

*“For too many of us, perhaps, the weeks following the radiant Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ are a time a relaxation and even of indulgence; the rigors of the Fast being ended, the body revels while the spirit grows weak. But if this is unfortunately so, it is our own fault and not the fault of the Holy Church; for she never ceases to draw our minds upward and instruct us as to what thoughts and actions are appropriate for Orthodox Christians in this holy season.”*

+Fr. Seraphim Rose

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is Risen! We would all do well to consider what the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord did after His Resurrection to the time when He Ascended. We are fortunate since all these things have been written down for us in the Gospels. Nevertheless, it took a lot of faith for those first Apostles and Disciples to understand that Christ had truly risen from the dead; but the Lord helped them, just as He still helps us in our times if we're willing to make the effort!

Today it seems that some Christians view Pascha/Easter as something we briefly acknowledge once a year, almost like when you're at a baseball game and the announcer asks for a brief moment of silence to remember a great baseball player who passed away recently and then it's time to "Play Ball!" How easy it is to forget about all the amazing events of Holy Week leading up to Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection.

In this season we should imitate the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord after His Resurrection. They assembled together in the upper room to patiently wait on the Lord. This is an image of the Church, and we should assemble together as often as possible in the Church to meet the Lord. The Holy Myrrhbearers fearlessly went forth to anoint the Lord's Body with fragrant spices. Those spices represent the holy virtues of Humility, Meekness, Temperance, Purity, Thankfulness, Diligence and Charity that we too should practice and offer to the Lord. Even though the world, the passions and the devil would try to scare us away, we should be bold and make our way to the Lord, for He is all-powerful and can easily make the guards as dead men and roll away the heavy stone from our hardened hearts. And like Luke and Cleopas, we should continue to walk along life's path, contemplating all that our Lord accomplished and He will visit us and enlighten us and reveal Himself through the breaking of bread, an image of Holy Communion.

The Holy Church calls us to exercise and strengthen our faith, during this time between Christ's Resurrection and His Ascension. Each of these Sundays now are focused on increasing our faith and doing everything possible to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost when we will be endued with power from on high! May God bless you and reveal Himself to you on our spiritual journey as we follow Christ and His holy Apostles.

In Christ,

+Fr. Gregory