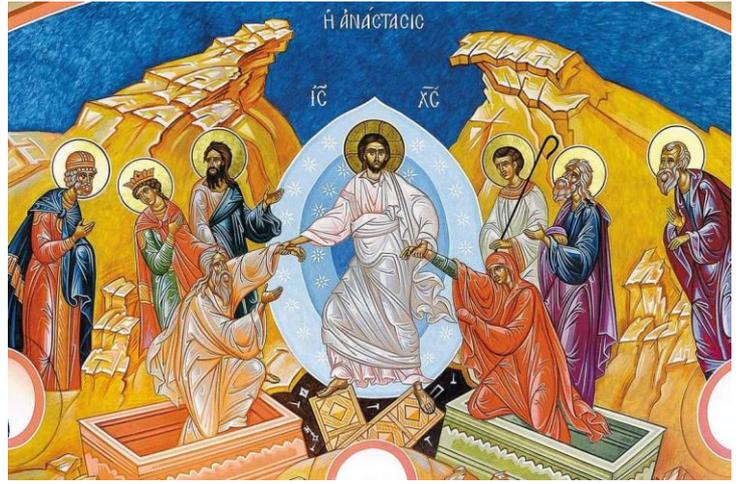


St Aidan's Manchester - Great and Holy Week and Pascha 2026



Great and Holy Monday:	6 th April	8.00 pm	Bridegroom Matins
Great and Holy Tuesday:	7 th April	8.00 pm	Bridegroom Matins
Great and Holy Wednesday:	8 th April	8.00 pm	Holy Unction (Healing) Service
Great and Holy Thursday:	9 th April	8.00 pm	Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil
Great and Holy Friday:	10 th April	9.00 am	Matins with 12 Gospels
		3.00 pm	Vespers (Deposition from the Cross)
		8.00 pm	Matins (Lamentations)
PASCHA (Saturday night to Sunday morning)	11 th / 12 th April	6.00 pm	Great Vespers
		7.15 pm	Baptisms / Chrismations
		8.15 pm	Acts of the Apostles
		9.45 pm	Night Office
		10.15 pm	The Light of the Resurrection
		10.30 pm	The Paschal Procession
		10.45 pm	Paschal Matins
		12.00 am	Paschal Divine Liturgy
		1.30 am	Paschal Agape Meal (Bring and Share)

Please bring food to share after the Paschal Liturgy.

Note:

1. Please come to as many services as possible at this holy time. The cross must come before the resurrection, both in our personal lives and our liturgical lives.
2. The light of the resurrection is received between 10.15 pm and 10.30 pm, NOT midnight. The Paschal Liturgy starts at approximately 12 midnight and this must be the priority for all Orthodox Christians. With the old timing, too many people (mostly those who irregularly attended church) received the light and then promptly left, well before the Paschal Liturgy began. This is unacceptable.
3. Vesperal Liturgies are appointed for the evening, (hence “vesperal”), not in the morning! For spurious reasons of convenience, all the services of Great and Holy Week got moved 12 hours earlier centuries ago, thus creating a “semi-paschal” Liturgy on Saturday morning ... mainly because some people were not attending the night vigil. The timings above restore the original integrity of the services at their appointed times with ONE Liturgy at Pascha, not two!

St Aidan's Manchester - Great and Holy Week and Pascha 2026

A Guide to Holy Week in the Orthodox Church

The Services of Great and Holy Week are many and a rich source of salvation in our lives through the power and operation of the Holy Spirit. Through them we become more closely conformed to Christ through whom we receive the death destroying life of Pascha from the Father. Here follows a very short guide to the services we shall celebrate this year.

On Great and Holy Monday and Tuesday we serve the Bridegroom Matins. This puts our hearts in readiness to receive Christ the Bridegroom who will come perhaps when we least expect. We must always be prepared to greet him by watchfulness and prayer.

On Great and Holy Wednesday evening we serve the Unction Service of Healing. Hearing the 7 gospels and imploring the healing grace of Christ we are anointed and made whole.

On Great and Holy and Thursday at the Liturgy we celebrate our Lord's Institution of the Eucharist in the Vespereal Liturgy. *(NOTE: We serve all Vespereal Liturgies in the evenings).*

On Great and Holy Friday at Matins we proclaim the 12 Passion Gospels. In this service the holy and life giving cross is installed in the nave. (This service is served on Holy Friday morning). At **Vespers** (mid-afternoon) we take down the image of our Lord from the Cross and place it in a white shroud in the altar. Shortly afterwards the burial epitaphion is solemnly processed into the nave where the icon of the crucified Christ is venerated with great devotion. At **Matins** later in the same evening, we sing the solemn but joyful funeral chant for our Lord and process with his icon in the epitaphion outside the Church. The people walk under the epitaphion as they come into Church to signify that through the cross they have passed from death to life. They then venerate the gospel book and receive a flower from the epitaphion (venerated at the end of the service).

Great and Holy Saturday sees the beginning of the Paschal Vigil - We begin to celebrate the resurrection victory of Christ our God and particularly see this as a fulfilment of the great promise of redemption in the Law and the Prophets proclaimed in the Old Testament Readings. The vestments are all changed from purple to white/gold at the beginning of the Paschal Vigil. Baptisms and /or chrismations often take place in this service after the Vespereal part.

After Vespers and the Baptisms, we read from the **Acts of the Apostles**. Pascha marks the beginning of the new Israel of God, the Church. We then serve the **Night Office** which prepares us to enter into the joy of the Paschal victory. Afterwards we process around the temple, enter and celebrate the resurrection with "**Christ is Risen!**" in many languages - concluding with the famous **Paschal Homily of St. John Chrysostom**. There then follows **Paschal Matins and the Paschal Liturgy**. *You should not go home at this point but rather stay for the Liturgy.* The **Agape Party** follows the morning Paschal Liturgy. There are no other services on Sunday later in the day. You may need to sleep in!

Fr Gregory, Fr Emmanuel, Fr Daniel, Fr Stauros and Fr Deacon Alexey