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**Easter traditions in Georgia**

To all of our friends in Georgia, Greece and other Orthodox countries, we will wait until Sunday, and then say: ‘’Christ is Risen!’’ To which you will undoubtedly respond: ‘’ Indeed He is Risen.’’

The week before Easter begins with Willow Sunday which Americans know as Palm Sunday. Special services are conducted in almost every church in Georgia, but particularly on Passion Thursday and Good Friday. Passion Thursday is connected to the Last Supper when Jesus Christ washed his apostles’ feet and when Judah betrayed him. Next Thursday, the Catholicos Patriarch of Georgia will wash the feet of twelve priests just like Christ did with the Apostles. Good Friday is connected with the Crucifixion, lamentation and burial of Jesus Christ. In Svetistkhoveli Cathedral, where Christ’s Robe is buried, a cross will be put in front of the altar at 2pm, and a special ritual will follow. On Saturday night, the most devout Orthodox Christians go to church and stay at the church until late Easter morning. Then people have a special meal to break the fast. Georgians fast for 40 days before Easter. Fasting means no sugar, eggs, dairy products, fish or meat are allowed. On Easter Monday, churches conduct a special prayer in memory of the deceased, and Orthodox Christians bring red eggs and flowers to the graves of their relatives.

People prepare for Easter by dying eggs red on Good Friday and by baking Easter Bread, called Paska. The eggs symbolize the blood of Christ. They are placed on green wheat grass, which symbolizes new life, resurrection and eternity. People grow this wheat grass on flat plates two weeks before Easter. On the Saturday evening before Easter, people take the eggs and Easter breads to church for a blessing. After the service, people take the bread and eggs home and crack the eggs during the next days. The person who ends up with the last unbroken egg is believed to have a year of good luck.

Lasha Aqubardia -For eTwinning project : “My World My Classroom”

Physical-mathmetical public school N41 after Andria Razmadze 6-th Grader