Eastern Orthodox Holy Friday

Orthodox Christians annually commemorate the death of Jesus Christ on this day, the Friday before Pascha (Easter). His death, by crucifixion on a cross in Jerusalem around 33 A.D., is recorded in the Christian Scriptures in Matthew chapter 27, Mark chapter 15, Luke chapter 23, John chapter 19, and is recognized throughout the Epistles – letters written mostly by St. Paul. This is also recorded in such Scriptures as Isaiah chapter 53, verses 5–6, and Romans chapter 5, verses 6–9. The (Eastern) Orthodox Christian Church does not use the term “Good Friday” but the term “Holy Friday” or “Great Friday” instead.

Date
- It is always commemorated on the Friday before Pascha, which means it is a moveable Holy Day. Christian Orthodox churches calculate the date according to the Julian calendar so the date usually occurs after the western observance.
- Link to Interfaith Calendar for year/date lookup.

Greetings
- There is no traditional greeting for this holiday; however, some Orthodox Christians say “Good Pascha” to each other in anticipation of the Resurrection to come on Sunday.

Common Practices and Celebrations
- Many Orthodox Christians commemorate the day by attending numerous church services and strict fasting.
- Orthodox Christians usually refrain from doing much work on this day in remembrance of Christ’s great sacrifice.

Common Dietary Restrictions
- Very strict fasting and limited food consumption.

Impact to U-M Community
- Link to U-M Guidance Regarding Conflicts.

U-M Campus Resources
- Maize Pages - Orthodox, U-M
- Association of Religious Counselors, U-M

Information Sources
- Time and Date, holidays
- Blue Letter Bible, Matthew 27
- Blue Letter Bible, Isaiah 53:5-6
- Blue Letter Bible, Romans 5:6-9

Photo credit: iStock/PenWin

Edited 12/15/2020