

Koinonia Year Two—April
Content from *Growing Faithful*
Scripture from the NRSV Bible

PASCHA

The Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Apolytikion and Kontakion of the Holy and Great Sunday of Pascha

Christ has risen from the dead,
by death he has trampled on death
and to those in the graves given life.

Though you descended into a tomb, O Immortal,
yet you destroyed the power of Hell;
and you arose as victor, O Christ God,
calling to the Myrrh-bearing women:
Rejoice!
and giving peace to your Apostles,
O you who grant resurrection to the fallen.

HEAR the Word of God—

Acts 1:1-8

1In the first book, Theopholis, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning 2until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; 5for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with (in / by) the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

John 1:1-18 (Note: the actual liturgical reading does not include vs. 18.)

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

6There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") 16From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

SHARE thoughts and insights—

- * What do we learn of salvation history through the Epistle and Gospel readings?
- * What of—and about—Christ is revealed in the Gospel reading?
- * Christ is the Word of God. What does this mean? What are the implications of this for how we are to live?
- * What do we learn about God the Father through the Epistle and Gospel readings?
- * What do we learn about the Holy Spirit in Epistle reading? Where do you see the Holy Spirit in the Gospel reading?
- * What of "eternity now" do you see—experience and realize—in and through Pascha—the feast of feasts?
- ~ Looking at and exploring the Gospel reading...
 - Who is the Word of God?
 - What is the Word of God?
 - Who spoke of the Word of God?

Who accepted the Word of God? Who did not accept the Word of God?

What does the Word of God give us?

Whom does the Word of God show us?

GROW in faith—

* *From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.* Knowing that we have all—each one of us!—received from Christ's fullness, how can you grow in your ability to see God's grace in others?

~ How can you see something of God in others? This is God's grace.

SERVE one another in love—

* Practice seeing God's grace in others and help bring this grace to light.

~ Practice seeing something good in others, and name the goodness you see.

PRAY—

Apolytikion of the Resurrection

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
and while soldiers were guarding your most pure Body,
you rose, O Savior, on the third day,
giving life to the world;
therefore the heavenly Powers cried out to you, Giver of Life:
Glory to your Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to your Kingdom!
Glory to your dispensation, only Lover of mankind!