



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No 30 May '11

Christ is Risen!

ARCHBISHOP MARK'S PASCHAL MESSAGE

Thou, O Christ, art gone down to the nethermost parts of the earth, shattering the everlasting bolts which had kept the captives in....

Orthodox Christians are enveloped by the greatest of joys at Easter, when the Church on earth and the Church in heaven are triumphant, when, together with us, all nature glorifies the Resurrection of Christ and is herself raised up, renewed.

*Today all things are filled with light, heaven, earth and that which is beneath the earth...Let us imagine the relief felt by the prophets and righteous of the Old Testament, who in hope had been awaiting the coming of the Messiah, when the light of Christ shone forth in the dark abysses of hades. What joy was felt then by the souls of despairing sinners who at that moment came to believe in the saving Light! They all became witnesses of how the Lord had *slain hell with the brightness of His Divinity* and destroyed the *everlasting bolts*. No-one else could have done this. Only He, in His most great humility and love, could raise up and lead forth the prisoners of the underworld from their everlasting captivity.*

Nowadays the underworld is continually stirring and shaking. This is permitted by God in order to bring us to our senses. Humanity asks in disbelief: What will happen next? News of floods, fires and earthquakes have become commonplace. Hundreds of thousands have perished from the ragings of the elements. Unheard of heat or cold, non-stop rains or lethal droughts, tsunamis, typhoons and eruptions of volcanoes threaten and invade our lives despite all the achievements of science and technology. Nevertheless, many, a great many, refuse to see in all this the consequences of sin and their own remoteness from God. Such people are not interested in why the Creator Himself went down into *the nethermost parts of the earth*. This is why they are unable to rejoice at His resurrection. Putting their hope in human reason and all-powerful ‘progress’, they still live in constant fear of both present and future natural catastrophes.

However we, dear brothers and sisters, *will not fear when the earth is troubled, nor when the mountains are removed into the heart of the sea*. (Ps 45, 3), for as Orthodox Christians we believe that the Lord has not appointed our planet, but other places for the eternal life of the human race. *The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up* (2 Peter 3, 10), as the holy Apostle warns the faithful. The Lord Who destroyed the gates of hell has opened the heavens to us and led us, as the Easter synaxarion proclaims, to ‘the ancient inheritance which perishes not’. *By Thy resurrection, O Lord, paradise has been revealed anew* – as Holy Church sings in Bright Week. As soon as we take in this news with our

whole heart and mind, with our whole being, we truly find the entrance to the *paradise of sweetness* which perishes not, open to those who have refused the satanic pride of the self-exalted human mind, having humbly accepted the Word of God, Holy Tradition and the experience of the Church.

In the Church of Christ we know and experience the saving lightness that comes to us through true repentance, this miraculous medicine granted to us by the All-Merciful Saviour. Not only in Lent but throughout the whole year, again and again we go out through the door of repentance from the dark into the wonderful light of Christ, and together with the Psalmist we thank God, Who delivers our souls *from the lowest hell* (Ps 85, 13) – from captivity to our sins and passions.

During the last century many of us suffered an earthly captivity, the inhuman violence of atheist tyranny. Great is the unforgettable joy which is felt at freedom from such oppression. But far above this is the unspeakable joy of those who have escaped from a life of sin into the hands of the Father. The Lord Himself shelters and warms such repentant fugitives with His love and mercy, He clothes them with immortality and places on their fingers a precious ring, signifying the passage from captivity and slavery to the inheritance of the children of God, partakers of His everlasting goodness.

Let us pray that the joy of the Resurrection of Christ may become for us permanent and integral, that we may accept the resurrection of our souls from a life of sin and affirm our steps on the path of salvation. That, seeing our rejoicing and freedom, those near us may be able to rejoice with us and be resurrected with us in Christ. And that those who for the moment are far from understanding the true joy that Christ is risen, may through our faith and love awaken from the slumber of sin and hasten to the embrace of the Risen Saviour.

The Passover, the Passover of the Lord, let us embrace one another in joy! Amen.

+ Archbishop Mark

CHURCH NOTES & JOTTINGS

RADONITSA

Visiting the cemeteries on the Tuesday after Thomas Sunday (3 May this year) is an Orthodox custom.

“On this day, the Tuesday of St. Thomas week, according to the order instituted by our Holy Fathers, we call to remembrance, in Paschal joy, all those who have died from the beginning of the ages in faith and in the hope of resurrection and life eternal.

Having previously celebrated the radiant feast of Christ's glorious Resurrection, the faithful commemorate the dead today with the pious intent to share the great joy of this Paschal feast with those who have departed this life in the hope of their own resurrection. This is the same blessed joy with which the dead heard our Lord announce His victory over death when He descended into Hades, thus leading forth by the hand the righteous souls of the Old Covenant into Paradise. This is the same unhopd-for joy the Holy Myrrh-bearing Women experienced when discovering the empty tomb and the undisturbed grave clothes. In addition, this is the same bright joy the Holy Apostles encountered in the Upper Room where Christ appeared though the doors were closed. In short, this feast is a kindred joy, to celebrate the luminous Resurrection with our Orthodox forefathers who have fallen asleep.

There is evidence of the commemoration of the dead today in the writings of the Church Fathers. St. John Chrysostom (AD349-407) mentions the commemoration of the dead performed on Tuesday of St. Thomas week in his "Homily on the Cemetery and the Cross."

Today, the faithful departed are remembered in Divine Liturgies, "koliva" is prepared and blessed in the churches in memory of those who have fallen asleep, and the Orthodox graves in cemeteries are blessed by the priests and visited by the faithful. On this day alms are given to the poor. Furthermore, it should be noted that due to the great spiritual joy this jubilant commemoration bears, it is called in the Slavonic tongue, "Radonitsa," or *Day of Rejoicing*."

We plan to serve a Liturgy in our church at 9.45am. And after this we will visit the grave of our foundress and then we will visit graves in Beccles Cemetery and in other churchyards where we know that Orthodox Christians are buried. If you would like us to visit the graves of your loved ones, that are presently unknown to us, please let us have the details of the location/s.

IKON GIFT

We have also recently received a copy of the Kazanski Ikon of the Mother of God from Claudia Manta, who lives in Beccles. The ikon had belonged to a pious Romanian woman called Zorica-Mirela who reposed shortly before the start of Great Lent. May God grant her Eternal Memory.

SCHOOL ROOM

We are grateful to Laura Jordan-Tozeland's grandson, Jake Doyle, for his sterling efforts in spending two days painting the old school room. This is the first stage in the process of turning this room into a book room for SGOIS stock. The next job is to recover and restore the former office which, years ago, was incorporated into the hall by piercing one wall with a large open arch. This arch will be blocked in order to turn the area of the former office back into a separate room again.

INTER-CHURCH QUIZ

The annual inter-church quiz was held in Mettingham Village Hall on Friday 15 April. There were ten teams from various local churches. Since the Anglican parish host this event, they do not enter a team. Thus we were the only team representing Mettingham. Unhappily, for the second year running, we only managed to be in second place. Holy Trinity Parish from Bungay scored 67 points and were the winners. We scored 63½ points.

LOOKING AHEAD

The annual Sponsored Bicycle Ride, organised by Suffolk Historic Churches Trust is on Saturday 10 September this year.

Also our church Patronal Festival is on 6 November. Do make a note of this in your diary.

NAMEDAYS

To everyone celebrating a nameday this month we send Congratulations and wish you Many Years.

4 May - St Philippa of Perga in Pamphylia - Matushka Philippa Steer

6 May - St George the Great Martyr - George Tattum-Smith

8 May - St Mark the Evangelist - Reader Mark Tattum-Smith

15 May - St Boris & St Gleb, Martyrs - Boris Jermy, Gleb Jermy

21 May - Apostle & Evangelist, St John the Theologian - John Andrews

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Cheques for the church fund should be made payable to "*Joy of All Who Sorrow*" Church.

The account is in HSBC Bank, 3 New Market, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 9HQ

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