

Rev. Derek Fairman

Easter Sunday

This day we celebrate the feasts of feasts in the Church. We celebrate the Lord Jesus' Resurrection and His triumph over death. His Resurrection was not just something that was for His benefit only. His Resurrection was not just something for the benefit of the Apostles. His Resurrection is something that we all benefit from even today, because the Lord Jesus invites us to share in His Resurrection.

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul writes, "Awake O sleeper and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." This is probably an early hymn which refers to Easter and the Baptismal liturgy. The person being baptized is told to rise from the dead. The person does not literally rise from the dead, but rises above sin and darkness, in imitation of the Lord Jesus, who rose from the dead.

This passage, however, also calls the person to awaken from sleep. The person being baptized is not literally asleep during the Baptism, so what does this mean? It means that the person is spiritually asleep, waiting for the Lord to bring them out of that spiritual sleep. The person is about to have a spiritual awakening. In Baptism, that is what happens: the person is given new life.

What about after Baptism? How does that apply to us who have already been baptized? Sometimes we go through our lives or parts of our lives in a sleepy state, just drifting through. We aren't always aware of everything that is happening, nor are we grateful for every gift that God gives to us. Perhaps another way of expressing this is the idea that we are lukewarm.

Faith is a virtue that can be a good example of this. Hopefully none of us completely disbelieves God or His Church, so that we have some faith. We come here because of our belief in the Lord's Resurrection from the dead. However, there is a difference between acknowledging Jesus as Lord and believing in His Resurrection, versus trusting in the Lord Jesus to take care of us and being devoted to Him.

We can take as examples the faith of Abraham and the faith of the Israelites after they crossed the sea. Unlike his neighbors who believed in many gods, Abraham believed in only one God. There was more to Abraham's faith than just monotheism. Abraham left his homeland because the Lord called him to. He trusted in God's promise even when he was about to slay Isaac. His faith was personal.

