

GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA
THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR



Icon of the Descent into Hades



***This is the
chosen
and
holy day,
the foremost of
Sabbaths,
their
king and Lord,
the
feast of feasts
and
festival of festivals,
when all of us
bless
Christ forever!***

Ode 8
Resurrection Matins

Christ IS Risen! Indeed He IS Risen!

My Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Хрїсто́въ воскрѣсе! Воистину воскресе! (Old Slavonic)

Christos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese (Transliteration)

Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес! (Ukrainian)

Chrystos voskres! Voistynu voskres! (Transliteration)

Χριστός ἀνέστη! Ἀληθῶς ἀνέστη! (Greek)

Khristós Anést! Alithós Anést! (Transliteration)

Christus resurrexit! Resurrexit vere! (Latin)

المسيح قام! بالحقيقة قام! ; المسيح قام! حقاً قام!

a-Masīḥ qām! Belḥāqiqātl qām! (Transliteration)

It is with profound affection that I greet you on this wondrous day. I cannot find the appropriate words to tell you what a great joy and pleasure it is to celebrate this feast with you. It has been one of God's greatest gifts to me to have been chosen to serve you. It is my sincere prayer that some how I may have helped you understand the truth and depth of this feast. It is my hope that you will enter with me into the true meaning of Easter.

Easter is truly not about some distant, past historical event. It is about a truth revealed to us by God about our lives as humans. It is about realizing that LIFE is eternal and immortal because it is shared with our God, Who is eternal and immortal; and it is about God's love for us; it is about God helping us to come to a true understanding of human life.

HUMAN LIFE is a sharing in God's own life. This feast tells us that God shares His own life with us so that we might bring Him praise and glory. He shares His very life-force and Spirit with us so that we might know that we are loved and therefore seize every opportunity that life presents to grow in our hope and trust in Him.

God allows life to present challenges to us that are unique and purposefully designed to help us to grow. It is all a matter of us accepting life's challenges as moments of spiritual growth. May this Easter be a moment of grace for all of you.

Fr. Wayne



A WORD OF WELCOME

is extended to those who joined me and the spiritual communities of St. Michaels or Holy Ascension to celebrate PASCHA. I would, on behalf of these communities, greet you in the name of the Risen Lord and hope that your visit was spiritually rewarding. Whether you came as a *first-time* visitor or as a *friend from the past*, know that we are happy you joined us and hope you will join us again. Please know you are always welcome. It is our prayer that you will be filled with the joy that comes from truly believing that *Christ IS Risen!*



SINGING WITH JOY

All are reminded that the *PASCHA Tropar* is to be sung with “joyful enthusiasm.” *It is not a funeral dirge! It is a hymn of victory!* The pace should be “quick” and upbeat. It is meant to reflect a certain “eagerness” to share the Good News of the Lord’s Resurrection. Resist the temptation to drag the tempo. It is our declaration of joy! Would strangers know we’re happy and excited when they hear us sing? So, sing out with joy for truly Christ IS Risen! *Christus resurrexit!*



GREETINGS

I would extend PASCHA Greetings to those who receive my Bulletin in the mail or by email. If you do, it probably means that you were not here with us to celebrate PASCHA. Please know that you were in our thoughts and prayers.

*God bless each of you and grant you health and happiness!
Christ is Risen!*

The **ARTOS** . . . is the special loaf of bread we bless on PASCHA and then distribute on St. Thomas Day. This loaf reminds us that Christ, Who IS truly THE bread of life, is with us. *Χριστος Βοσκρες!*



REMEMBER . . . Monday and Tuesday are “Splash” Days. Guys splash gals on Monday and on Tuesday the gals have their revenge. Silly? Perhaps, but a wonderful way to make our joy real. *Christ IS Risen!*



A BIG THANK YOU is extended to the Dicky and Krokosky families for making Willow branches available last weekend. You are reminded to either burn or bury any old branches you may have. You are also asked to remember what these branches mean.

Χριστός ἀνέστη!

THE EASTERN CHURCH'S ICON OF THE RESURRECTION

At the center of our Christian faith is Jesus Christ and His Resurrection from the dead. As such, the Icon of the Resurrection is the most celebrated, the most common, the most cherished, the most instructive of all the icons we possess. The Eastern Church's Icon of the Lord's Resurrection does not show Christ coming out of the tomb. Rather, it presents the impact of the Lord's Resurrection, namely conquering death, shown by bringing Adam and Eve back to life and those who died before Him.

Jesus Christ was not content with laying in the tomb for three days after His death. Instead, while His body was entombed, His soul descended into Hades, the place where the souls of the deceased were held. He descended there not to suffer, but to free the souls trapped there. He brought light into darkness, causing the darkness to disappear. The Source of all Life descended into the abode of the dead and destroyed death, proclaiming that human life is eternal.

In the Icon, Jesus Christ stands victoriously in the center, robed in heavenly glory. He is shown as surrounded by a *mandorla*, a sphere of light, representing the Glory of God. He is shown pulling Adam and Eve from their tomb. He is pulling Adam from

the tomb by the wrist, and not the hand.

Surrounding Christ are John the Baptist and the Old Testament Righteous who awaited the Messiah.

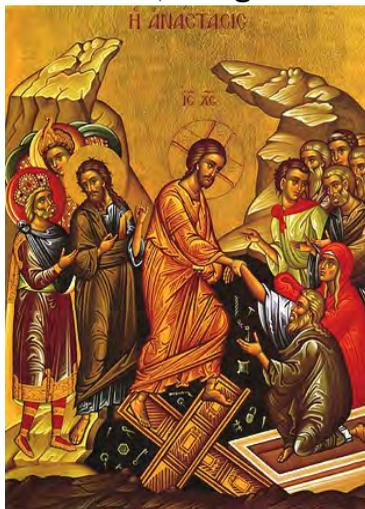
He frees them from Hades. And what of Hades? It is shown in the aftershock of Christ's descent. It is in utter chaos. This event, known as the **Harrowing of Hades**, was taught from the very beginning of the Church. Many of the Fathers shared this.

Beneath Christ's feet – which still carry the marks of His crucifixion –

lay the gates of Hades, smashed wide open. Often they are shown laying in the shape of the Cross. Just as the hymns proclaim, so too does the Icon: Christ has trampled Death by death.

The Eastern Church does not dwell on Christ coming out of the tomb or speculate how it happened. Rather, it stresses the fact that His death on the Cross eliminated Death. This is why we rejoice on Pascha! The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead changes how we think about life and eliminates, or should, our fear of death.

So our joy today is fueled by the truth that human life is immortal - that God has revealed that human death has been conquered by Christ - that we humans are immortal.





St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

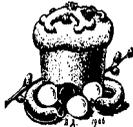
PASCHA Dinner

MAY 5th

"Reservations" are necessary!

Pastoral Letters

You will find the Pastoral Letters of our Bishops and Patriarch on our website. Take time to read them. The URL is on the following page. If you would like a paper copy, please contact me.



MANY THANKS

A big thank you is extended to all those who helped with the services, Steve, Len, Bob, Mike and those who sang and any others who were willing to help.

Christ IS Risen!

HOW TO CELEBRATE

If you truly believe what we celebrate today, then make a personal pledge to do all in your power to begin to think and act like Jesus. He is our model how to live.



A CALL TO HOLINESS

The call that God gives us to be holy is a call to be united with Him for all eternity. He, of course, does not force us to respond to His call. He gave us free will and respects our ability to decide. He created us in His image with the potential to grow in His likeness.



The Feast of Pascha should erase all doubts in our minds that we have been called to be united to Him. Through the raising of His Son Jesus, God clearly revealed that it was His intent when He created humankind that we should be united with Him for all eternity. This is why I am emboldened to believe in His love.

If indeed God did not love us, He would not have gone to such great lengths to call us to holiness - call us to a deeper union with Him. If He did not love us, He would never have created us in His image and given us the potential to grow in His likeness. And yet we, and centuries of people before us, believe that He did and does this. It is all a matter of our belief.

Now I realize that I cannot empirically prove any of this. It is a MATTER OF FAITH. All I do know is that this FAITH can make life easier to live. It provides something very important, I believe, and that is A MEANING AND PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES. It provides me with a clear purpose, namely to actualize the potential I have to grow in God's likeness. It provides me with an explanation of why life is as it is.

(Continued on page 8)

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

This article begins a series of installments about the Resurrection of Christ which I will continue during the Easter-tide. It is all about the Eastern Church's understanding of the Resurrection of Christ. It differs, in some ways from the Western Church's understanding.

Eastern Christians believe that the New Testament Church and the Christian faith itself appeared at a particular point in history because the crucified Jesus of Nazareth was raised from the dead. The cause behind the emergence of the Church and the Christian Faith was not a crucified, dead and buried Jesus. Rather, that very crucified, dead and buried Jesus was revealed to be both Lord and Christ following His Resurrection "on the third day."

God vindicated the messianic claims of Jesus when He raised Jesus from the dead "according to the Scriptures." We readily agree with the Apostle Paul's insistence on the absolute centrality of the bodily resurrection of Christ as the foundation of Christian faith in Jesus: "If Christ is not raised, then your faith is in vain and our preaching is in vain". Among all Christians this has been an overwhelming consensus since the initial witness of the apostles to the Risen Lord.

But since the emergence of critical biblical scholarship within the last two

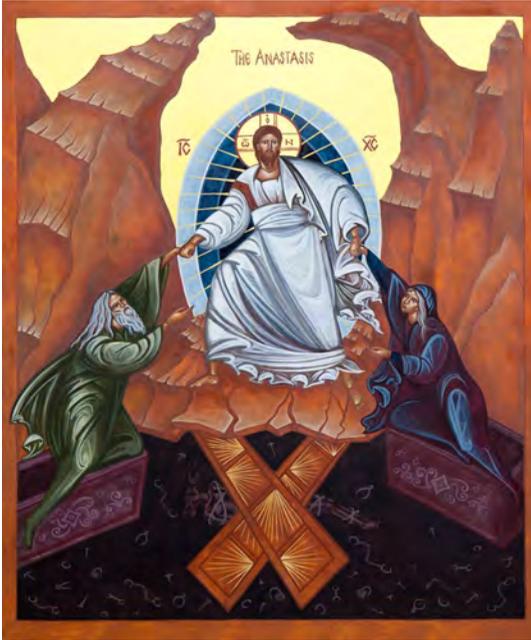


centuries or so, we find Christian scholars and those influenced by them questioning, reinterpreting or openly denying the bodily resurrection of Jesus. This process may be more accelerated today, or simply more prominent and public in its expression. A vivid - if not lurid - expression of this skeptical approach to the resurrection claims of the first Christians can be found in the work of the New Testament scholar Dom Dominic Crossan. In his reconstruction of events, the body of the crucified Jesus was discarded in a shallow grave, there to suffer the further humiliation of becoming the food of ravenous dogs. That is also the kind of counter-claim that will attract a good deal of publicity.

This threatens to undermine a consistent and long-standing witness among all Christians that points to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ among the great "religious founders" within human history. That uniqueness was articulated by Prof. Veselin Kesich in the following (Continued on page 7)

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

(Continued from page 6)



manner in his book, *The First Day of the New Creation*: “For the members of the first Christian community in Jerusalem, the resurrection of Christ was above all an event in the life of their Master, and then also in their own lives. After meeting Christ following his resurrection, they could have said with Saint Paul that necessity was laid upon them to preach the gospel of the resurrection. Christianity spread throughout the Greco-Roman world with the proclamation that Jesus who died on the cross was raised to a new life by God. The message of Christianity is without parallel in religious history in its content and in its demand.”

The Risen Christ spoke to His disciples about “belief” in His

resurrection even among those who did not “see” Him as those very first disciples did. This was in response to the Apostle Thomas’ movement from unbelief to belief when Jesus appeared to Thomas and offered him to probe the wounds in His hands and side: “You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed” (John 20:29).

Clearly, the presence of faith is essential in confessing that Jesus has been raised from the dead: “If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). However, in perhaps challenging a misconceived understanding of faith, this does not mean that believing that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead is an irrational leap into the unbelievable and indefensible.

On the one hand, the Resurrection is an overwhelming and awesome event that invokes “trembling and astonishment” in those who are presented with its reality - and perhaps initial silence because of its numinous quality (cf. Mark 16:8). On the other hand, Christians do not believe in the resurrection of Christ in the face of evidence that clearly contradicts or “disproves” that claim.

The Resurrection of Christ, although unbelievable, is an integral part of God’s revelation to us.

This is our faith’s challenge to us!

Schedule of Services

St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

Rectory: (313) 582-1424
Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
In most instances membership
required for six months

Funerals
Membership of an immediate
family member required

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

Sunday April 21 - The Great Day - PASCHA - Vellkden
8:00 AM - Resurrection Matins Followed by Divine Liturgy
Blessing of Food Immediately After the Liturgy

BRIGHT WEEK

Bright Monday April 22 - Theodore Sykiot, Venerable Father
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Bright Tuesday April 23 - George, Great Martyr & Wonderworker
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Bright Wednesday April 24 - Sabbas, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Bright Thursday April 25 - Mark, Apostle & Evangelist
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Bright Friday April 26 - Basil, Priest-Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday April 27 - Simeon, Priest-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Sunday April 28 - The Anti-Pasch - St. Thomas Day
10:00 AM - Special Intention

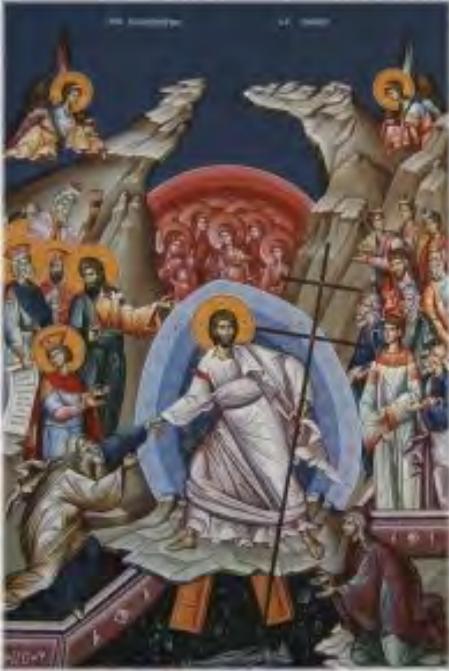
(Continued from page 5 - A Call to Holiness)

Today I would share my faith with you, my readers, and encourage you to believe the wondrous revelation made to us by our God through the Person of Jesus, the Christ. It is the belief of our Church that God became a human in the Person of Jesus and then, after His death, rose from the dead to tell us quite clearly that human life IS ETERNAL. Jesus is the Archetype of what God intended when He created humans. God poured His life and Spirit into His creation, which became known as humankind, so that He might share all that He has with us. Because the "power" that unites the Three Persons of the Godhead is love, He is compelled to pour it out to others and share it. Our response to His love must be to love others. ***Христосъ воскрес!***



<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

OUR CHURCH'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HADES



The teaching of Christ's descent into Hades is an inseparable part of the dogmatic tradition of the Church. It was shared by all members of the ancient church as reflected in the New Testament (NT), the works of the early Christian apologists, fathers and teachers of the Church, ancient and later writers of both the East and West, as well as in the baptismal creeds, Eucharistic services and liturgical texts. One author writes: "It seems that the descent of Christ into Hades was by itself not contested in any Christian community in the early Church.

While the fact that the descent was not itself questioned by the representatives of church tradition, there did exist various and different interpretations of the event. Many writers maintained that Christ freed all who were held captive in hell, others thought that only the Old Testament righteous were liberated, and another group believed that only those who came to believe in Christ and followed him were saved. Finally, others held that Christ freed only those who had lived in faith and piety during their earthly lives. The first interpretation is most widely reflected in the liturgical texts of the Eastern Church: that Christ "emptied" hell and "not a single mortal" remained. The first and second opinions were endowed with equal authority in the Eastern Christian patristic tradition, but with the passing of the centuries the first gradually gave way to the second. In the Western tradition after Augustine, the second and fourth views were given preference.

What is universally endorsed is the teaching that Christ mortified death and destroyed hell. This is, however, understood in different ways. The Eastern liturgical texts and many of the Fathers speak of a total destruction of death and hell. Others are more specific, saying that death and hell continue to exist but only inasmuch as people's evil wills encourage its existence. In the Western tradition the view that Christ's death harmed hell but did not mortify it came into dominance and remains in dominance.

The significance of the descent into Hades has been evaluated in a variety of ways. In the West some have maintained that the descent into Hades

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OUR CHURCH'S UNDERSTANDING OF CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HADES

(Continued from page 9 - Christ's Descent into Hades)

was a “one-time” event that had significance only for those who were in hell when it happened. Certain Western writers even considered that the “memory” of Christ’s descent into Hades was not retained there. This is a perception that is entirely foreign to the Eastern tradition, in which the descent is truly seen as an event of universal significance. A great number of Eastern authors perceived Christ’s descent into Hades as an event of universal significance and some extended its saving action not only to past generations but also to all those who followed. The idea that all the dead received the opportunity to be saved is quite widespread among Eastern Christian writers, and it was only in the West where some authors labeled it heretical.

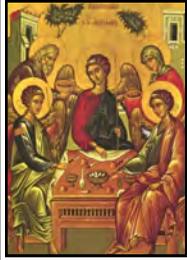
Belief in Christ’s descent into Hades and his preaching to the dead belongs to the realm of general church doctrine. This belief is based on the New Testament (NT), works of the church fathers and liturgical texts. It is, therefore as significant for our church today as it was for the Christian Church of early centuries. The teaching that Christ granted to *all* the possibility of salvation and opened for *all* the doors to paradise should also be considered general church doctrine. This teaching is confirmed by



the vast majority of liturgical texts referring to the subject, as well as by works of many church fathers.

The teaching that Christ trampled death by His death, abolished the power of the devil and destroyed hell - a teaching based on the NT, liturgical texts and works of the church fathers - is general church doctrine. The devil, death and hell continue to exist, but their power over people is neither unconditional nor unlimited, for hell “reigns,” but “not for ever,” over the race of mortals. The opinion that Christ only “wounded” hell but did not mortify it should be considered a personal interpretation without authority for the entire church

Think about how we celebrate Pascha! Our liturgical tradition tells us that Christ DID conquer Death and He did destroy hell. **CHRIST IS RISEN.**



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 16 The GREAT DAY - PASCHA - EASTER - VELIKDEN April 20-21, 2019



An Easter Tradition

All are reminded again that from PASCHA until Pentecost our tradition is

TO STAND IN PRAYER

We even encouraged to stand *in private prayer*. Sitting is permitted when tired or elderly. *It is not more pious to kneel!* This tradition reminds us that we are the children of God and thus privileged, because we are His heirs, to stand in His presence.



A BIG THANK YOU ... is truly extended to each and every person who took the time to remember me at PASCHA. Please know your thoughtfulness is appreciated and cherished. Thank you for making me a part of your life. I pray that each of you may be blessed with health and happiness.

A WORD OF THANKS ... is extended to all who generously donated for PASCHA flowers, allowing our worship space to be so beautifully decorated. Please know that your generosity has brought great joy to me and to many others.

A WORD OF GRATITUDE ... is extended to all those who helped with the singing during this sacred time. Your efforts are truly appreciated. Singing is a way to become truly involved in our worship and to praise God. They say that singing prayer is like praying twice and like the angels before His throne.

A SPECIAL THANKS ... is offered to any and all who helped in any way to make our Great and Holy Week Services prayerful. *Thank You!*



BRIGHT WEEK . . . is the eight day period that follows PASCHA. The last day, St. Thomas's Day, is the Anti-Pasch. Each day of this week is a celebration of PASCHA. During ordinary time, PASCHA is celebrated only every weekend. This tradition is a direct carryover of the Jewish Passover which is celebrated for eight days. During the period from PASCHA to Pentecost Sunday is counted as the first, not last, day of



Great and Holy Pascha

It is the Pasch; the Pasch of the Lord.
O You, who are truly all in all!
The joy, the honor, the food and the
delight of every creature;
through You the shadows of death
have fled away,
and life is given to all,
the gates of heaven are flung open.

God becomes man
and man is raised up to the likeness of God.
O divine Pasch!
O Pasch, light of new splendor.

The lamps of our souls will no more burn out.
The flame of grace,
divine and spiritual,

burns in the body and soul,
nourished by the resurrection of Christ.

We beg you, O Christ, Lord God,
eternal king of the spiritual world,
stretch out your protecting hands
over your holy Church
and over your holy people;
defend them, keep them, preserve them.

Raise up your standard over us
and grant that we may sing with Moses
the song of victory,
for yours is the glory and the power
for all eternity! Amen

St. Hippolytus of Rome