

Pascha

“This is the day that the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.” (Ps. 118:24 ESV) We have finally made it to the journey’s end after a long and arduous journey, to the bright and glorious day that knows no end. After 40+ days of fasting and self-denial, 40+ days of heightened prayer, and 40+ days of giving of ourselves to help those in need, we have reached the promised land, the Day of Resurrection. Today’s feast day is a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom, where we get a small glimpse into what God has prepared for those who love Him, what awaits the blessed for all eternity. Christ has won the victory on this day that has changed the eternal destiny of mankind. Truly, “this is the day that the Lord has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

As the Holy Scriptures tell us, Christ arose from the dead and appeared to various witnesses, whom we call Apostles, who wanted to tell the whole world of what they had seen and heard. And they did this traveling all over the known world at that time, suffering beatings, stoning, shipwreck, nights and days on the sea; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by their own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness, beside their worries about the churches. (2 Cor. 11:25-28) They did all this because what they had seen was true. Jesus had died and had come back to life and had interacted and talked with them and they had seen Him and touched Him. He had also raised others who then came into the city after His resurrection and appeared to many. The gates of Hell had been shattered and the devil’s kingdom had been trampled upon. If the Apostles had agreed among themselves to lie about what had happened, surely at least one of them would have recanted before all were martyred, but they didn’t. They bore witness to the truth, even to the shedding of their own blood.

So today, we are celebrating Jesus’s victory over death and how all those who are united with Him in their lives will also pass over from death to life with Him. He is the first born of the dead and He like Adam will give rise to many who will follow Him into Life. In the Old Testament whenever a sacrificial offering was made, the sacrifice wasn’t complete until the priest ate of the sacrifice and as the Holy Scriptures say, it made him holy. So, too, with Christ’s sacrificial death on the Cross. It is not complete until we, the royal priesthood of Christ, partake of the sacrifice and it makes us Holy. Let us on this great and holy Day of Resurrection prepare ourselves to receive Holy Communion and complete the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, that we too may become holy and share in the victory of Christ over sin and death.