

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

REJOICE, FOR HE IS RISEN!

THE FEAST OF FEASTS

In the eight ode of the resurrection Canon, written by St. John of Damascus, we Find this descriptive reference to Pascha:

“ THIS IS THE HOLY AND CHOSEN DAY; THE FIRST OF SABBATHS; LORD AND KING; THE FEAST OF FEASTS; AND THE TRIUMPH OF TRIUMPHS. LET US BLESS CHRIST ON THIS DAY FOREVER.” Certainly we all can agree on the monumental importance of today. Everything pales in comparison to Christ’s rising from the dead. No triumph is greater. No Sabbath is sweeter. No day is as sacred and blessed. No celebration carries the same impact or magnitude.

Words cannot properly describe the feeling in our hearts and souls on this ‘FEAST OF FEASTS.’ How does one verbalize the surge of emotion released when the Paschal troparion is sung for the first time? What can be said for the inner joy that exists for us when we view our church brilliantly illumined at Resurrection Matins --- A sharp contrast to the solemn darkness so prevalent in our Lenten liturgical life?

For the next 40 days, we will greet each other repeatedly with the most meaningful of Christian phrases: CHRIST IS RISEN. The message of Pascha, however, is not merely seasonal. We are constantly overshadowed by the light of the Resurrection. All of our daily actions are tempered by the victory of our Saviour over death and the grave. We, who profess to be His devoted followers, are heartened by His blessed promise to us: **I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. HE, WHO BELIEVES IN ME, WILL NEVER DIE.”**

Let us boldly proclaim the words of St. John Chrysostom as we celebrate Pascha: “CHRIST IS RISEN, AND DEATH IS ABOLISHED. CHRIST IS RISEN, AND THE DEMONS ARE CAST DOWN. CHRIST IS RISEN, AND THE ANGELS REJOICE. CHRIST IS RISEN, AND LIFE IS FREED!”