

A Liturgical Explanation of Holy Week

Saturday of Lazarus

"Having fulfilled Forty Days... we ask to see the Holy Week of Thy Passion." With these words sung at Vespers of Friday, Lent comes to its end and we enter into the annual commemoration of Christ's suffering, death and Resurrection. It begins on the Saturday of Lazarus. The double feast of Lazarus' resurrection and the Entrance of the Lord to Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) are described in liturgical texts as the "beginning of the Cross" and are to be understood therefore, within the context of the Holy Week. The common Troparion of these days explicitly affirms that by raising Lazarus from the dead Christ confirmed the truth of general resurrection. It is highly significant that we are led into the darkness of the Cross by one of the twelve major feasts of the Church. Light and joy shine not only at the end of Holy Week but also at its beginning. All those familiar with Orthodox worship know the peculiar, almost paradoxical character of Lazarus Saturday services. It is a Sunday, i.e., a Resurrection, service on a Saturday, a day usually devoted to the liturgical commemoration of the dead. And the joy which permeates these services stresses one central theme: the forthcoming victory of Christ over Hades. Hades is the Biblical term for that inescapable darkness and destruction that swallows all life and poisons with its shadow the whole world. But now -- with Lazarus' resurrection -- "death begins to tremble." For there the decisive duel between Life and Death begins and it gives us the key to the entire liturgical mystery of Pascha. In the early church Lazarus Saturday was called "announcement of Pascha", it announces and anticipates, indeed, the wonderful light and peace of the next Saturday - the Great and Holy Saturday, the day of the Lifegiving Tomb.

Palm Sunday: The Entrance

The Saturday of Lazarus from the liturgical point of view is the pre-feast of Palm Sunday - the Entrance of Our Lord into Jerusalem. Both feasts have a common theme; triumph and victory. Saturday reveals the Enemy, which is Death. Palm Sunday announces the meaning of victory as the triumph of the Kingdom of God. Palm Sunday the acceptance by the world of its only King, Jesus Christ. In the life of Jesus the solemn entrance in the Holy City was the only visible triumph. Up to that day, He consistently rejected all attempts to glorify Him. But six days before the Passover, He not only accepted to be glorified, He Himself provoked and arranged this glorification by doing what the prophet Zacharias announced: "behold, Thy King cometh unto thee... lowly and riding upon an ass.." (Zac. 9:9).

He made it clear that He wanted to be acclaimed and acknowledged as the Messiah, the King and the Redeemer of Israel. The Gospel narratives stress all these Messianic features; the Palms, the cry from the crowd of "Hosanna", the acclamation of Jesus as the Son of David and the King of Israel. The history of Israel is now coming to its end; such is the meaning of this event, for the purpose of that history was to announce and to prepare the Kingdom of God, the advent of the Messiah. And now it is fulfilled. For the King enters His Holy City and in Him all prophecies, all expectations find their fulfillment. He inaugurates His Kingdom. The Liturgy of Palm Sunday commemorates this event. With palm branches in our hands, we identify ourselves with the people of Jerusalem; together with them we greet the lowly King, singing Hosanna to Him. But what is the meaning of this today for us? First, it is our confession of Christ as our King and Lord. We forget so often that the Kingdom of God has already been inaugurated and that on the day of our Baptism we were made citizens of it and promised to put our loyalty to it above all other loyalties. We must remember that for a few hours Christ was indeed King on earth in this world of ours, for a few hours only and in one city. But as in Lazarus we have recognized the image of each man, in this one city we acknowledge the mystical centre of the world and indeed of the whole of creation. For such is the biblical meaning of Jerusalem, the focal point of the whole history of salvation and redemption, the holy city of God's advent. Therefore, the Kingdom inaugurated in Jerusalem is a universal Kingdom, embracing in its perspective all men and the totality of creation. The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem came at the end of the entire process of preparation revealed in the Bible: it was the end of all that God did for men. And thus this short hour of Christ's earthly triumph acquires an eternal meaning. It introduces the reality of the Kingdom into our time, into all hours, makes this Kingdom the meaning of time and its ultimate goal. The Kingdom was revealed in this world - from that hour - its presence judges and transforms human history. And at the most solemn moment of our liturgical celebration, when we receive from the priest a palm branch, we renew our oath to our King and confess His Kingdom as the ultimate meaning and content of our life. We confess that everything in our life and in the world belongs to Christ, nothing can be taken away from its sole real Owner, for there is no area of life in which He is not to rule, to save and to redeem. We proclaim the universal and total responsibility of the Church for human history and uphold her universal mission.

The Way of the Cross

We know however, that the King whom the Jews acclaimed then, and whom we acclaim today, is on His way to Golgotha, to the Cross and to the grave, we know

that this short triumph is but the prologue of His sacrifice. The branches in our hands signify, therefore, our readiness and willingness to follow Him on this sacrificial way and our acceptance of sacrifice and self-denial as the only royal way to the Kingdom. And finally these branches, this celebration, proclaim our faith in the final victory of Christ. His Kingdom is yet hidden and the world ignores it. It lives as if the decisive event had not taken place, as if God had not died on the Cross and Man in Him was not risen from the dead. But we, Orthodox Christians, believe in the coming of the Kingdom in which God will be all in all and Christ the only King. Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: The End - These three days, which the Church calls Great and Holy have within the liturgical development of Holy Week a very definite purpose. They place all its celebrations into the perspective of End; they remind us of the eschatological meaning of Pascha. So often the Holy Week is considered one of the beautiful traditions" or "customs", a self evident "part" of our calendar. We take it for granted and enjoy it as a cherished annual event which we have observed since our childhood. We admire the beauty of its services, the pageantry of its rites and, last but not least, we like the fuss about the Paschal table. Then when all this is done, we resume our normal life. But do we understand that when the world rejected its Savior, when "Jesus began to be sorrowful and very heavy....and his soul was exceedingly sorrowful even unto death," when He died on the Cross, "normal life" came to its . For they were "normal" men who shouted, "Crucify Him!", who spat on Him and nailed Him to the Cross. They hated and killed Him precisely because He was troubling their normal life. It was indeed a perfectly "normal" world which preferred darkness and death to light and life. By the death of Jesus, this "normal" world, this "normal" life was irrevocably condemned, or rather, they revealed their true and abnormal nature i.e. their inability to receive the - "Now is the judgment of this world." (John 12:31). The Pascha (Passover) of Jesus signified its end to "this world" and it has been at its end since then. This end can last for hundreds of centuries; this does not alter the nature of time in which we live as the "last time." The "fashion of this world passes away..." (1 Corinthians 7:31).

Holy Thursday: The Last Supper

Two events shape the Liturgy of the Great and Holy Thursday: the Last Supper and the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. The Last Supper is the ultimate revelation of God's redeeming love for man. The betrayal by Judas reveals that sin, death and self-destruction are also due to love, but love directed at that which does not deserve love. The mystery of this unique day, and its liturgy where light and darkness, joy and sorrow are so strangely mixed, challenges us with the choice on

which the eternal destiny of each one of us depends. "Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come... having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end..." (John 13:1) To understand the meaning of the Last Supper, we must see it as the very end of the great movement of Divine Love which began with the creation of the world and is now to be consummated in the death and resurrection of Christ. God is love. (1 John 4:8) And the first gift of Love was life. The meaning, the content of life, was communion. But through sin, if man betrayed, God remained faithful to man. He did not "turn Himself away forever from His creature whom He had made, neither did He forget the works of His hands, but He visited him in diverse manners, through the tender compassion of His mercy." (Liturgy of St. Basil) A new Divine work began, that of redemption and salvation. And it was fulfilled in Christ, the Son of God, Who, in order to restore man to his pristine beauty and to restore life as communion with God, became Man, took upon Himself our nature, with its thirst and hunger, with its desire for and love of life. And in Him life was revealed, given, accepted and fulfilled as total and perfect Eucharist, as total and perfect communion with God. He rejected the basic human temptation: to live "by bread alone." He revealed that God and His kingdom are the real food, the real life of man. And this perfect Eucharistic Life, filled with God, and therefore Divine and immortal, He gave to all those who would believe in Him, i.e., find in Him the meaning and the content of their lives. Such is the wonderful meaning of the Last Supper. He offered Himself as the true food of man, because the life revealed in Him is the true Life, and the movement of Divine Love which began in paradise with a Divine "take, eat..." (for eating is life for man) comes now "unto the end" with the Divine "take, eat, this is My Body..." (for God is life of man...) The Last Supper is the restoration of the paradise of bliss, of life as Eucharist and Communion. But this hour of ultimate love is also that of the ultimate betrayal. Judas leaves the light of the Upper Room and goes into darkness. "And it was night." (John 13:30) Why does he leave? Because he loves, answers the gospel, the "silver" more than he loves the Lord. Each year, as we immerse ourselves into the unfathomable light and depth of Holy Thursday, the same decisive question is addressed to each one of us: do I respond to Christ's love and accept it as my life, or do I follow Judas into the darkness of the night?

Great and Holy Friday

From the light of Holy Thursday we enter into the darkness of Friday, the day of Christ's Passion, Death and Burial. In the early Church this day was called "Pascha of the Cross," for it is indeed the beginning of that Passover or Passage whose whole meaning will be gradually revealed to us, first, in the wonderful quiet of

the Great and Blessed Sabbath, and then, in the joy of the Resurrection day. If only we could realize that on Great and Holy Friday (Megali Paraskevi Gk.) darkness is not merely symbolical and commemorative. So often we watch the beautiful and solemn sadness of these services in a spirit of self-righteousness and self-justification. Two thousand years ago bad men killed Christ, but today we - the good Christian people -- erect sumptuous Tombs in our Churches - is this not the sign of our goodness? Yet, Good Friday deals not with the past alone. It is the day of Sin, the day of Evil, the day on which the Church invites us to realize their awful reality and power in "this world." For sin and evil have not disappeared, but, on the contrary, still constitute the basic law of the world and of our life. And we who call ourselves Christians, do we not so often make ours that logic of evil which led the Jewish Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate, the Roman soldiers and the whole crowd to hate, torture and kill Christ? On what side, with whom would we have been, had we lived in Jerusalem under Pilate? This is the question addressed to us in every word of the Holy Friday services. It is the revelation of the true nature of the world which preferred then and still prefers darkness to light, evil to good, death to life. Having condemned Christ to death, "this world" has condemned itself to death and inasmuch as we accept its spirit, its sin, its betrayal of God - we are also condemned. Such is the first and dreadfully realistic meaning of Good Friday: a condemnation to death.

Great and Holy Saturday

This is the Blessed Sabbath. The "Great and Holy Sabbath" is the day which connects Good Friday, the commemoration of the Cross, with the day of His Resurrection. To many the real nature and the meaning of this "connection", or "middle day", remains obscure. For a good majority of churchgoers, the "important" days of Holy Week are Friday and Sunday, the Cross and the Resurrection. These two days, however, remain somehow "disconnected." There is a day of sorrow, and then, there is the day of joy. In this sequence, sorrow is simply replaced by joy, but according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, expressed in Her Liturgical tradition, the nature of this sequence is not that of a simple replacement. The Church proclaims that Christ has "trampled death by death." It means that even before the Resurrection, an event takes place, in which the sorrow is not simply replaced by joy, but is itself transformed into joy. Great Saturday is precisely this day of transformation, the day when victory grows from inside the defeat, when before the Resurrection, we are given to contemplate the death of death itself. All this is expressed, and even more, all this really takes place every year in this marvelous morning service, in this liturgical commemoration which becomes for us a saving and transforming

present. On coming to the Church on the morning of Holy Saturday, Friday has just been liturgically completed. The sorrow of Friday is, therefore, the initial theme, the starting point of Matins of Saturday. It begins as a funeral service, as a lamentation over a dead body. After the singing of the funeral troparia and a slow censuring of the church, the celebrants approach the Epitaphion. We stand at the grave of our Lord, we contemplate His death. Psalm 119 is sung and to each verse we add a special "praise", which expresses the horror of men, and of the whole creation, before the death of Jesus: "O all ye mountains and hills, and all ye gatherings of men," "Mourn, weep and lament with me, the Mother of your God" And yet, from the beginning, along with this initial theme of sorrow and lamentation, a new theme makes its appearance and will become more and more apparent. We find it, first of all, in Psalm 119 - "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." The death of Christ is the ultimate proof of His love for the will of God, of His obedience to His Father. It is an act of pure obedience, of full trust in the Father's will; and for the Church it is precisely this obedience to the end, this perfect humility of the Son that constitutes the foundation, the beginning of His victory. The Father desires this death, the Son accepts it, revealing an unconditional faith in the perfection of the Father's will, in the necessity of this sacrifice of the Son by the Father. Psalm 119 is the psalm of that obedience, and therefore the announcement that in obedience the triumph has begun. But why does the Father desire this death? Why is it necessary? The death of Christ is described as His descent into Hades. "Hades" in the concrete Biblical language means the realm of death, which God has not created and which He did not want; it also signifies that the Prince of this world is all powerful in the world. Satan, Sin, Death - these are the "dimensions" of Hades, its content. For sin comes from Satan and Death is the result of sin - "sin entered the world, and death by sin." (Romans 5:12). The entire universe after the fall had become a cosmic cemetery, it was condemned to destruction and despair. And this is why death is "the last enemy," (1 Corinthians 15:20) and its destruction constitutes the ultimate goal of the Incarnation. This encounter with death is the "hour" of Christ of which He said that "for this hour have I come." (John 12:27) Now this hour has come and the Son of God enters into Death. The Holy Fathers of the Church usually describe this moment as a duel between Christ and Death, Christ and Satan. For this death was to be either the last triumph of Satan, or his decisive defeat. The duel develops in several stages. At first, the forces of evil seem to triumph. The Righteous One is crucified, abandoned by all, and endures a shameful death. He also becomes the partaker of "Hades," of this place of darkness and despair. But at this very moment, the real meaning of this death is revealed. The One who dies on the Cross has Life in Himself, i.e., He has life not as a gift from outside, a gift which therefore can be taken away from Him, but as

His own Essence. For He is the Life and the Source of all life. "In Him was Life and Life was the light of man." The man Jesus dies, but this Man is the Son of God. As man, He can really die, but in Him, God Himself enters the realm of death. This is the unique, the incomparable meaning of Christ's death. In it, the man who dies is God, or to be more exact, the God-Man. God is the Holy Immortal; and only in the unity "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation" of God and Man in Christ can human death be "assumed" by God and be overcome and destroyed from within, be "trampled down by death." Death is Overcome by Life Now we understand why God desires that death, why the Father gives His Only Begotten Son to it. He desires the salvation of man. Hence the necessity of the Incarnation and the necessity of that Divine death. Death was not only destroyed by God, but was overcome and trampled down in human nature itself by man and through man. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (1 Corinthians 15;21) Sabbath, the seventh day, achieves and completes the history of salvation, its last act being the overcoming of death. But after the Sabbath comes the first day of a new creation, of a new life born from the grave. However, we are still in Great Saturday before Christ's tomb, and we have to live through this long day, before we hear at midnight 'Christ is Risen!', before we enter into the celebration of His Resurrection. Thus, the third lesson -- Matthew 27:62-66 - which completes the service, tells us once more about the Tomb - 'which was made secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.' But it is probably here, at the end of Matins, that the ultimate meaning of this "middle day" is made manifest. Christ arose again from the dead. His Resurrection we will celebrate the next day on Pascha (Pascha). This celebration, however, commemorates a unique event of the past, and anticipates a mystery of the future. It is already His Resurrection, but not yet ours. We will have to die, to accept the dying, the separation, the destruction. Our reality in this world, is the reality of the Great Saturday; this day is the real image of our human condition. We believe in the Resurrection, because Christ has risen from the dead. We expect the Resurrection. We know that Christ's death is no longer the hopeless ultimate end of everything, Baptised into His death, we partake already of His life that came out of the grave. We receive His Body and Blood, which are the food of immortality. We have in ourselves the token, the anticipation of the eternal life. All our Christian existence is measured by these acts of communion to the life of the "new eon" of the Kingdom, and yet we are here, and death is our inescapable share. But this life between the Resurrection of Christ and the day of the common resurrection, is it not precisely the life in the Great Saturday? Is not expectation the basic and essential category of Christian experience? We wait in love, hope and faith. We wait for "the Resurrection and the life of the world to come" (see Nicene Creed). Every year,

on Great and Holy Saturday, after this morning service, we wait for the Pascha night and the fullness of Paschal joy. We know that they are approaching -- and yet, how slow is this approach, how long is this day! But is not the wonderful quiet of Great Saturday the symbol of our very life in this world? Are we not always in this "middle day," waiting for the Pascha of Christ, preparing ourselves for the day without evening of His Kingdom?

Pascha – “The Feast of Feasts”

A little before midnight on the Blessed Sabbath the **Nocturne** service is chanted. The celebrant goes to the tomb and removes the winding-sheet. He carries it through the royal doors and places it on the altar table where it remains for forty days until the day of Ascension.

At midnight the Pascha procession begins. The people leave the church building singing: “The angels in heaven, O Christ our Savior, sing of Thy resurrection. Make us on earth also worthy to hymn Thee with a pure heart.”

The procession circles the church building and returns to the closed doors of the front of the church. This procession of the Christians on Pascha night recalls the original **baptismal procession** from the darkness and death of this world to the night and the life of the Kingdom of God. It is the procession of the **holy passover**, from death unto life, from earth unto heaven, from this age to the age to come which will never end. Before the closed doors of the church building, the resurrection of Christ is announced. The Gospel is read which tells of the empty tomb. The celebrant intones the blessing to the "holy, consubstantial, life-creating and undivided Trinity." The **Pascha troparion** is sung for the first time, together with the verses of Psalm 68 which will begin all of the Church services during the Pascha season.

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee from before his face!

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life. (*Troparion*)

This is the day which the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

The people re-enter the church building and continue the service of **Paschal Matins** which is entirely sung.

The **canon hymns** of Christ's resurrection, ascribed to St John of Damascus, are chanted with the troparion of the feast as the constantly recurring refrain. The building is decorated with flowers and lights. The vestments are the bright robes of the resurrection. The Pascha icon stands in the center of the church showing Christ destroying the gates of hell and freeing Adam and Eve from the captivity of death. It is the image of the Victor "trampling down death by his own death." There is the continual singing and censuring of the icons and the people, with the constant proclamation of the celebrant: **Christ is risen!** The faithful continually respond: **Indeed he is risen!**

It is the day of resurrection ! Let us be illumined for the feast! Pascha! The Pascha of the Lord! From death unto life, and from earth unto heaven has Christ our God led us! Singing the song of victory: Christ is risen from the dead! (*First Ode of the Pascha Canon*)

Following the canon, the paschal verses are sung, and at the conclusion of the Pascha Matins, the **Pascha Hours** are also sung. In general, nothing is simply read in the Church services of Pascha : everything is fully sung with the joyful melodies of the feast.

At the end of the Hours, before the Divine Liturgy, the celebrant solemnly proclaims the famous **Paschal Sermon of St. John Chrysostom**. This sermon is an invitation to all of the faithful to forget their sins and to join fully in the feast of the resurrection of Christ. Taken literally, the sermon is the formal invitation offered to all members of the Church to come and to receive Holy Communion, partaking of Christ, the Passover Lamb, whose table is now being set in the midst of the Church..

The **Paschal Divine Liturgy** begins immediately with the singing once more of the festal troparion with the verses of Psalm 68. Special psalm verses also comprise the antiphons of the liturgy, through which the faithful praise and glorify the salvation of God:

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Sing of his name, give glory to his praise.

Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee! Let it praise Thy name, O most High!

That we may know Thy way upon the earth and Thy salvation among all nations.

Let the people thank Thee, O God! Let all the people give thanks to Thee.

The troparion is repeated over and over again. The baptismal line from Galatians replaces the Thrice-Holy Hymn. The epistle reading is the first nine verses of the Book of Acts. The gospel reading is the first seventeen verses of the Gospel of St. John. The proclamation of the Word of God takes the faithful back again to the beginning, and announces God's creation and re-creation of the world through the living Word of God, his Son Jesus Christ.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... all things were made through him ... In him was life and the life was the light of men. ...

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth. .. we have beheld his glory, glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father, and from his fullness have we all received grace upon grace. ... (Jn 1:1-17).

The Liturgy of St John Chrysostom continues, crowned in holy communion with the Passover Lamb at his banquet table in God's Kingdom. Again and again the troparion of the Resurrection is sung while the faithful partake of him "who was dead and is alive again" (Rev 2:8).

In the Orthodox Church the feast of Easter is officially called **Pascha**, the word which means the **Passover**. It is the new Passover of the new and everlasting covenant foretold by the prophets of old. It is the eternal Passover from death to life and from earth to heaven. It is the **Day of the Lord** proclaimed by God's holy prophets, "the day which the Lord has made" for his judgment over all creation, the day of His final and everlasting victory. It is the Day of the Kingdom of God, the day "which has no night" for "its light is the Lamb" (Rev 21:22-25).

The celebration of Pascha in the Orthodox Church, therefore, is once again not merely an historical reenactment of the event of Christ's Resurrection as narrated in the gospels. It is not a dramatic representation of the first Pascha morning. There is no "sunrise service" since the Pascha Matins and the Divine Liturgy are celebrated together in the first dark hours of the first day of the week in order to give men the experience of the "new creation" of the world, and to allow them to enter mystically into the **New Jerusalem** which shines eternally with the glorious light of Christ, overcoming the perpetual night of evil and destroying the darkness of this mortal and sinful world:

Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone upon you! Exult and be glad O Zion! Be radiant O Pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of thy son!

This is one of the main Paschal hymns in the Orthodox Church. It is inspired by Isaiah's prophecy and the final chapters of the **Book of Revelation**, for it is exactly the **New Creation**, the **New Jerusalem**, the **Heavenly City**, the **Kingdom of God**, the **Day of the Lord**, the **Marriage Feast of the Lamb with his Bride** which is celebrated and realized and experienced in the Holy Spirit on the Holy Night of Pascha in the Orthodox Church.

The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom (347-407 AD) is read during Matins of Pascha

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived therefore. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. let no one bewail his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for

it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.