Pascha or Easter?

You may have heard and may have used both terms, Easter and Pascha, regarding the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. You may also wonder which one of the two terms is more appropriate to be used by us as Orthodox Christians.

The word Easter is used only in English and German (or the languages they influenced). According to Venerable Bede (673-735), a monk who wrote about Anglo-Saxon mythology, in those countries Resurrection Sunday was called Easter in connection with the goddess Eostre/Ostra. Eostre, the goddess of Spring was venerated at the vernal equinox. It is not surprising that she and her accompanying symbolism were integrated into the new religion’s festival, since Christianity resounded so well with the already familiar springtime themes of rebirth, new life, new hope and light. Eostre was presented in legend and art with a magical hare who could actually lay eggs (think Cadbury bunny). From here comes the Easter bunny.

Most of the languages use a term coming from the Hebrew Pesach, which became Pascha in Greek—which is translated into Passover in English. Passover is the main Jewish feast commemorating the Israelites’ freedom and exodus from Egypt. Thus the Israelites passed over “death and slavery” in Egypt to “life and Freedom” in the Promised Land. While Easter is associated with the bunny, Pascha is associated with red eggs, as symbol of new life and Resurrection.

From the origin of the word we can strongly say that Pascha is most appropriate to be used by Christians. For us Pascha best identifies our Passover from sin’s “death and slavery” to “life and freedom” through Christ’s Resurrection. What Moses, a prototype of Christ, inaugurated for the people of Israel on the temporal level, Christ inaugurated through His Resurrection, for all the people on the eternal level. Words described relationships—what do you prefer: “Some bunny loves you” or “Jesus loves you?”

A Happy Paschal Season to all

By Fr. Cornel Todesea of the St. Dimitrie Roumanian Orthodox Church, Bridgeport, CT

Archangel Michael Greek Orthodox Church Bulletin
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Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen! Χριστός Ἀνέστη! Αληθῶς ἀνέστη!

Sunday Holy Scripture Reading
Apostolic Reading: Acts 1:1-9
Gospel: St. John 1:1-17

Services: Sunday 9 a.m. Orthros and 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Weekdays 8 a.m. Orthros and 9 a.m. Divine Liturgy when scheduled.


Order of Service
Antiphons
From Pascha
Little Entrance 3rd Antiphon we chant the Paschal verses and Christ is Risen
Instead of Come let us worship we chant:
In the gathering places bless ye God the Lord from the springs of Israel. Save us O Son of God, who did rise from the dead, we sing to You. Alleluia.

Ἐν Ἐκκλησίαις εὐλογεῖτε τόν Θεόν, Κύριον ἐκ πηγῶν Ἰσραήλ. Σῶσον ἡμᾶς, Ὑιέ Θεοῦ, ὁ ἀναστάς ἐκ νεκρῶν, ψάλλοντάς σοι, Ἀλληλούϊα.

After the Entrance:

Ypakoe of Pascha Tone 4
When they who were with Mary came, anticipating the dawn, and found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher, they heard from the Angel: Why seek ye among the dead, as though He were mortal man, Him Who abides in everlasting light? Behold the grave clothes. Go quickly and proclaim to the world that the Lord is risen, and has put death to death. For He is the Son of God, Who saves the race of man.

Kontakion of Pascha Tone 8
Though You did descend into the grave, O Im mortal One, yet did You destroy the power of Hades, and did arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Your Apostles, O You Who does grant resurrection to the fallen.

Instead of the Trisagion: As many as have been baptized…

Instead of “Axion Estin” Tone 1
The angel cried unto her that is full of grace: O pure Virgin, rejoice, and again, I say: Rejoice; for your Son has risen from the grave on the third day.

Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem, for the glory of the Lord, has arisen upon you; dance now and be glad O Sion, and do you exult, O pure Theotokos, in the arising of Him Whom You did bear.

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O’Αγιεσι ως τη Κεχριτωμένης Ἀγνή παρθένε, χριστά και πάλιν ἕρω χριστά, ὁ σῶς Υἱός ἀνέστη τρίχρημαν ἐκ τάφου.

Φωτίζου, φωτίζου, ἡ νάση Ἰερουσαλήμ ἡ γάρ δόξα Κυρίου ἐπὶ σε ἀνέτειλε.
Holy Communion in the Orthodox Church

Holy Communion of the Orthodox Church is the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is "With the fear of God, faith and love" that we approach the Divine Mysteries. Therefore, Holy Communion is reserved only for those baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer and fasting, as prescribed by the teachings of the Holy Orthodox Church. We ask that women, before approaching to receive from the Holy Cup, in respect of our Lord, to please remove lipstick.

Coffee Hour Signup
We will be having coffee hour again and are looking for sponsors beginning on Thomas Sunday, May 9, 2021.

Christians Around the World
Please remember to keep Christians around the world in your prayers. Many are being persecuted and even killed for their faith in Jesus Christ. Remember also the two kidnapped Orthodox bishops from Syria.

Brotherhood of St. George Feast Day Celebration
All are welcome to attend for services at the Brotherhood, 361 Forest St., Denver, CO, 303-316-7407; Bright Monday, May 3, 2021, 8am Orthros 9:30am Divine Liturgy followed by an all-day luncheon.

Stewardship 2021
Please support our parish with your time, talent and treasure. Stewardship packets have been mailed. See Ruxandra Georgescu for more information.

Bookstore
Please stop by our bookstore with many items for your spiritual benefit and see Olga Sonnenburg for more information.

Reflection
There is heroism above heroism and asceticism above asceticism. St. Epiphanius of Cyprus invited Hilaryon the Great to dinner and in order to show the greatest hospitality to his distinguished guest, placed fried chicken on the table and offered it to him. Hilaryon said to him: "Forgive me, but ever since I was tonsured a monk, I have eaten nothing butchered." To that Epiphanius replied: "And I, ever since I was tonsured a monk, have never lay down in bed until I first forgave my enemy." Amazed, Hilaryon said: "Your virtue is greater than mine, Oh holy master!" This is a great lesson for all of us. Fasting is an admirable thing but, it is more admirable to forgive insults. Through fasting, man is preparing for charity but, by forgiving insults, man shows charity. Fasting precedes forgiveness but fasting alone, does not save without forgiveness.