

**ARCHPASTORAL LETTER FOR
The Feast of the Glorious Resurrection: Holy PASCHA
Sunday, April 20, 2014**

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Dearly Beloved in our Resurrected Lord:

“Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus ...”

Certainly one of the most beautiful prayers of our Church is the Paschal hymn, “Having Beheld the Resurrection.” One might rightly wonder, however, how we can offer this prayer ... how we can say that we have beheld the Resurrection, as though we have seen it, when in fact Christ rose from the dead two thousand years ago and, even then, without any human being actually having been an eye-witness?

The fact is that the Holy Spirit urges us to offer this prayer not only on Pascha but at every Liturgy. And, the words of the hymn urge us to speak the truth that the Resurrection of Christ takes place in everyone who believes, and not only once a year but at every moment when our Lord arises in us ... resplendent in beauty and shining with the brightness of incorruption and divinity.

We know this from the Scripture. Following His Resurrection on the first Pascha, Jesus appeared to several of His followers ... at the point of their deepest need.

He appeared to Mary Magdalene in her great grief, when she thought that her beloved Master was dead. His appearance, His calling her by name, brought her unbounded joy.

He appeared to Simon Peter in his great sense of sorrow and shame for having denied Christ three times. The Lord appeared to assure him that he had indeed been forgiven and accepted once more.

He appeared to Luke and Cleopas, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, who were despairing and doubting now that their great Deliverer had been crucified. His appearance caused them to feel the warmth of God’s presence in their hearts.

He appeared to His disciples in the Upper Room, where they were hiding behind locked doors for fear of the authorities. His appearance changed those broken men. It made them strong and confident and bold as lions. They sang, they rejoiced; they healed, they taught; they suffered triumphantly -- not just for a few days of passing enthusiasm, but for the rest of their lives. This miraculous change occurred in them because Christ had actually appeared to them.

Eight days later He appeared to the Apostle Thomas to help him cope with his doubts. He showed him the nail prints in His hands and the spear mark in His side, and enabled the doubting Thomas to make the greatest profession of faith in all the Scripture, calling Christ “my Lord and my God!” ... and Thomas went the farthest of any of the apostles in his missionary labors, travelling all the way to India to preach the Good News of the Risen Savior.

