

St. Innocent Orthodox Church

✙ 50th Anniversary:1967-2017 ✙ Moscow Patriarchal Parishes ✙
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Church Website: www.stinnocentchurch.com † E-Mail: frroman@firebirdvideos.com
St. Innocent Monastic Community: 9452 Hazelton, Redford, MI 48239 † 313-535-9080
PASTOR: Rt. Rev. Mitered Archbishop ROMAN STAR † Cell: 313-319-0590

APRIL 30, 2017

ASSISTANT PRIEST: Rev. DANEIL SHIRAK † 313-295-3073

DEACONS: Rev. Dn. Dr. Joshua Genig

Rev. Dn. Michael Comerford, *Attached*

ATTACHED: Sister Ioanna

EPISTLE: Acts of the Apostles 6:1 - 7 (#16)

GOSPEL: St. Mark 15:43 - 16:8 (#69)

STONE: 2

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Elizabeth Star Hatfield

READER: George Hanoian



✙ MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN SUNDAY ✙ the 3rd Sunday of Pascha ✙

† 9:15AM — HOURS & AKATHIST FOR THE RESURRECTION; CONFESSIONS †

† 10am — DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM †

COMMEMORATED TODAY: Holy Apostle James (Jacob), the brother of St. John the Theologian (44 A.D.). Myrrhbearing Women. Uncovering of the Relics of St. Nikita, Bishop of Novgorod (1558). St. Donatus, Bishop of Euroea in Epirus (ca. 387). Uncovering of the Relics of St. Basil, Bishop of Amasea (4th c.). Martyr Maximus of Ephesus. St. Ignátii (Ignatius) Brianchaninov, Bishop of Stavropol' (1867).

FOR THE REPOSE OF: Estelle & Joseph Star; Anna & John Witkowski; Michael Sr. & Margaret Rusko; Mary, Andrew, Daniel, Michael & Lottie Yakuber; Ross & Margaret Falsetti; Helen, John & Carole Andrayko; Peter & Theresa Harvilla; Betty Martell; Frances, Todd & John Smoly; Peter Glover; Irene Adams; Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua deVyver, David Horka; Michael Rusko; Anna Lichagina, Yelena & Zinaida Korniyevskaya; Joseph Nossal; Michelle Tucker; Todd Comerford, John Manier, Jr.

MEMORY Matushka Barbara Frenchek (newly departed, 3/23; **40th-Day, Tomorrow, May 1st**) of St. Paul's, Dearborn Hts.

ETERNAL! Ellen (Olena) Liss (newly departed, 3/31; **40th-Day, 5/9**), Mother of COCC President, Olga Liss (Pokrov Ukr.Ch., Sthfld) Alexandra Yupco, whose anniversary of her repose is Friday, 5 May, by Grandson, Fr. Roman

FOR THE HEALTH OF: Archimandrite Seraphim; Priest Daneil, Mat. Debra & Corrina Shirak; Deacon Michael, Mat. Mary Ellen & Julius Comerford; Deacon Joshua, Mat. Abigail, Emma, Clare, Rose & Anna Genig; Matushka Mary Donahue; Reader Robert Latsko, Reader George & Betty Hanoian, Rose Nossal, Mary Glover, Nancy Cupp, Vasiliki Stamoulis, Gerald Martell, Azbehat, Donald Yakuber, Carl deVyver, Jo Anne Nicholas, Joan Rusko, Daria, Joseph Nossal, Ed Manier, Pat Harbut, John Sedor, Olga Liss, Anna Smerechnak

ALSO FOR: Zachary Minnik, who celebrates his birthday Today, Sunday, 30 April, by Grandparents, Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie Shirley Davis, who celebrates her birthday on Thursday, 4 May

*** MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS! ***

SCHEDULE FOR THE COMING WEEK (Regular Wednesday & Friday fasting resumes)

| | | |
|------------------|--------|--|
| TODAY: Sun, 4/30 | 1pm | GRAVE BLESSINGS finished (after Coffee Hour, about 1:00+pm) |
| Saturday 5/6 | 4pm | GREAT VESPERS & CONFESSIONS |
| Sunday 5/7 | | Sunday of the Paralytic (4 th Sunday of Pascha) |
| | 9:15am | Hours & Akathist for the Resurrection |
| | 10am | DIVINE LITURGY, Followed by Coffee Hour |
| Sunday, 5/14, | | Mothers' Day, Church Breakfast after Liturgy |

PROSPHORA FOR TODAY IS OFFERED BY: Deborah Hartz

In Memory Eternal of: Parents, Paul & Bernadette; Infants Mark & Barbara; John & Elizabeth; Philip & Hilda; Edward & Irene; Caroline & Louis; Agnes & August; Charles & Stephen; Fr. Roman Braga; Mother Theodora-Amphilopia; Sister Alexandra; newly-departed Matushka Barbara Frenchek; and all members of the Hartz, Zwilchir, Smith, Nied & Fisher families; and **for the Health of:** Mother Gabriella & all the sisters of HDM; Father Roman & Matushka Rose Marie; Elizabeth & Larry & family; Elaine; Sherri, and all friends, family and parishioners.

✙ CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN! ✙ ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕСЕ! ВОИСТИНУ ВОСКРЕСЕ! ✙
✙ KHRISTOS ANESTI! ALITHOS ANESTI! ✙ HRISTOS A ÎNVIAT! ADEVĂRAT A ÎNVIAT! ✙

CANDLES FOR LAST SUNDAY, 23 APRIL

YEARLY CHURCH VIGIL LAMPS:

Royal Doors Lamp: In Memory of Husband, Joseph; Son, Kenneth; parents, Michael & Margaret Rusko, & John & Martha Nossal, *by Rose Nossal*

Altar Candelabra: In Memory of Parents, Nicholas and Susan Yakuber, *by son, Donald Yakuber*

Altar Candles (2): In Memory of Irene Adams, *by Goddaughter, Rose Ann Everhardt*

Iconostasis Lamps: In Memory of departed family & friends; & Health of family & friends, *by Fr. Protodeacon Daniel & Mat. Irene Sudol*

Candles on the Solea: In Memory of Peter & Theresa Harvilla, Norman & Monica Holst, & Ricky Ellis, *by Jason & Debra Truskowski*

Table of Oblation Lamp: In Memory of Parents, Helen & John Andrayko, Sr. & sister, Carole Andrayko, *by John Andrayko, Jr.*

Reliquary-Icon Lamps: Sts. Innocent, Tikhon & Herman: Health of Joseph/Sue; Robert/Diane; Pat/John; Joseph B., Jared, Jay; Rachelle/Aaron,

Gabriel; Tricia, Lindsey; & In Memory of sisters, Anna, Margaret, Theresa & Irene; & brothers, John, Edwin & Michael *by Rose Nossal*

Reliquary-Icon Lamps: Sts. Elizabeth & Raphael: Health of the Genig and the Just Families, *by Fr. Deacon Joshua & Abigail Genig*

Reliquary-Icon Lamps: St. Seraphim & St. Alexis: In Memory of Ross & Margaret Falsetti, *by daughters, Rose Ann Everhardt & Margie Martell*

Reliquary-Icon Lamps: St. Nestor & St. Gerontius: In Memory of Rusko Family: Grandparents, Anna, Alexandra, Mike, Margaret, John, Mary,

George, Pauline, Pete, Irene, Andrew, Anna, Grandparents Nickolas & Anna Schulik, *by Rose Nossal*

Reliquary-Icon Lamps: St. Hilarion & Sts. Alexandra & Martha: In Memory of Parents, Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua; Robert David H; //

IN MEMORY OF (MEMORY ETERNAL!)

//& Health of brother, Carl, by Sister Ioanna

Joseph & Estelle Star, *by son Father Roman and family*

Paul & Alexandra Yupco, Basil & Ellen Starinshak, *by grandson, Father Roman and family*

John & Anna Witkowski, *by daughter, Matushka Rose Marie and family*

Samuel & Mary Kupec, *by granddaughter, Matushka Rose Marie and family*

Parents, Helen & John Andrayko, and sister, Carole Andrayko, *by John Andrayko + + + My husband, Michael Rusko, by Joan Rusko*

My husband, Joe; my sisters, Margaret & Ross Falsetti, Anna & Mike Elascat, Theresa & Pete Harvilla, Irene, & brothers, Michael, John &

Edwin Rusko; niece, Rose Mary & Dean Hough; Joe's brothers, Raymond & Walter Nossal, & sisters, Theresa, Florence & Helen Nossal,

by Rose Nossal + + + Pete & Theresa Harvilla, by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay Truskowski + + + Jaimie Truskowski, by daughter Kay T.

Parents, Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua; David H; Nina I; Marion P; Fr. Photius; Mo. Benedicta; Archm. Roman; Mat. Barbara F; Ellen Liss,

by Sr. Ioanna + + + Child Lana, Shirley, Betty, Marsha, Paul, by Becky Jurczyszyn + + + Thelma Ratchiff, Louis Pitts, by Manier Family

FOR THE HEALTH OF: (MANY YEARS!)

Elizabeth & Lawrence, Caitlin & Zachary, *by parents & grandparents, Father Roman & Matushka Rose Marie*

Gregory & Tamiko Star, *by parents, Father Roman & Matushka Rose Marie*

Children, Grandchildren & Great-grandchildren; Monk Fr. Sdn. Tikhon (Dade); *by Rose Nossal*

Father Roman & Matushka & family; Sister Ioanna; John Andrayko; Nancy; Mary G; Jo Anne N; Grandson Joey (*in the Navy Reserves*) & all

people in the Armed Forces; & all St. Innocent Church parishioners, *by Rose Nossal + + + Family & Friends, by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay*

Brother, Greg & Donna; nephew, Gregory & Liz; & nephew, Alex, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay + + + Ed Manier, by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay*

Archimandrites Nafanail, Gregory & Seraphim; Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie; Fr. Lawrence & fam; Fr. Laurence & fam; Fr. Daneil & fam;

Fr. Dcn. Michael & fam; Fr. Dcn. Joshua & fam; Mat. Mary D; Carl; Monk Fr. Tikhon; Sdn Andrew; Rdr Robert; Robert M; David Samuel

/Sky & Avi; JoAnne/Nick; Athanasius; John A; Ed/Tiffany & fam; Kim/Mark & fam; Vasiliki; Rose; Emil; Billy/Fonda; John S; Olga Liss,

by Sr Ioanna + + + Rose Nossal, by John Andrayko + + + John Andrayko (May God watch over him), by Rose Nossal

Leia, Mike, Reece & Wyatt Wilson; Bob/Joan Jurczyszyn; Toni /Richard Bussen; Pete, Krista, Jacob, Clair, Matt & Paul Stelmaszek; Damon

Trestain, Levi Troyer, Briana Saylor, *by Becky Jurczyszyn + + + Shirley Peponis, by brother, Nick & JoAnne*

Aunt Rose, Happy 90th B-day, *by Mary Ann H. + + + Brittany Truitt (mental health & deliverance), by Manier Family*

Anastasia, *by Mother, Frances Roy + + + Alice & Autumn, by Grandmother, Frances Roy*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) MOTHERS' DAY BREAKFAST, SUNDAY, MAY 14th: Please plan to celebrate Mothers' Day this year by participating in a **Mothers' Day Breakfast** here at St. Innocent. Instead of going out to a restaurant or cooking at home, share a special breakfast with your mothers, grandmothers, godmothers at St. Innocent (and help us raise funds for our 50th at the same time). Adults are only \$5 and children are \$2.

(2) CONGRATULATIONS TO FRANCES & KEN ROY, WHO WERE ACCEPTED AS CATECHUMENS TODAY. MANY YEARS!

(3) PLEASE DONATE AN AD FOR OUR 50th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE BOOK. See/print PDF form with info on our website, on our Home Page (<http://stinnocentchurch.com/>) or on the 50th Anniversary page (http://stinnocentchurch.com/50th_anniversary.html).

(4) 2nd CLASS OF 12-WEEK CATECHUMEN INSTRUCTION for Frances & Ken Roy, on **Tuesday, 5/2**, at 7pm, with Sister Ioanna

(5) "ST. INNOCENT ORTHODOX STUDY GROUP": with Fr. Deacon Joshua, meets weekly on **Wednesdays**, 6:30 – 7:30 pm.

(6) NEEDED: PHOTOS OF LIFE AT ST. INNOCENT, 2008 – 2014. To use in 50th Anniversary Commemorative booklet. See Elizabeth.

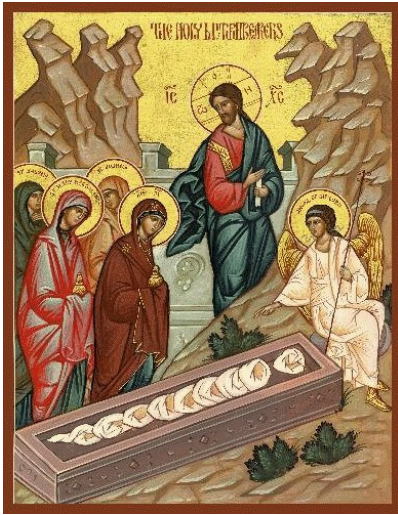
(7) THE REDFORD INTER-FAITH RELIEF NEEDS SPRING/SUMMER CLOTHING, ESPECIALLY FOR CHILDREN.

(8) SEE 2 NEW ARTICLES ON OUR CHURCH WEBSITE: By Sister Ioanna. "And Upon Those in the Tombs, bestowing Life" (http://stinnocentchurch.com/and_upon_those_in_the_tombs.html) and a 1-page text version of "THE ORTHODOX FAITH: Some Basic Principles" (http://stinnocentchurch.com/theorthodoxfaith_somebasicprinciples.html)

(9) READ NEWS & SEE PHOTOS ABOUT OUR PATRIARCHAL PARISHES IN ENGLISH AT: <http://mospatusa.com/>

✦ **CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!** ✦ **ХРИСТОС БОЖКРЕЦЕ! БОЖИТИНУ БОЖКРЕЦЕ!** ✦

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MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN SUNDAY

By Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

A Sermon delivered on May 11, 1997

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

We keep today the feast of a number of the followers of Christ of whom we think seldom, because they are mentioned very little in the Scriptures. And each of them could be a lesson for us.

St. Joseph of Arimathea was a rich man who listened to Christ with an open mind and did not commit himself. Neither did Nicodemus; but Nicodemus was a learned man, part of the Sanhedrin. He had been listening to Christ, he had been asking questions of Him, he wanted to understand, he wanted to be sure. But neither of them had committed themselves to follow Christ, to

declare themselves as His disciples.

And yet, when Christ in the eyes of everyone was defeated, when victory had come to His enemies, when He was dead, about to be buried, their faithfulness to Him who had taught them words of life came to the fore. And they joined the Mother of God to bring down the body of Christ and to bury him. Daringly they went to Pontius Pilate and asked for this body so that they could bury Him with veneration. In the course of His life they had been listening to Him with a hesitant yet open mind. When death came their faithfulness sprang to the fore. And seeing the pain of the Mother of God and St. John the Apostle there was no doubt left in them; they must declare themselves, because they could not accept that He should be rejected through defeat after having been their teacher, their guide and their friend.

And then there is another group of people, the myrrh-bearing women, a group of women who had been following Christ and supporting Him and His disciples in their need. When Christ was crucified all the apostles fled, with the exception of St. John and with the exception of these women. It was not an intellectual conviction that held them as disciples of Christ. It was something which perhaps could be defined in the words of the pilgrims to Emmaus: "was not our heart burning within us when He was speaking to us on the way." All the way from Galilee to Jerusalem, from the peace of the land to the tragedy of Jerusalem, all this time they had been listening and their hearts had come to life — not with personal love but with a deep sense of life eternal. These are the words which also St. Peter had said earlier, when most people who surrounded them had left, and Christ turned to his disciples and said: "are you also going to go?" And Peter said: "Where should we go? You have the words of eternal life." And these words were not simply syllogisms, or proofs, or ways of conveying things. When he spoke it was life eternal that was awoken in them — the door into eternal life that came to life. And they knew that these words were true because there was new life in them. And so was it also for these women.

So today we keep the feast of people who proved faithful, the ones who in their frailty had not fled, and the ones who in the face of defeat and tragedy had suddenly become disciples and faithful. Let us remember them, not only seeing their glory as we have done today in the service, but also asking ourselves: do we belong, to any extent, to the example given by one or another of them? Can we say that in the face of the defeat of Christ we would come out and say: I am one of His disciples, although in the time when there was no danger around I kept out, hesitant, unsure, asking myself questions, indeed asking Him questions? Is any one of us Joseph of Arimathea, is any one Nicodemus, and can we say that we are like these myrrh-bearing women, whom neither the needs nor the defeat nor the death of Christ had been able to alienate from Him?

None of us is any of it to the full; but let us learn from them and try to grow into that faithfulness which they have shown; the ones throughout the life of Christ, and the other ones in the face of His defeat. Amen.

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN!

AND UPON THOSE IN THE TOMBS, BESTOWING LIFE

By: **Sister Ioanna** (M.Th., M.A., Ph.D.)
St. Innocent Monastic Community, Redford, MI

*Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death,
and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life.*



How many times, over and over, do we sing these triumphant words on Pascha and throughout the forty days of Pascha! But what do these words really mean, especially the last phrase of the Paschal Troparion, *and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life*?

Most things in Orthodoxy have multiple meanings, and so it is here. This preeminent Orthodox Paschal hymn (*that does not exist in Western Christianity*) is the bold affirmation of the historical truths that Christ is risen, and that by His death, He became victorious over the power of death, and that He brought life to those righteous souls who had previously died. This is what is clearly portrayed in the traditional Orthodox icon of the Resurrection, as we see here. The Resurrection icon clearly depicts St. John the Forerunner and Baptizer, and Old Testament righteous kings and prophets: David, Solomon, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, (and in other icons, sometimes the 3-Holy-Children-in-the-Fiery-Furnace, and other righteous prophets, depending on how much room is available in a particular icon). And of course the two central figures, always portrayed, being raised up from their tombs/sepulchres/coffins, are **Adam** (whose name means *man*) and **Eve** (whose name means *woman*). *But what does all that have to do with us, here and now, today?*

Here, Adam and Eve are not just the first-created human beings of the past: they represent all men and all women — all of us, you and me. Whereas the other righteous holy prophets and rulers shown in the icon stand peacefully and calmly on the ground, in contrast, Adam and Eve are being *literally* dragged and pulled up out of their coffins. If you look carefully, in every single Orthodox icon of the Resurrection of this type, Christ is grabbing Adam and Eve by their wrist, not by their hand. To be grabbed by their hand, signifies a willing collaboration. Being grabbed by their wrist, implies being forced to do something against one's will, like a naughty child being dragged by their wrist by a frustrated parent. It is also like when being born. When a baby is born, it is pulled into this world, kicking and screaming and crying. In fact, one knows that the baby is alive precisely because it *is* crying. Being born hurts! We resist it! We kick and scream and cry, because being in the womb — in our comfort zone — is safe and secure and warm and comfortable. And so it is with us. In the Paschal icon, Christ is not only giving life to those who preceded Him in death. Christ is not only promising to give eternal life to us when we physically die and are buried. The Resurrection icon visually portrays and proclaims that Christ is seeking to bring **us**, while we are still in our bodies, into new and resurrected life **now**. But we resist, because it hurts to be born. It hurts to be crucified and to die to one's self and to overcome one's ego. It is easier to wallow in our complacency and to stay within our comfort zones, walking around like corpses (and there are many corpses walking around), than to participate in Christ's crucifixion and new, resurrected life. But Christ was born in order to give us Life and to give it abundantly. Christ invites **us**, challenges **us**, to allow Him to drag and pull **us** into new Life.

But what does it mean to have Life? Does it simply mean to eat and drink and sleep and work and play? That is what it is to be alive, but not necessarily to have Life. Because we use the same words to mean many different things, we need to stop and ask ourselves what do we really mean when we use words whose meanings we think we know, but can mean very different things. *What does it mean to have Life?* It is like the Prophet Ezekiel's glorious prophesy of the dry bones that is triumphantly and dramatically chanted on Holy and Great Friday night after the procession with Christ's shroud around the church, that announces Christ's coming Resurrection: the dry bones came together, but there is no life in them until God puts His Spirit into them, that they may live and know that God is the Lord, when He raises them from their tombs.

That is the same for each one of us today. To become a new creation, to be resurrected, to have Life in us and not just be walking corpses or dry bones, we have to be filled with the Life of the Holy Spirit. When our Resurrected Lord bestows His Life on us, and breathes His Holy Spirit into us, then we become filled with peace, love, patience, kindness, gentleness, humility, compassion, joy, mercy, and with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit; and then the Light of the Resurrection fills our hearts and overflows to embrace all of God's creation and bring His Life to others. Then as light naturally disperses darkness, the darkness of existence without God's Presence also disappears, and with it, the manifestations of darkness: sin and evil in all their forms — anger, hate, jealousy, violence, vulgarity, intolerance, lust in all its forms, self-centeredness, greed, acquisitiveness, lack of compassion for others' suffering and need, and using others as 'things' to satisfy one's own passions.

This is what it means when we sing in the Paschal Troparion: *"and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life."* Each time we sing it, we are thereby challenged to accept the Lord's gracious offer to be born anew into His glorious, Resurrected Life and Light, Truth and Beauty, and to reject the death and darkness, violence, lies and hatred that engulf us in the daily existence of the godless, secular, lifeless and ugly world of walking corpses that surrounds us.



“POST-PASCHA SWOON” OR “REVIVED BY JOY”?

By Fr. Steven Kostoff

I began this morning with a question on my mind: Is there life after Pascha? This, in turn, led to a series of further related questions: Is there meaningful ecclesial/Church life following the Paschal celebration of only little more than a few days ago? Is it possible to retain any of the vibrancy and joy of commemorating, participating, and experiencing the Resurrection of Christ? Can we continue to maintain our ecclesial lives beyond the level of perfunctory attendance once we have passed through Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha?

Humanly speaking, these may be unrealistic expectations for the following reasons:

- Most everyone is still overcoming a certain level of exhaustion, that is not merely physical. I think at times that Bright Week may have to be downgraded to Recovery Week!
- Clearly everyone is back to normal time and routines – work, school, etc. – that may have been temporarily interrupted during Holy Week and Pascha. “Life goes on,” according to a limp cliché, and we may still be catching up with some unfinished business.
- Does our surrounding culture influence us by treating Pascha as a “one and done” affair—meaning that when we wake up on Bright Monday, are we already “moving on?”

However, that does not mean that our parishes have to empty out and become tomb-like immediately after Pascha, apart from Sunday’s Liturgy. The inevitable “summer slowdown” need not begin before we have even completed Bright Week. The Resurrection of Christ is meant to be enlivening, not deadening! The “swoon theory” is a hopelessly absurd idea meant to explain away the Resurrection of Christ. Yet, how many of the faithful experience a “post-Paschal swoon” from which they need to awaken before the entire Season comes to a close. If such is the case, then what does this say of the over-all impact of the Paschal Season?

Perhaps we need to probe just what each and every one of us means by the term “Pascha.” It is the Greek form of the Hebrew word for Passover. Pascha, therefore, is:

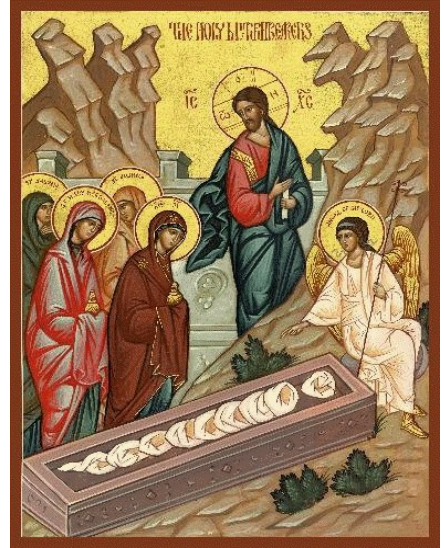
- the Christian Passover/passage from death to life in and through the Death and Resurrection of Christ.
- the commemoration and actualization of these saving events, realized through the Church’s liturgical services, and succinctly expressed as “Christ is Risen!”
- the transformation of suffering into joy, revealing the true meaning of the Cross as salvific.
- the supreme gift of the renewal of life and the restoration of communion with God.
- the “death of death.”
- the foretaste of our own resurrection from the dead into the eternal light of God’s Kingdom.

- the event that established the Church in the world until the end of time.
- the “Feast of Feasts” and focal point of our community’s shared life together.

The exuberance of our Paschal celebration during the “night brighter than the day” is the festal expression of the Church’s deepest truth. The light, color, music and movement are all manifestations of the Paschal joy that sweeps through the Church as we proclaim that Christ is Risen! Hopefully, it is also the expression of our own faith in the Risen Lord.

However, for some Pascha may be reduced to something other than what it truly is, or it takes on a life of its own, detached and independent from what was outlined above. This is probably true for once-a-year visitors to the church – “Easter” Orthodox Christians – but this can also tempt us. Such reductions may include:

- approaching Pascha primarily in ethnic, cultural or social terms.
- over-emphasis on the externals—dress, Pascha basket, roasted lamb, family traditions, etc.
- nostalgic or sentimental evocation of one’s past.
- a “fun experience”—I have actually heard this before—thus using a term better suited to a trip to the amusement park than for the “Feast of Feasts.”



Perhaps we could say that the above is more a description of Pascha popularly understood, rather than Pascha as revealed in the Church. Again, when these approaches are detached from the deeper meaning of Pascha, then the inevitable occurs quite naturally—Pascha is reduced to a once-a-year special event that is over and done with the moment one’s exhausted head hits the pillow some time early in the morning. It is forgotten before all of the Easter eggs – real and chocolate – are consumed. And then the search for the next potentially exciting event begins.

The Risen Christ appeared to His disciples for forty days following His Resurrection. He did not depart from them into Heaven immediately. We can assume that the disciples remained “excited” (to use an inadequate word) for that entire period – and beyond. We have a forty-day Paschal Season in the Church for this reason. As the disciples rejoiced in the Lord’s presence, the same possibility is before us as we too rejoice in the Lord’s presence, since it is the Lord who promised to be with us “until the end of the world.” The Risen Lord is as present among us today as He was when He appeared to the eleven disciples behind “closed doors” for the first time and, then again, eight days later, as recounted by Saint John in his Gospel [20:19-29]. Everyone, beginning with the clergy, probably suffers from the “post-Paschal blues” to some extent. We must rely on our faith and trust that our Lord Jesus Christ has been bodily raised from the dead, the “first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” [1 Corinthians 15:20], in order to revive us to the joy of this unique season in which we continuously affirm that “If Christ has not been raised, [our] faith is futile and [we] are still in [our] sins .. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” [1 Corinthians 15:17, 20].

About the author of the “Reflections in Christ” series on www.oca.org : *Father Steven Kostoff is rector of Christ the Savior-Holy Spirit Church, Cincinnati, Ohio. He is also a member of the adjunct faculty of the theology department at Xavier University in Cincinnati, where he has taught various courses on Orthodox theology.*