

The celebration of Holy Pascha in the Metropolis of Austria



With the Vespers of Love, this year's cycle of liturgical events for Holy and Great and Holy Week and Holy Pascha came to an end, marked by the overwhelming participation of the faithful, whose presence enriched the services of the local Church.

In his Paschal message, His Eminence Metropolitan Arsenios of Austria and Exarch of Hungary urged the faithful to experience the Divine Passion and Resurrection as a living presence and participation in the light of the Resurrection. The parishes of the Holy Metropolis of Austria and the Exarchate of Hungary offered the faithful many liturgical opportunities so that this call would not remain a wish or an expectation, but would become a lived reality and a testimony of Christ's love for humanity and the world.

The schedule of Holy Services had been announced on the website of the Holy Metropolis since the last Sunday of Lent, and the faithful either attended the

services in their place of residence or traveled to nearby cities in the region. Bridegroom services were celebrated in all the parishes of Austria, with the faithful embracing the efforts of the clergy and singers of the Metropolis.

In Vienna, all the prescribed services were held at the Holy Church of St. George the Great Martyr, with Metropolitan Arsenios and Bishop Maximos of Aristi presiding from Palm Sunday evening through Holy and Great Thursday, concluding with the Service of the Holy Passion. On Holy and Great Friday, the Service of the Royal Hours, the Taking down of Christ from the Cross and the Lamentations at the Tomb were held in the Holy Trinity Cathedral. During the procession of the Epitaphios, the faithful filled Fleischmarkt Street as the procession passed the Cathedral and continued down Rotenturm Street, where the police temporarily regulated traffic to allow the procession to reach the Church of St. George. As in all services, the Byzantine Choir of the Holy Metropolis of Austria chanted the hymns of Holy and Great Week and the Lamentations in alternating choirs, according to tradition.

On Holy and Great Saturday Vespers and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great were celebrated according to the rite of the "First Resurrection". Bishop Maximos of Aristi concelebrated with the Metropolitan and also visited the Ukrainian-speaking parishes of the Metropolis. Meanwhile, services were also held in the German-speaking parish of St. John Chrysostom.

On the night of Holy and Great Saturday, the Vigil of the Resurrection was celebrated in the Holy Trinity Cathedral in Vienna, with the participation of the German-speaking parish. The clergy and laity once again went to the courtyard of St. George's Church on Greek Street, where the Holy Gospel was read and the Resurrection Hymn was joyfully sung in the presence of a large gathering of the faithful. This was followed by the traditional festive Divine Liturgy of the Resurrection in the Cathedral, which lasted until the early hours of the morning.

The celebration concluded with the Great Hierarchical Vespers of Love, during which the Gospel of the Resurrection of the encounter between Christ and Thomas was read in several languages. At the end of the service, Metropolitan Arsenios expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Auxiliary Bishops Paisios of Apamea and Maximos of Aristi for their assistance in coordinating the parishes, to the clergy for their faithful adherence to the schedule and for serving the spiritual needs of the faithful through the Sacrament of Holy Confession throughout Holy and Great Week. He also thanked the choir for once again beautifully singing the sacred hymns of the Church.

On behalf of the clergy, Bishop Maximos of Aristi expressed his gratitude to the

Metropolitan, emphasising his care in staffing and strengthening the parishes, in establishing parishes for refugees, and in providing spiritual guidance so that the faithful people of God may find rest and spiritual growth.

The Holy Metropolis of Austria and Exarchate of Hungary, proclaiming the joyful message of the Resurrection, wishes that the Lord may be the helper and guide of all throughout their lives.

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