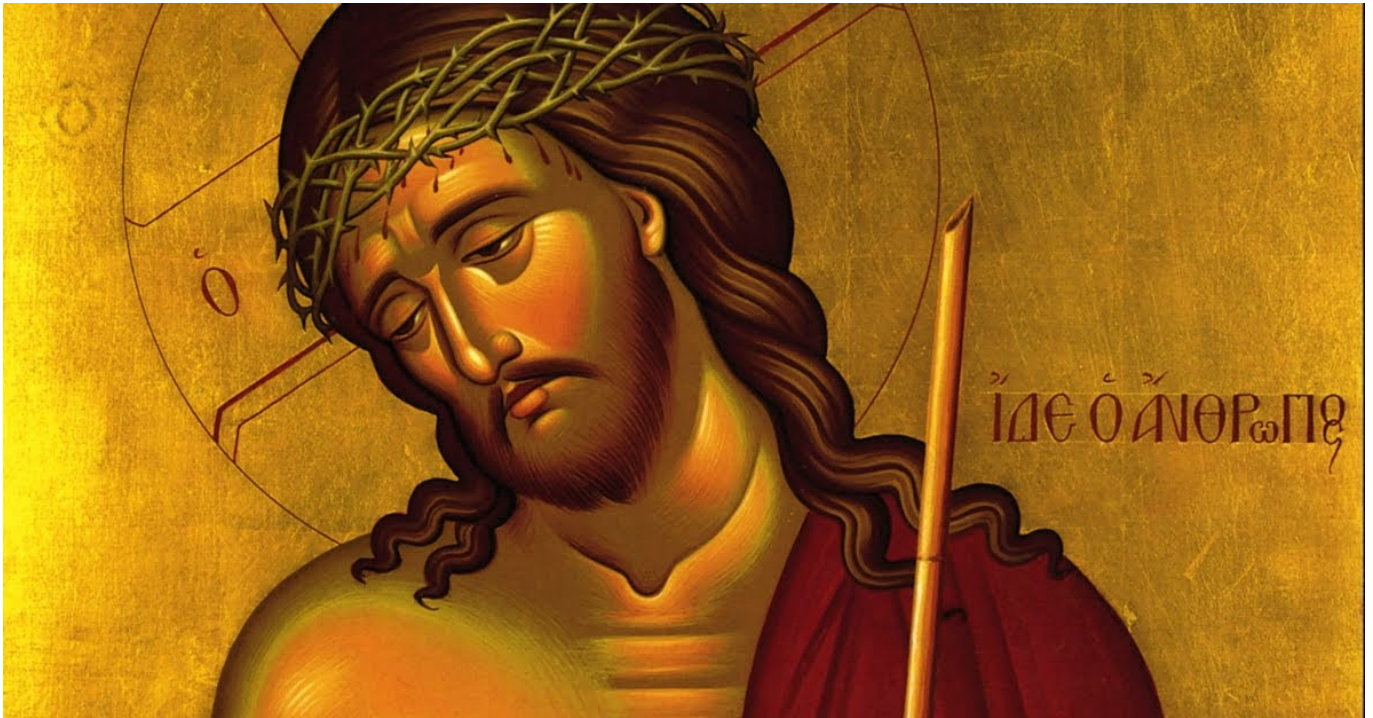
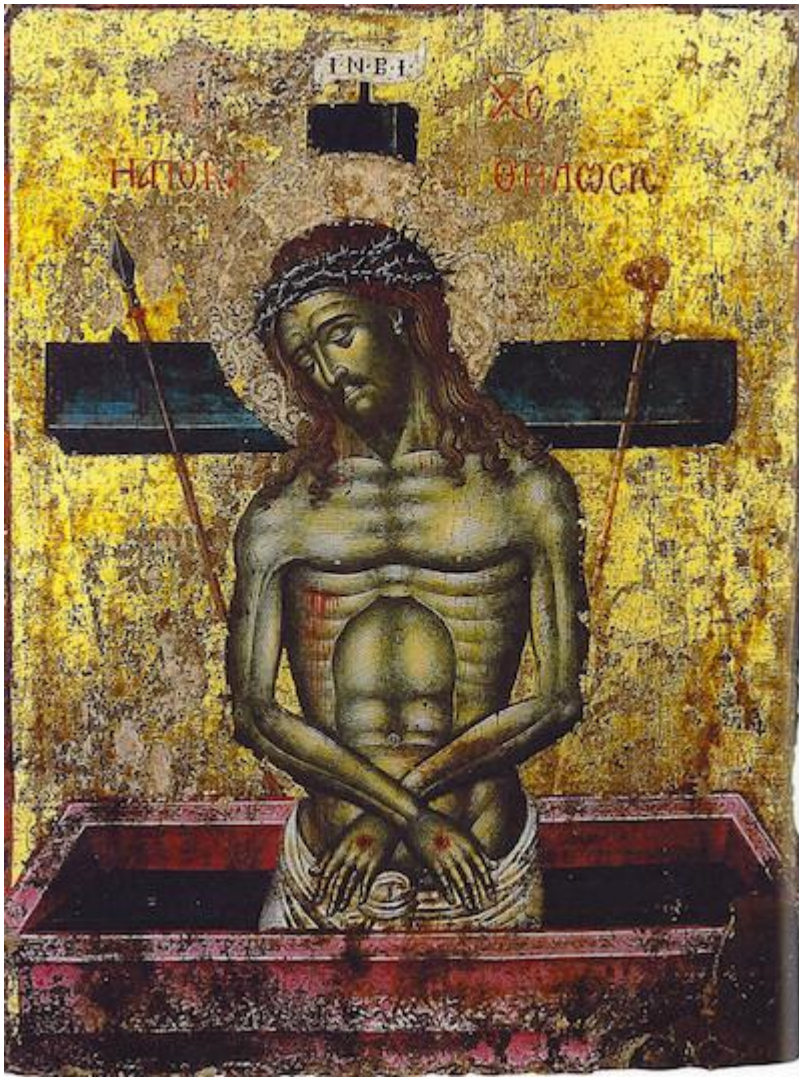


## Great and Holy Friday the culmination of Passion of Jesus



Orthodox Churches around the world and Eastern Orthodox faithful observed Great and Holy Friday, the climax of the Passion of Jesus.

Orthodox Churches on this day display the icon known as the “The Extreme Humility.” This icon depicts the crucified dead body of Christ upright in the Tomb with the Cross in the background. It combines the two awesome events of Great Friday – the crucifixion and burial of Christ.



Orthodox Churches also display an icon of the Crucifixion of Christ — shown nailed to the Cross. His right side is pierced and from the wound flows blood and water. At the foot of the Cross is a skull. (Golgotha, the Mount of the Crucifixion, means “the place of the skull.”) Tradition related that the Cross of Christ stood directly over the grave of our Forefather Adam. On the top bar of the Cross is the inscription “I.N.B.I.”, the initials for the Greek words meaning “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

To the left of Christ, the Theotokos and St. Mary Magdalene are often pictured as well; the youthful St. John the Beloved Disciple and St. Longinus the Centurion (Mark 15:39) are shown to the right if they are depicted.

Another icon that depicts the events of Holy Friday is known as the Epitaphios Thrinos. In this icon, Christ has been taken off of the Cross, and His body is being prepared for burial. Shown around the body and mourning His death are His mother, the Theotokos and Virgin Mary, John the beloved disciple, Joseph of Arimathea, and Mary Magdelene.

In addition to these icons, Orthodox churches process with and display a large wooden Crucifix with an image of Christ attached. At the Vespers on Friday, the image of Christ is removed from the Cross and wrapped in a white cloth. Another icon, one that depicts the body of Christ removed from the Cross, appears on the Epitaphios (decorated bier) that is carried and placed in the Tomb during this service.

View the Passion of Christ, the cell, Golgotha, or Calvary and the Via Dolorosa, the services from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the lighting of the Holy Light from the webpages of the Orthodoxia news agency.

The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, His All Holiness Bartholomew I, on Holy Thursday co-presided over the Matins, Vespers and the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, with Synod Metropolitans co-presiding.

The lights in the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George and at entire Patriarchate compound were then switched off during the procession of the Epitaphios, with only the candles of the faithful illuminating.

In Cairo, members of the Greek Orthodox community observed the Passion of Jesus on Holy Thursday at the Egyptian metropolis' main Orthodox cathedral.