

### *Celebrating the Risen Christ!*

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

With this glorious announcement, we come to the climax of the Church Year, the highest and most important of all our feasts and festivals: “The Resurrection of Our Lord.” With the somber time of Lent complete, our repentant purple paraments are put away, replaced with white, the color of our Lord’s holiness, and gold, reminding us that our resurrection life in Christ is precious and eternal. The joyous word “Alleluia” returns to our liturgy and hymns, and once again we sing our hymns of praise, the *Gloria in excelsis* and *This is the Feast*.

But sadly, most people in the Christian Church treat Easter the way they do Christmas, like we’re crossing a finish line after a long race. So once they show up in Church on Easter Sunday, it seems they figure “the party’s over.” No need to come back next week. They go on about their “other business” in life, and wait for the next ‘big event’ to roll around.

But the truth is we’ve not come to an end on Easter Sunday—we’ve come to a beginning! Easter is not a one-day event, it’s an entire season, and more! As far as the Church Year is concerned, The Resurrection of Our Lord is a celebration that lasts not for a single day but for *fifty* days, all the way to the Day of Pentecost.

During these days, just consider some of the things we hear about and celebrate. In the upcoming Gospel readings alone, we hear how our resurrected Jesus made Himself known to an accidentally absent disciple, enabling His bold recognition of Jesus as “my Lord and my God” (see John 20:19-31). Another account tells how He appeared to His disciples and opened their minds to understand the Scriptures—imagine what it was like for them to finally “get it” after three years with Jesus!—and then promised them “power from on high” (check out Luke 24:36-49, and glance ahead to Acts 2 for the sequel!).

In these weeks ahead, we meet Jesus as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18) and Jesus as the true vine (with us as the branches, John 15:1-8). And though He said it before His death and resurrection, He told His disciples (and us) to abide in His love, to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:9-17). Then He showed them (and us) what kind of love He was talking about.

Yes, this celebration of The Resurrection of Our Lord is just beginning. And beyond these fifty days, it will continue to echo throughout the Church Year, for every Sunday is a “little Easter.” Don’t miss the party! For all this is just a warm-up for an even greater celebration yet to come: the Day when Jesus returns to raise up all the dead from their graves and bring us into the unending glory of the new heavens and the new earth