) and St. John (19:31-37). As we venerate the Shroud – a banner bearing the image of the crucified Christ laid out for burial – with the reality of the Lord's passion and death seared into our minds, we share in the grief and loss of His mother, disciples, and friends, who could have had little inkling of what was yet to come.

At Compline we gather around the Shroud to sing the Canon of the Lamentations of the Blessed Virgin, and we are there again on Saturday morning to sing Psalm 118 (119) with funereal interverses. As day is breaking, at the Service's end, we hear of the guard being placed at Jesus' tomb (Mt. 27:6-66). But we have also heard Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (37:1-14), and St. Paul (I Cor. 5:6-8; Gal. 3:13-14) tells us that Christ is the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for the whole world. The church then remains in silent hope throughout the day, as we prepare for the Evening Service.

At that evening's Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great – the Service in which catechumens are traditionally baptized and converts received into the Church through Chrismation – after listening to fifteen readings from the Old Testament, we hear St Paul (Rom. 6:3-11) tell us that, dying with Christ through Baptism, we also share in His Resurrection and must live now in newness of life. Then, after the triumphant singing of verses from Psalm 81 (82), we listen to the final chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. We hear the joyful news given to the women by the angel at the tomb: *He is not here. He is risen, as He said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid.* And the Lord's own words: *Behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*

You shattered the brazen gates of Hades,  
 O Christ God,  
 and broke asunder its fetters,  
 and You raised up the fallen race of man.  
 With one accord, therefore, we cry out:  
 O Lord, who arose from the dead,  
 glory be to You!

From Vespers  
 Bright Tuesday

Our joy at the announcement remains restrained and peaceful. St. Basil's Divine Liturgy proceeds in its slow, solemn fashion. The Shroud remains enshrined on its bier in the midst of the temple, and the faithful do not yet greet one another with shouts of **Christ is risen!** The

exuberance is yet to come.

At the Midnight Office, in the darkness before the dawn, we again gather around the Shroud to sing the Canon of Holy Saturday. Near the end of the Canon the priests remove the Shroud from the bier, carry it into the sanctuary, and place it on the altar, where it will remain for forty days – until the Feast of the Lord's Ascension into heaven. All the lights are now extinguished except for one lamp in the sanctuary, and we wait in darkness. Then all the doors of the iconostasis are opened, and a priest emerges, arrayed in festal vestments and carrying a lighted candle. The faithful light their candles from his and process out of the church to the narthex, where they gather before the main doors.

When all has been readied, the priest raps on the doors with a blessing cross, and they swing open. Then the jubilant Paschal Troparion rings out again for the first time since the previous Eastertide. Entering the church, ablaze with lamps and candles, fragrant and shimmering with incense, the faithful bring in the dawn, singing the Paschal Troparion in countless repetitions, proclaiming their ecstatic joy at the Resurrection.

The joy cannot be contained in one celebration. It overflows and remains with us. As it was preceded by seven weeks of fasting – Holy Week and the forty days of Lent – Pascha is prolonged by seven weeks of feasting. Having reached the goal of our pilgrimage, we bask in its brightness during the Great Fifty Days until Pentecost. During this time there is no fasting, and, because of the joy and triumph of the Resurrection, kneeling and prostrations have been excluded from the Services since the First Council of Nicaea (325 AD).

We repeat the paschal texts through the first week of the period, and the doors of the iconostasis remain open, symbolizing Christ's reopening of Paradise for us by His Resurrection. Nor, during this Bright Week, do we celebrate any Service for the departed or commemorate them in the litanies. Death has been conquered, all trial and sorrow is now subsumed in Paschal joy, and all things begin anew.

Divine Liturgy is again celebrated every day. The jubilant Paschal Troparion, **Christ is risen from the dead...**, stands at the Head of every Service for the forty days until the Feast of our Lord's Ascension into heaven, and the faithful greet one another: **Christ is risen! He is truly risen!** The reading of the Acts of the Apostles

and of the Gospel of St. John, which began at Liturgy on Pascha morning, continues, with few exceptions, until Pentecost. On the Sunday after Pascha, called Thomas Sunday because of its appointed Gospel reading (Jn. 20:19-31), we begin again the eight-week cycle of tones for the daily services. This Sunday, also known as New Sunday, is a renewal of the Paschal celebration and the prototype for all the Sundays of the year, each one a reiteration of Paschal joy.

Following the chronology provided by St. Luke (Acts 1:3), the Church celebrates our Lord's Ascension into heaven on the fortieth day, a Thursday, after Pascha. This commemoration of the last event of our Lord's life on earth is also an occasion of triumph and joy.

When He descended and confused tongues,  
the Most High divided the Nations,  
but when He divided the Tongues of Fire,  
He called all men to unity:  
therefore, with one accord,  
we glorify the Most Holy Spirit!

*Kontakion of Pentecost*

The only begotten Son and Word of God chose to take flesh of the Virgin Mary, becoming a man like us in all things except sin. Remaining consubstantial with the Father in His divine nature, in His human nature He became consubstantial with

us. In the flesh he suffered crucifixion and death, and on the third day rose again, a man with flesh and bones who ate and drank with his disciples. In rising to new life, He did not leave His humanity behind, nor did he do so when He ascended to His rightful glory. In Christ, human nature – though fallen through the sin of Adam – is now raised up from its corruption and sits at the right hand of the Father. In so far as we remain united to Him, the seat is ours, as well.

Serenely, then, in the growing brightness of days lengthening into summer, we happily await the Holy Spirit's descent upon the Apostles at Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit is never absent from our celebrations, of course; indeed, He is noted at



the beginning of the Great Fifty Days, as well as at the end. Already, at Vespers on the evening of Pascha, we hear in the Gospel reading (Jn. 20:19-25) how the risen Lord breathed out the Holy Spirit on the Apostles for the sacramental forgiveness of sins. At Pentecost we celebrate His descent upon the Apostles for the life and growth of Christ's body, the Church. He comes now as a seal upon the whole work of salvation accomplished by the Son of God, empowering the Apostles to become unwavering preachers of the Gospel and champions of the Faith. Through His grace, the Church – whose first flowering is chronicled in the readings from the Acts of the Apostles we have been hearing at Divine Liturgy throughout this holy season – comes to birth and is preserved and guided to down through the ages.

Thus it is fitting that, on the Sunday between Ascension and Pentecost, we honor the memory of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. These holy bishops, many of whom had suffered for the Faith during the Great Persecution, assembled at Nicaea in 325 AD in response to the Church's first great challenge by heresy. The Creed they forged under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as a concise statement of the Church's faith remains the rule of orthodoxy for most Christians and is recited in our churches to this very day.

So, too, is it fitting that, on the Sunday after Pentecost, we remember all the Saints, holy men and women, known and unknown, of every time and place, who have kept the Faith and done the Lord's will. The work of the Holy Spirit, begun in the preaching of the Apostles, continues in the Church down to our days. It is manifested most brightly in holiness of life among the faithful.

In the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost, the Byzantine tradition sees the definitive revelation of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit, who came upon the Virgin Mary, overshadowing her with the power of the Most High for the Incarnation of Christ (Lk. 1:35), and who descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove at His Baptism (Mt. 3:16-17; Mk. 1:10-11;

Lk. 3:22; Jn. 1:32-34) for His revelation as God's Son, is now Himself manifested in the full power of His divinity, equal in dignity with the Father and the Son.

The Byzantine Church is profoundly Trinitarian in her outlook. She closes most of her liturgical prayers with a doxology of the Holy Trinity, and she is especially careful to remember that the three Divine Persons are equally God and co-eternal, with the Father serving as the principle of unity among them; they are one in nature, will, and action, working always in concert with one another. The texts of Pentecost Sunday celebrate the Trinity as much as they recall the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. Pentecost Monday is observed as the feast of the Holy Spirit, Himself.

Pascha is the greatest feast celebrated by the Church on earth. Together with Pentecost, it illuminates the Great Fifty Days with a double brightness that radiates throughout the year. We perceive it most strongly each week at the Sunday Services. Paschal texts pervade Great Vespers and Matins; the latter bears the form of a joyful Easter Service with the reading of a Resurrection narrative from one of the Gospels at its heart.

We never lose sight of this joy that animates our faith. We are reminded throughout Lent that celebrating the Resurrection is our goal, and its light remains with us during the intensity of Holy Week. Even on Good Friday, and on Holy Saturday as we sing the Lamentations at the Tomb, it sometimes glimmers through the solemn texts. The light of Christ, risen from the dead, shines ever in our minds and hearts.

Fittingly, at each Divine Liturgy throughout the year, as a prayer of thanksgiving after Holy Communion, we sing a text taken from the Vespers of Pentecost:

**We have seen the true light and received the heavenly Spirit; we have found the true faith, worshipping the undivided Trinity that has saved us.**

# The Beauty of His House



We removed the furnishings of our parlor to storage, re-erected the iconostasis that had once stood there, and returned the space to its former use as a chapel. By November first we had vacated the church and resumed Services in our old location.

In late summer of last year, with the **Jampot** season in full swing and the major infrastructure improvement of its septic system still only half complete, we marked the thirtieth anniversary of our arrival on this shore. In celebration of the occasion, we held a special Divine Liturgy of thanksgiving and dedicated the carillon that had recently been installed in the bell tower of the monastic church. The carillon had been planned from the beginning of design work on the church a dozen years before, and much generosity during the course of a yearlong fundraising effort had at last made its installation possible. The melodious beauty of its inaugural recital that Sunday afternoon seemed a fitting close to our first three decades of monastic life in this holy place.

Almost immediately, we plunged into the work of decade number four.

Construction of the new septic system resumed with excavations at the lower end of the **Jampot** parking lot after the shop closed in late October. At the same time, we began preparations for a badly needed repainting of the interior of our monastic church.

After ten years in the church, we had forgotten just how small the old chapel was. With only a third the floor space, the stalls nearly overwhelmed the choir, and there was barely room to move around the altar. Moreover, the community was a third larger than when we had last celebrated there, and we were now regularly getting some fifteen or twenty people joining us for Divine Liturgy each Sunday. Everyone seemed to take the crowding in stride, however, and we quickly adjusted to singing in the much less resonant space. Besides, there was a certain charm to the candlelight, which the room's lack of lighting fixtures necessitated at Vespers and Matins during this dark time of year. We were grateful, nonetheless, for the work's completion and our return - in time for Christmas - to the familiar space of the now transfigured church



In contrast to the uniform off-white it had originally been painted, the church's new coloring is bold and vivid. Inspired by hues already present in the tiles of the floor, the deep pallet provides a good background for the monastery's collection of icons and for the paintings that will adorn the church's upper walls. A bright band encircles the nave at the height of the iconostasis cornice and separates the earthy red of the lower area from the marine blues of the upper register of windows and future murals. Golden glazed walls adorn the apse and dome of the church and enhance the sunlight streaming into these areas symbolic of heaven.

The introduction of color into the church constitutes the first step in its long delayed decoration. Even before commencement of the background painting, we were in discussion with a local artist concerning the murals. Work on the first canvas – a seven by eleven foot depiction of

the Archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael – is now underway, and the painting should be ready for installation by mid-summer. Its prominent location, on the western end of the north wall, directly opposite the main doors, will serve to remind pilgrims immediately upon entering the temple of the heavenly incorporeal powers that join with us there in worship of our Triune God.

The painting will be the first of many. Ultimately murals will adorn all the upper walls of the church, providing instruction and manifesting the beauty of God's house. The entire cycle will take some years to complete. We are committed to see it through to the end, that this holy temple might be an ever more worthy vessel of the Lord's praise.

We are grateful for the generosity that has made undertaking the project possible at this time, and we trust the Lord will continue to provide the means for its successful completion.





## At the Jampot

For the first time in quite a number of years winter arrived when – from long experience – we have come to expect it. By Thanksgiving several inches of snow blanketed the ground, and it continued to accumulate from then on. Although snow removal consumed more of December’s time than in the recent past, we were grateful that no severe storms disrupted the timely shipping of our many Christmas orders.

Post-season production had gone well, and orders proved not significantly greater than anticipated; we were able to close the kitchen before the first of the year. Additional production would have been impossible in any case, as the septic hauler was unable to pump the tanks when the temperature stayed consistently below twenty degrees. The contractor, however, continued to lay stone and drainpipe in all but the most severe of weather, and the drain field was in place and awaiting the installation of pumps before the season’s worst arrived. Final landscaping is yet to come, but the system is now operational, and we look forward to a less complicated season ahead.

We have often said that winter is our cloister wall. Certainly, this year’s severe weather kept trips into town at a minimum, occasionally – notably on Holy Thursday – it prevented people from making it to Services, and it brought about the cancellation of at least one retreat. Winter

still proved a busy time, however, with extended retreats by priests from three different dioceses, several overnight visits by local clergy, a trip out of the area for a conference, and attendance – a few days after our return – at the festivities surrounding the Consecration and installation of the new Bishop of Marquette. We found ourselves almost relieved at the return of **Jampot’s** relatively stable routine.

Winter was still very much in evidence when **Jampot** opened its doors on May second. Although it was mostly gone from around the building, snow still shrouded the edges of the parking lot and remained abundant in the woods; much shoveling had been necessary to clear the way for deliveries a few days previous. The melt has progressed slowly since then, sparing us the flooding we feared winter’s heavy snowfall might bring. The days have been cool, and we have seen more rain than is usual for May, but spring is unmistakably here; we look forward to the greening and the return of summer’s busy days.

We hope to see you during the coming months. The reappearance of so many good friends is always one of **Jampot’s** greatest joys. If, however, you will be unable to visit us this season, or if you just want to anticipate the time, we commend your attention to the shippable items listed on the following pages.

HOLY TRANSFIGURATION SKETE  
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# Hope Springs Eternal

Spring always finds us unabashedly filled with hope. Water, freed at last from winter's icy grip, dripping from rock and moss and root, fills swales, swells creeks, and tumbles, rushing and roaring, down the gorges to the resurgent Lake. Waves again lap or crash against our shore, bare branches put forth buds, and shoots spring up from the emergent earth. All around, nature corroborates liturgical celebration; its quickening proclaims the triumph of life: **Christ is risen! He is truly risen!**

As a rigorous Lent promotes an exuberant Pascha, so a severe winter ushers in an exhilarating spring. The winter just past was one of the most severe in recent memory, and its departure was long and lingering; all the more precious, then, are the signs of new life we now see peeking out. In many ways, the whole of 2013 proved to be the most distressing of the thirty years we had so far seen in this difficult and beautiful place; welcome, indeed, are the glimmers – though yet unfulfilled – of better things to come.

We hope, in particular, that the favorable outcome of last year's frustrating experience with the design and permitting of the new septic system – coupled with a newfound flexibility on the part of local government – might indicate a way forward from **Jampot's** expansion deadlock of

the past seven years. Our initiative in mid-March received a guardedly positive verbal response, but nothing was cast in writing. Six weeks later our attorney managed to ascertain exactly what the Township's chosen bureaucratic procedure would demand, so that we, in turn, might determine whether or not we could, in good conscience, comply. Thus, negotiations have only just begun, but we take the professed willingness to talk as a definite sign of hope. Meanwhile, our appeal of the Township's Stop Work Order wends its way through the State courts toward a probable hearing in the coming months.

We ask your prayers for a reasonable solution to this longstanding and debilitating impasse. May the Lord bring it to resolution in such a way that neither party feels itself the loser and that good relations and future harmony follow in its train. Given past history, this seems a very big order, indeed, and perhaps only a farfetched hope. But spring reassures us in so many ways that hope is never in vain.

For the rest, know that we also continue to pray for you, who remain so much a part of this monastery's life and mission. We look forward to seeing you again as the Lord provides. God grant us all a happy, peaceful and productive summer.