

SS. PETER & PAUL

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Gospel Reading ~ John 1:1-17
Epistle Reading ~ Acts 1:1-8
Resurrection of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ

This Week at a Glance

Sat, April 14th

6:00 pm - Great Vespers

Sun, April 15th

St. Thomas Sunday

9:00 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Sunday School

Adult Ed Coffee Hour

Grave Blessings

Will be postponed until after next month. Date and schedule to be announced.



Gospel Meditation

I greet all of you on this bright day, the radiant and holy day of Pascha, the day upon which the light of Christ has risen upon all mortal human beings. The light that now surrounds us in our Churches, in our Monasteries, and in all of creation, is greater than can be accounted for by physical candles, chandeliers, or the sun and the moon.

The light that presently shines is the light of the Lord's dramatic victory over hell, over corruption and over death itself. He had reminded His Disciples that whosoever lives and believes on me, shall never die and today, that promise is fulfilled in us, for Christ's victory has become our victory – we have entered fully into it.

The Holy Apostle Paul reminds us of this when he says: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should also walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:3-5).

As we share the joy of the Feast of Feasts in our communities, with our families, and even with strangers, let us all give thanks for the light in our hearts, for it is not a simple emotional response, but an experience of authentic life – life which pierces through the darkness of our earthly cares and passions. And so, let us rejoice in the Lord with thanksgiving for His great victory, and let us cry out with the paschal hymn: Yesterday, O Christ, I was buried with Thee, and today I rise again with Thee, in Thy rising. Yesterday I was crucified with Thee, now glorify me, O Savior, in Thy Kingdom.

Christ is risen!

† **TIKHON**

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

105th Anniversary Celebration

In honor of our parish's 105th anniversary, His Beatitude Met. Tikhon, His Grace, Bishop Paul and the St Tikhon's Mission Choir will be here at our parish on April 21-22. On Saturday the 21st, Vespers at 4:00pm. Banquet with the Bishop and Choir Concert at St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church at 5:00pm. On Sunday following the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, there will be an expanded coffee hour with the hierarchs.

Congratulations!

On Holy Saturday, at the Vesperal Liturgy, we received **Annette Kunakowsky** into the Orthodox Church through Holy Chrismation. May God grant her and her family many years! The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

The Feast of Feasts

Holy Week comes to an end at sunset of Great and Holy Saturday, as the Church prepares to celebrate her most ancient and preeminent festival, Pascha, the feast of feasts. The time of preparation will give way to a time of fulfillment. The glorious and resplendent light emanating from the empty Tomb will dispel the darkness. Christ, risen from the dead, cracks the fortress of death and takes "captivity captive" (Psalm 67:19). All the limitations of our createdness are torn asunder. Death is swallowed up in victory and life is liberated. "For as by a man came death, by a man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:21-22). Pascha is the dawn of the new and unending day. The Resurrection constitutes the most radical and decisive deliverance of humankind.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the fundamental truth and absolute fact of the Christian faith. It is the central experience and essential kerygma of the Church. It confirms the authenticity of Christ's remarkable earthly life and vindicates the truth of His teaching. It seals all His redemptive work: His life, the model of a holy life; His compelling and unique teaching; His extraordinary works; and His awesome, life-creating death. Christ's Resurrection is the guarantee of our salvation. Together with His Ascension it brings to perfection God's union with us for all eternity.

The Resurrection made possible the miracle of the Church, which in every age and generation proclaims and affirms "God's plan for the universe, the ultimate divinization of man and the created order." The profound experience of and the unshakable belief in the risen Lord enabled the Apostles to evangelize the world and empowered the Church to overcome paganism. The Resurrection discloses the indestructible power and inscrutable wisdom of God. It disposes of the illusory myths and belief systems by which people, bereft of divine knowledge, strain to affirm the meaning and purpose of their existence. Christ, risen and glorified, releases humanity from the delusions of idolatry. In Him grave-bound humanity discovers and is filled with incomparable hope. The Resurrection bestows illumination, energizes souls, brings forgiveness, transfigures lives, creates saints, and gives joy.

The Resurrection has not yet abolished the reality of death. But it has revealed its powerlessness (Hebrews 2:14-15). We continue to die as a result of the Fall. Our bodies decay and fall away. "God allows death to exist but turns it against corruption and its cause, sin, and sets a boundary both to corruption and sin." Thus, physical death does not destroy our life of communion with God. Rather, we move from death to life - from this fallen world to God's reign.

The Icon

One of the most symbolic of the Festal Icons of the Orthodox Church is that of the Holy Resurrection. In the center of this radiant event is Christ pulling Adam and Eve up from their tombs. The gates of the Realm of Death are broken and thrown down. Death, personified in human form is defeated, and bound hand and foot at the bottom of the scene. We recall the joyous words of St. Paul: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Corinthians 15:55)

In the background stands the host of the departed, so numerous they can not be depicted. Among them in the front of the multitude are some of the righteous dead, though now invigorated by the Resurrection. King David and his son Solomon are seen on the left wearing crowns. Near the center is Saint John the Baptist. On the other side is Abel, the son of Adam and the first man to ever die. He wears a shepherds robe and has a cane. Many Icons of this subject depict large crowds with a few other recognizable prophets.



