



# An Educational Summary for the Holy Pascha

(Biblically - Ecclesiastically – Spiritually)

Pope Tawadros II



**His Holiness**

**Pope Tawadros the Second**

**Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark**

## Introduction

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

**Our lives revolve around three components during the Holy Pascha:**

### **I. Readings:**

Readings answer the question: How did Jesus Christ live through the Holy Pascha? This is explained through the events of the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

### **II. Chants and Rites:**

Chants and rites answer the question: How does the church live during the Holy Pascha? And that is through the unique and distinct rituals and chants practiced by the Church during this week, with unparalleled creativity.

### **III. Spiritualities:**

These answer the question: How do we believers live during the Holy Pascha? In deep spiritual experiences and deep heartfelt connection with Jesus Christ who suffered on our behalf. And what these holy days leave in our lives throughout the whole year.

This (educational brief) briefly explains historical events, church rituals, and spiritual exercises that help you achieve the desired spiritual benefit from these holy days in all of our lives.

**Pope Tawadros II**

## I- Readings: What has happened?

### I. Last Friday of the Holy Lent

Leading up to this day we fasted for 47 days from the beginning of the Holy Lent.

- **Seven days:** Preparation week.
- **Forty days:** Representing the forty days Jesus Christ fasted on our account and with us.

**The gospel of the liturgy Luke 13:31-35 on that day discusses:**

- 1- **the sin of deception:** Through the term "fox", by which Jesus described Herod the King.
- 2- **The repetitive lamentations of Jesus Christ:** ““O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate.” (Matthew 23:37-38).

In fact, the Temple (the house of the Jews) has become a ruin until this day. After it was destroyed in the year 70AD by the roman commander Titus.

### II. Lazarus Saturday

Liturgy Bible Reading: John 11:1-45

Jesus woke Lazarus from the dead after he was dead for four days even after he was described as putrefied (John 11:39). This Happened in the village of Bethany (the house of affliction).



Both the divinity and humanity were manifested “The one nature united of God the Incarnate Word” in this miracle. It was said:

- A) **“Jesus cried”** (John 11:35), manifesting his humanity.
- B) Jesus called Lazarus from the dead, **“Lazarus come out”** (John 11:43), manifesting the power of his divinity.

Lazarus had two sisters:

- Mary: who represents contemplation and spiritual solitude.
- Martha: who represents service and deeds.



The successful Christian has to combine both contemplation and service in his/her spiritual life. Because the middle way led to the salvation of many.

### III. Palm Sunday Eve

Jesus Christ visited the house of Simon the Leper, who made a feast in honour of Jesus for the waking of Lazarus from the dead. There Mary, Lazarus' sister, took a pound of very costly spikenard oil and anointed the feet of Jesus.

### IV. Palm Sunday

Jesus left Bethany in the morning and entered Jerusalem. On his way he saw Zacchaeus on the sycamore tree. And on this day Zacchaeus received his salvation Luke 19:1-10.



On the way to Jerusalem, he was met with multitudes chanting “Hosanna” (Son of David save us), “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.”, Jesus went back to Bethany in the evening (Luke 19:28-44), (Zechariah 9:9) ...

## V. Monday of the Holy Pascha

Jesus left Bethany to go to Jerusalem, where two events occurred:

- The cursing of the fig tree with no fruit but plenty of leaves.
- The expulsion of sellers and money-changers from the temple... which is the place of prayer, not of trade He said,



Jesus then went back to Bethany in the evening and spent the night there.

## VI. Tuesday of the Holy Pascha

Jesus left Bethany and went to Jerusalem. On the way disciples were astonished to see the fig tree withered.



Our fathers called this day “the day of questions and parables”

as **there were four groups of Jewish people who asked Jesus these questions:**

- **The Sanhedrin and they are the leaders:**

Questioned Jesus’ authority saying “By what authority are you doing these things? i.e. The authority to cleanse the temple

Jesus answered, “The baptism of John - where was it from? From heaven or from men?”  
(Matthew 21:23-27).

**(The ignorant question is answered by a question.)**

- **The Scribes and Pharisees:**

The word Pharisee means “devoted”, and they possess a high degree of knowledge.

Their question: “tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” (Matthew 22:17).

Jesus answered, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” (Matthew 22:21). These are heavenly obligations, and all municipalities are from God.

**(The deceptive question is answered with wisdom)**

- **The Sadducees:**

These are a group of people who don’t believe in the resurrection of the dead nor eternal life. They are the ones who planned how to dispose of Jesus. They asked Jesus, “In the resurrection, will people be married or give in in marriage?”.

Jesus answered them, all earthly bonds are non-existing in heaven.

**(The question aiming for knowledge is answered by teaching)**

- **The Lawyers:**

These follow the Law of Moses.

They asked Jesus, Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”. It was a wise question, but the intentions of the lawyers were to test Jesus.

Jesus answered, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself.”

(Luke 10:27)

**(The wise question is answered with a verse from the Bible).**

Tuesday is also the day of Parables in which three parables are mentioned:

- The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)
- The Parable of the Marriage Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)
- The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)



## VII. Wednesday of the Holy Pascha

Jesus stayed in Bethany all day. This day saw Judas Iscariot conspiring with the chief priests to deliver Jesus into their hands.

For the second time in the Holy Pascha, the anointment of Jesus Christ with fragrant oil occurred and it was as a healing balm for the wounded Jesus by the betrayal of the disciple.



## VIII. Thursday of the Holy Pascha

Jesus left Bethany and went to the house of Mary the mother of St Mark and there he did:

- The Last Supper
- The washing of the feet of the disciples
- The establishment of the Eucharist



He then left for Gethsemane and on the way he gave his farewell speech (John 13-17).

- ❖ In Gethsemane he prayed a very moving prayer and these are included in the three prayers of the midnight prayers of the Agpeya (John 17).
- ❖ At midnight, the chief priests, Roman soldiers and Judas Iscariot arrived in Gethsemane. Judas kissed Jesus to identify him to the Roman soldiers to capture him.
- ❖ Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, Malchus, cutting off his right ear. Jesus then restored Malchus' ear. (John 18:10)
- ❖ Jesus then foretold Peter's denial, "Most assuredly, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." (Mark 14:30).
- ❖ Jesus was taken by the high priest and tried illegally at night, as in that time legal trials had to be conducted during the day.



- ❖ In this night (Claudia Brucolia), Pilate's wife, suffers because of the trials of Jesus telling him: "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." (Matthew 27:19).

## IX. Good Friday

Among the six trials of Jesus three of them brought religious charges against him and three of them brought civil charges against him:

1. In front of the High Priest Caiaphas and Annas
2. The High Priests accused Jesus of Blasphemy
3. Infront of the Sanhedrin with accusations of breaking certain laws
4. Infront of Pilate
5. Infront of Herod
6. In front of Pilate again where he washed his hands of judgement and acted on the will of the people saying, "**I am innocent of the blood of this Just person**". He then released Barabbas the criminal from prison according to the will of the people.

Then the events are as follows:

- ❖ Putting the crown of thorns on Jesus, the mockeries and Jesus was whipped 39 times (Matthew 27:29).
- ❖ Along the way Jesus fell under the weight of the cross.
- ❖ Simon from Cyrene was compelled to carry the cross for him (Matthew 27:33).
- ❖ Jesus looked at the great multitude lamenting him and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28).
- ❖ Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified between two criminals on a hill called Golgotha, (Luke 23:33),
- ❖ The tradition says it is the burial site of Adam.

❖ On the cross Jesus uttered seven sentences:

- I. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34)
- II. “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43)
- III. “Woman, behold your son... Behold your mother!” (John 19:26-27)
- IV. “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46)
- V. “I thirst.” (John 19:28)
- VI. “It is finished.” (John 19:30)
- VII. “Father, ‘into Your hands I commit My spirit.” (Luke 23:46)



❖ Jesus Christ died on the cross and his human spirit separated from his body, but the divinity remained united to his humanity (the human spirit and the human body) and never separated even for a twinkle of an eye.

❖ His spirit then descended into Hades restraining Satan and freeing the spirits of his saints thus raising them with him to paradise (Matthew 27:52).

❖ A centurion by the name of Longinus pierced the side of Jesus with a spear and immediately blood and water came out (John 19:34).

❖ Due to these signs the centurion believed saying, “Truly this was the son of God.” (Matthew 27:54).

❖ The veil of the temple was then torn in two from top to bottom, the earth quaked, the rocks split, the graves were opened and the bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep arose (Matthew 27:51).

❖ Following the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea requested of Pilate permission to take Jesus’ body. After agreeing, Nicodemus brought about a hundred pounds of a mixture

of myrrh and aloes and then bound the body of Jesus with strips of linen and spices. Jesus was then buried in a new tomb carved by Joseph of Arimathea. The tomb was close to Calvary and this helped in finishing the burial procedures quickly before the Sabbath (John 19:38-42).



### IX. Joyous Saturday (Light Saturday)

During the Sabbath the Jews didn't do any kind of work. Jesus' tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers and a big rock blocked the entrance of the tomb.



### X. Easter Sunday

1. Mary Magdalene came and saw the tomb empty (John 20:1).
2. Peter and John his disciples came to look at the tomb (John 20:3).
3. The angel of the Lord told the two women: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, Emphasizing the truth of the resurrection (Matthew 28:



6).



### XI. Easter Sunday Evening

Jesus appeared to the 11 disciples who were scared and assembled in the upper room with the doors closed and said to them **“Peace to you”** (John 20:19).

### XII Easter Monday

Jesus appeared to two disciples from a village called Emmaus. Their names were Luke and Cleopas. They were travelling towards Emmaus and were talking about the events that

happened over the previous days. Jesus drew near and joined them and spoke to them, but their eyes were restrained and did not recognise him. Their eyes were then opened when he sat with them at a table and took bread, blessed, and broke it giving it to them. He then vanished from their sight (Luke 24:13-35).



## II- Chants: What are the rituals?

### I. Last Friday of the Holy Lent

- Early morning incense offering (prophesies and prostrates) as in all the holy lent days.
- Sacrament of the unction of the sick with seven prayers. Each prayer consists of:
  - Litany
  - Epistle
  - Psalm
  - Bible Reading
  - Requests

Prayer	Litany	Epistle	Psalm	Bible Reading
1 <sup>st</sup> Prayer	The Sick	James 5:10-20	6:1-2	John 5:1-17
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prayer	The Travellers	Romans 15:1-7	101:1-2	Luke 19:1-10
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prayer	Of the water, plants, and fruit	1 Corinthians 12:28- 13:8	37:1-2	Mark 10:1-8
4 <sup>th</sup> Prayer	Earthly Rulers	Romans 8:14-21	50:1-2	Luke 10:1-9
5 <sup>th</sup> Prayer	The Departed	Galatians 2:16-20	142:7	John 14:1-19

6 <sup>th</sup> Prayer	Oblations	Colossians 3:12-17	4:1	Luke 7:37-50
7 <sup>th</sup> Prayer	Catechumens	Ephesians 6:10-18	24:17-18	Matthew 6:14-18

## II. Lazarus Saturday

The mass is conducted according to the yearly rites in which the prophesies are read during early morning incense offering excluding prostrates.

### The evening of Lazarus Saturday

is prayed with joyous chants of Palm Sunday followed by a procession (Ef noty naynan).

## III. Morning of Palm Sunday

Early morning incense offering and the cross procession. The procession of the cross is conducted three times a year during:

- The feast of the cross on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September/ 17<sup>th</sup> of Toot.
- The feast of the cross on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March/ 10<sup>th</sup> of Baramhat.
- The feast of Jesus Christ entering into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday).

**The cross procession consists of twelve bible readings in twelve different places in the church:**

- i. In front of the church altar
- ii. In front of the icon of St Mary
- iii. In front of the icon of Archangel Gabriel
- iv. In front of the icon of Archangel Michael
- v. In front of the icon of St Mark the Evangelist
- vi. In front of the icon of the Apostles

- vii. In front of the icon of St George or any of the martyrs
- viii. In front of the icon of St Anthony
- ix. In front of the north gate of the church
- x. In front of the blessing of the water (Lakaan)
- xi. In front of the south gate of the church
- xii. In front of the icon of St John the Baptist

Incense is offered and the gospel of Zacchaeus the tax collector is read (Luke 19:1-10). This reading is read three times a year:

- i. On the third Sunday of the month of Toot.
- ii. On the last Friday of the Holy Lent during the sacrament of the Unction of the Sick.
- iii. On the morning of Palm Sunday.

This bible reading is also read during the sacrament of the Unction of the Sick and during the blessing of a new home.

**The Liturgy is conducted with joyous chants of Palm Sunday until the Bible litanies**

**then:**

- a) We pray two bible litanies: **The first** litany is followed by reading three chapters of the bible. **The second** litany is followed by reading of the fourth bible chapter.
- b) After discharging the Sacrifice Angel, the General Funeral prayers start according to the usual yearly rite.
- c) The Holy Pascha prayers start in the evening of Palm Sunday thus:
  - 1. Black curtains and coverings are set up around the church.
  - 2. We then proceed to the second Chorus and the church altar is left unattended because Jesus suffered outside Jerusalem.

3. No prayers are done for the departed as priority is given to the sufferings of Jesus Christ and it should be noted that the blessing of water at the end of the General Funeral is intended for the congregation and not the palms.
4. Agpeya prayers are not used because the psalms have prophecies regarding the incarnation, and we are concentrating on the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ.
5. The day is calculated from sunset of one day to the sunset of the following day.

#### **IV. Components of the Holy Pascha (Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday)**

Each hour of the morning and evening prayers consists of:

- i. Prophecies: Parts read from the Old Testament
- ii. Chant (Thok Te Te Gome) To you is the Power and Glory (12 times)
- iii. The Coptic psalm
- iv. Chant (Keh Eperto)
- v. Coptic Gospel Reading
- vi. Arabic/English Psalm
- vii. Arabic/English Gospel Reading
- viii. Commentary: Concise comments on the readings of the Pascha hour prayer
- ix. Two types of requests:
  - a. Morning: Accompanied by prostrates because we are fasting
  - b. Evening: No prostrates
- x. General Blessing

N.B. The day consists of 5 evening hours and 5 morning hours.

## V. Holy Thursday of the Holy Pascha Rites

### A) Early morning incense offering including Judas the betrayer's procession which involves:

1. The procession is conducted in a clockwise fashion rather than the traditional anticlockwise method. The clockwise procession is representative of earthly progression of time where the anticlockwise represents the heavenly. The procession is done only in the first Chorus.
2. The name of Judas is repeated six times signifying incompleteness
3. The chant is sung out of tune
4. The cymbals are reversed
5. No tonia (deacon attire) is worn
6. No priests walk in the procession. Incense and candles are also not used.

This is followed by the reading of Acts with the psalm and bible readings conducted in the sad tune. The prayers of the Holy Pascha hours follow (third, sixth, and ninth hours).

The prayers of **the blessing of the water** are performed for the second time in the year. The first time was during the Epiphany and is conducted a third time during the Liturgy of the Feast of the Apostles.

### B) The Liturgy of Holy Thursday is conducted without the following components:

- God have mercy (Kirieleison) 41 times during the offering of the lamb is omitted.
- Alleluia (Fay Beh Be)
- Sotes Amen
- The Catholic Epistle
- The Prayer of Reconciliation
- The Council

- Psalm 150

As Jesus Christ has not yet completed our redemption on the cross, these sections are omitted. During Holy Communion instead of Psalm 150 the prayers of the Eleventh Hour are read.

## **VI. Evening of Good Friday**

The Holy Pascha hourly prayers are prayed. Each prayer has four Gospel readings. We also add “My Lord and Saviour” to the “Thok Te Te Gome” chant.

## **VII. Good Friday**

In this day we pray the 6 prayers of the Pascha (the first, the third, the sixth, the ninth, the eleventh and the twelfth).

Each hour is read whole and separate.

### **In the sixth hour we pray:**

- “Tay Shory” is chanted. The chant explains the importance of the Virgin Mary in our hearts.
- Passages of the sixth hour ( as in the Agpeya) are said as normal in Coptic and English/Arabic.
- “Omonogenes” is chanted. This chant explains our doctrine.
- Agios is chanted during the offering of incense in front of the icon of the crucifixion.

The prayers of the Holy Pascha continue with the requests and prayers of the thief on the right hand of the crucified Jesus Christ. This is a prayer of repentance.

### **In the ninth hour**

- “Tay Shory” which is chanted for the Virgin Mary.

- Passages of the ninth hour are said as normal in Coptic and English/Arabic.

The prayer continues as usual.

### **In the eleventh hour**

It is prayed as usual without changes.

### **In the prayer of the twelfth hour**

- The Prayer of Lamentations of Jeremiah.
- “Thok Te Te Gome” is chanted alternating between choirs inside and outside the altar.
- 400 prostrates are completed, 100 in each of the cardinal directions (east, west, north, then south). Then the icon of the crucifixion is processed around the church.
- The burial is done while chanting the “Golgotha” chant, which is only done during this time of year.
- The psalms are read during these rituals

The whole prayer of Good Friday takes twelve continuous hours.

## **VIII. Evening of Joyous Saturday (Light Saturday)**

- The prayers start by reciting Psalm 151, “I am the young among my brothers”.
- A collection of wonderful praises from the Holy Bible are read.
- The story of the chaste Susanna.
- The whole book of Revelation (Apocalypse) is read followed by anointing with oil.
- The Agpeya is used during the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> hours to read the psalms only.
- The Mass of Joyous Saturday without the prayer of reconciliation and Psalm 150

**N.B.**

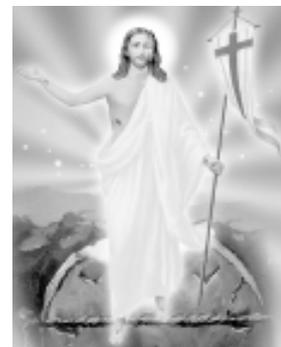
- The whole Gospel according to St Matthew is read after the morning prayer of Tuesday of the Holy Pascha.
- The whole Gospel according to St Mark is read after the early morning prayer of Wednesday of the Holy Pascha, also known as the Wednesday of Job. The mimar of Job (could be read after the prophecies of the sixth hour on Wednesday). Job symbolises Jesus Christ in his sufferings. During this time the conspiracy against Jesus Christ took place.
- The whole Gospel according to St Luke is read after the early morning prayer of Thursday of the Holy Pascha.
- The whole Gospel according to St John is read at the beginning of the evening of Easter Sunday before the Midnight prayers.

## IX. Easter Mass

Joyous chants, happy procession and holy remembrances are conducted.

This is one of the three masses conducted at night throughout the year (Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter).

Easter is celebrated for fifty days with joyous chants.



### III- Spiritualities: how do we live it?

#### I. Last Friday of the Holy Lent

The oil anointments during the general sacrament of the Unction of the Sick:

- On the forehead... God purify my thoughts
- On the front of the neck ...God make one's speech holy.
- On the hands ... God make one's deeds holy.



Jesus calls “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... Your house will be left desolate” (Matthew 23:37-38)

- We are to place our own names in the place of Jerusalem
- We are called to remove our stubborn selves, repent, and hear the call of Jesus Christ and his commandments.
- We are called to ask Jesus to give us the will to follow his commandments and follow them throughout our lives.

## **II. Lazarus Saturday**

Jesus Christ can do anything. He raised Lazarus from the dead after being dead for four days. He is still performing new miracles every day. He works with you and for you because he loves you.

## **III. Palm Sunday**

Jesus Christ is coming to your heart to reign over it, will you accept him?

**During that day we meet up with:**

- Humans (children)... a symbol of innocence
- Animals (Donkey)... a symbol of humility
- Plants (Palm)... a symbol of purity

These are descriptions of the spiritual person aiming for heaven.

## **IV. Monday of the Holy Pascha**

Avoid being a hypocrite, don't live a double life, let your inside and outside self be the same. Purge your heart from worldly unending worries which consume your life and deprives you from your heavenly inheritance.

## **V. Tuesday of the Holy Pascha**

- ❖ Be ready to receive your saviour and redeemer answering whoever asks you about the reason of the hope deep inside you.
- ❖ Fill your life with merciful and loving deeds for everyone so that you deserve eternal life like those wise virgins.

## **VI. Wednesday of the Holy Pascha**

- ❖ Avoid self-righteousness and do not be like Job.
- ❖ Avoid betraying Jesus like Judas.
- ❖ Live a faithful life like Mary who anointed Jesus with fragrant oil.

## **VII. Thursday of the Holy Pascha**

- ❖ The purification of the water ... Create a pure heart in me, and a new upright spirit within me.
- ❖ The liturgy ... This communion gives us salvation... forgiveness of sins... eternal life

## **VIII. Good Friday**

Go to your church and say with St Paul, “I’ve been crucified with Jesus” (Galatians 2:20).

This is what Jesus Christ did for you, what are you going to do for him?

## **IX. Joyous Saturday of the Holy Pascha**

Live with hope and joy, for after the cross there is resurrection. For every problem in your life there is a solution. Pope Shenouda III said, “I say to anyone going through a trial, God is present, everything is for good, eventually it will end”.

## **X. Easter Sunday**

Jesus is risen. Indeed, he is risen.

Jesus Christ was resurrected for you, be happy every day.

## **XI. Easter Monday**

Jesus Christ opened Paradise.

We go out and enjoy nature, we eat coloured eggs, salted fish, green vegetables, which all symbolise the resurrection and the opening of Paradise.

Be always joyful as this is a sign of a healthy spirituality.

