

# SOBORNOST

**St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church**

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*American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese*

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

## SERVICES

***Public services are in abeyance pending resolution of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please refer to the information on our parish and diocesan websites on how you can worship at home.***

**April 19, 2020 | Holy Pascha**

**Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!**

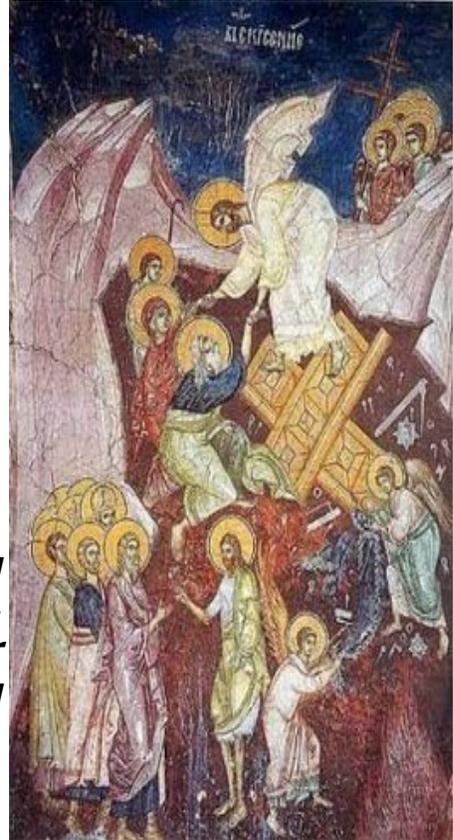
If anyone is devout and a lover of God, let him enjoy this beautiful and radiant festival.

If anyone is a wise servant, let him, rejoicing, enter into the joy of his Lord.

If anyone has wearied himself in fasting, let him now receive his recompense.

If anyone has labored from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If anyone has come at the third hour, with thanksgiving let him keep the feast. If anyone has arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; for he shall suffer no loss. If anyone has delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near without hesitation. If anyone has arrived even at the eleventh hour, let him not fear on account of his delay. For the Master is gracious and receives the last, even as the first; he gives rest to him that comes at the eleventh hour, just as to him who has labored from the first. He has mercy upon the last and cares for the first; to the one he gives, and to the other he is gracious. He both honors the work and praises the intention.

Enter all of you, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and, whether first or last, receive your reward. O rich and poor, one with another, dance for joy! O you



ascetics and you negligent, celebrate the day! You that have fasted and you that have disregarded the fast, rejoice today! The table is rich-laden; feast royally, all of you! The calf is fatted; let no one go forth hungry! Let all partake of the feast of faith. Let all receive the riches of goodness. Let no one lament his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn his transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free.

He that was taken by death has annihilated it! He descended into hades and took hades captive! He embittered it when it tasted his flesh! And anticipating this Isaiah exclaimed, "Hades was embittered when it encountered thee in the lower regions." It was embittered, for it was abolished! It was embittered, for it was mocked! It was embittered, for it was purged! It was embittered, for it was despoiled! It was embittered, for it was bound in chains!

It took a body and, face to face, met God! It took earth and encountered heaven! It took what it saw but crumbled before what it had not seen! "O death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?" Christ is risen, and you are overthrown! Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen! Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice! Christ is risen, and life reigns! Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in a tomb! For Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the First-fruits of them that slept. To him be glory and might unto ages of ages. Amen.

– Paschal homily of St. John Chrysostom

### **Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 1:1-8**

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

## Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 1:1-17

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

## A Word From the Holy Fathers

Let us now keep the feast, my brethren, for as our Lord then gave notice to His disciples, so He now tells us beforehand, that ‘after some days is the Passover,’ in which the Jews indeed betrayed the Lord, but we celebrate His death as a feast, rejoicing because we then obtained rest from our afflictions. We are diligent in assembling ourselves together, for we were scattered in time past and were lost, and are found. We were far off and are brought nigh, we were strangers, and have become His, Who suffered for us, and was nailed on the cross, Who bore our sins, as the prophet saith, and was afflicted for us, that He might put away from all of us grief, and sorrow, and sighing. When we thirst, He satisfies us on the feast-day itself; standing and crying, ‘If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.’ For such is the love of the saints at all times, that they never once leave off, but offer the uninterrupted, constant sacrifice to the Lord, and continually thirst, and ask of Him to drink; as David sang, ‘My God, my God, early will I seek You, my soul thirsts for You; many times my heart and flesh longs for You in a barren land, without a path, and without water. Thus was I seen by You in the sanctuary.’ And

Isaiah the prophet says, 'From the night my spirit seeks You early, O God, because Your commandments are light.' And another says, 'My soul faints for the longing it has for Your judgments at all times.' And again he says, 'For Your judgments I have hoped, and Your law will I keep at all times.' Another boldly cries out, saying, 'My eye is ever towards the Lord.' And with him one says, 'The meditation of my heart is before You at all times.' And Paul further advises, 'At all times give thanks; pray without ceasing.' Those who are thus continually engaged, are waiting entirely on the Lord, and say, 'Let us follow on to know the Lord: we shall find Him ready as the morning, and He will come to us as the early and the latter rain for the earth.' For not only does He satisfy them in the morning; neither does He give them only as much to drink as they ask; but He gives them abundantly according to the multitude of His lovingkindness, vouchsafing to them at all times the grace of the Spirit. And what it is they thirst for He immediately adds, saying, 'He who believes on Me.' For, 'as cold waters are pleasant to those who are thirsty,' according to the proverb, so to those who believe in the Lord, the coming of the Spirit is better than all refreshment and delight.

It becomes us then in these days of the Passover, to rise early with the saints, and approach the Lord with all our soul, with purity of body, with confession and godly faith in Him; so that when we have here first drunk, and are filled with these divine waters which [flow] from Him, we may be able to sit at table with the saints in heaven, and may share in the one voice of gladness which is there.

- St. Athanasius the Great, Festal Letter 20 (348)



# SPF50

The second Issue of SPF50 is available NOW!! It is a digital edition. If you didn't start with us on March 1, consider joining now. Make a commitment to reading Scripture and Praying together with your family. Visit the Diocesan Website at [acrod.org](http://acrod.org) and look for the SPF50 section or go directly to the SPF50 web page at <https://www.acrod.org/ministries/acrod-family/spf50> to find out more about SPF50 and how to help your family read Scripture and Pray together at home. Don't forget to fill out the Commitment Card which is available in the SPF50 Section of the Diocesan Website, and return the Card to your priest.

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***In Your Prayers – Please Remember...*** His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Presbyteria Katie Baker and family, Dn. Steve Hall, Santiago Alzugaray, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Howl Family, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Robinson Family, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Dcn. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)