

Let us be Radiant!

In the 8th Century, Saint John of Damascus wrote this Hymn to the Resurrection:

The Day of Resurrection! O People, let us be radiant. It is Pascha, the Lord's Passover; for Christ God has carried us over from death to life, from earth to heaven, as we sing a victory hymn.

In the coming period from the Resurrection to Pentecost, the Sunday Epistle readings tell us of a community of believers who were so totally devoted to God that their life together was charged by the Holy Spirit. They loved each other and shared their lives with one another, praying, and serving together in authentic Christian fellowship.

Those who had more shared with those who had less, and people related in ways that blurred the lines of gender, race and culture. Unbelievers coming into contact with this community of believers saw a vision of life that was so dynamic that they couldn't resist it.

Acts 2:47 tells us that "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

This is the Church that we as Orthodox Christians claim to be. These Christians shone brightly with the light of Christ.

In Christ's Resurrection everything is made new. Everything is restored. In the 4th Century, St. Gregory the Theologian wrote, "Today is salvation come into the world.... Christ is risen from the dead, rise ye with Him. Christ is returned again to Himself, return ye. Christ is freed from the tomb, be ye freed from the bond of sin. The gates of hell are opened, and death is destroyed" (Gregory of Nazianzus Second Oration on Easter).

In Christ's Resurrection we become radiant because He is the light of the world. As He told us, "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). Following Christ means that we will have His light of joy and gladness shining in our hearts. We will have an abundant life full of meaning and purpose.

Sainthood is not some unattainable state, and it is not just for a select few. It is the natural outcome of our baptism – if we see baptism as a beginning and not an ending.

Listen to some of the prayers that were read for us at our baptism:

- *"Open the eyes of his understanding, that the light of Your Gospel may shine brightly in him."*
- *"Make her a child of light, and an heir of Your kingdom."*
- *"Fill her with the power of the Holy Spirit."*

These prayers ask that the seed planted in our heart on our day of baptism will grow within us and guide our lives. Our baptism was not the ending but the beginning of our growth in faith in Jesus Christ. Our calling as Orthodox Christians is to strive toward the example of Christ. He is our great example.

When we are asked by our evangelical friends or even the evangelist on the street corner, "Are you saved?" there is no short answer.

Bishop Kallistos Ware, in his little book, *How Are We Saved?* says that he usually responds in the continuous present tense:

"I trust that by God's mercy and grace, I am being saved."

As Orthodox Christians we were not created to stay as we are. We were created to become. Our challenge as Orthodox faithful is to hear the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as if we were hearing it for the first time, allowing Him to transform our lives -- to be renewed in His Resurrection.

Being saved is not an event but a process. It is the same process that led all those whom we commemorate today to attain Sainthood.

The moon has no light of its own, yet it is able to light up the night by reflecting the light of the sun. And so it is with us – we have no light of our own, yet we may be radiant by

reflecting the light of Christ – by the way we live our lives.

A saint is a sinner who keeps trying. A saint is one who makes it easier for others to believe in God. Consider the possibility that you may be the only Orthodox Christian that someone ever meets. Are you radiant with Christ? Do you reflect His light?

If we believe that in Orthodoxy we have the fullness of the Truth, then we have the great responsibility to let our light shine before all people. It is our duty and obligation not to hide our light under the bushel. Let us take the light of Christ that we received at our baptism and the light we receive at His Resurrection, and let it be born in our hearts -- Let us be Radiant!



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The Catechetical Paschal Homily

of our Father Among the Saints, St. John Chrysostom

If there are devout and God loving people here, let them enjoy this beautiful, radiant festival. If there are prudent servants, enter joyously into the Lord's joy. Whoever may be spent from fasting, enjoy now your reward. Whoever has toiled from the first hour, receive today your just settlement. If any came after the third hour, celebrate gratefully. If any of you arrived after the sixth, have no misgivings, you have lost nothing. If some have been as late as the ninth, come forward, do not be at a loss. If any of you have arrived only at the eleventh hour, do not be dismayed for being late.

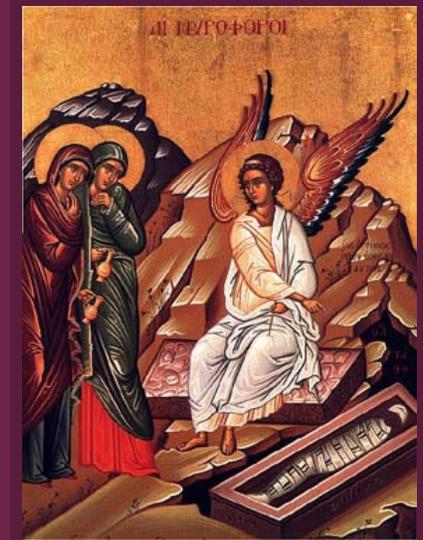
The Master is gracious: He accepts the last even as the first; He gives rest to those of the eleventh as well as to those who have labored from the first; He is lenient with the last while looking after the first; to the one He gives, to the other He gives freely; He accepts the labors and welcomes the effort; honors the deed, but commends the intent. So, all of you, enter into the joy of our Lord: first and second, share the bounty. Rich and poor alike, celebrate together. Sober or heedless, honor the day. Those who fasted and those who did not, rejoice today. The table is full, everyone fare sumptuously. The calf is fatted; no one go away hungry. Everyone, savor the banquet of faith; relish the riches of His goodness.

No one need lament poverty, for the kingdom is seen as universal. No one need grieve over sins; forgiveness has dawned from the tomb. No one need fear death; the Savior's death has freed us from it. While its captive He stifled it. He despoiled Hades as He descended into it; it was angered when it tasted His flesh. Foreseeing this, Isaiah proclaimed: "Hades," he said, "was angered when he met You below." It was angered because it was abolished. It was angered because it was mocked. It was angered because it was slain. It was angered because it was shackled. It received a body and encountered God. It took earth and came face to face with heaven. It took what it saw and fell by what it could not see. Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are overthrown. Christ is risen and demons have fallen. Christ is risen and angels rejoice. Christ is risen and life rules. Christ is risen and not one dead remains in the tomb. For Christ, having risen from the dead, has become the firstfruits of those that slept. To Him be the glory and the dominion, forever. Amen.

Saint John Chrysostom 347-407 AD

Welcome!

to Great and Holy Pascha
The Resurrection of our
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ



The Myrrhbearing Women at the Empty Tomb

In a few minutes we will light our Paschal candles and sing with joy that Christ is Risen!

Please keep this brochure to reflect upon and to share with your family and friends.

We hope you will return to worship with us on Sundays and Feast Days throughout the year.

Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!