

Easter Sunday

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] One of the great Christian traditions is to welcome Easter with the priest or bishop announcing Christ is risen and the people respond by saying, He has risen indeed, alleluia. Therefore, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, alleluia. Alleluia. You may be seated. I was thinking about Easter starting around Passion Sunday and realized I preached around 20 sermons on Easter or 20 Easter sermons throughout my ministry.

And every year during Easter, I think about reading this wonderful sermon from St. John Chrysostom, sometimes pronounced Chrysostom, which has been provided for you this morning as an insert in your bulletin.

And this year, I have finally decided to do it and to read this wonderful homily. Therefore, we are joining our Orthodox brothers and sisters throughout the ages in hearing this wonderful sermon. But before I read this homily, let me give you a very brief background to St. John Chrysostom. St. John Chrysostom was given the name Golden Mouth because of his great ability as a preacher.

[1 : 37] He was one of the most famous preachers of the second half of the fourth century. He was a priest in his native city of Antioch, Syria.

And later, he became bishop and patriarch of Constantinople, which today is the city of Istanbul in the country Turkey. St. John Chrysostom died, not the most loved or even the most liked bishop. St. John Chrysostom died, however, being faithful to the Lord and to the doctrine of the church. And he died at the age of 50.

Something that's on my mind as I'm getting ready to turn 50. He died in the year AD 407 as he was forced to journey in exile by the Empress after he called out sin, not only on her, but for the wickedness of the city.

This Easter sermon is considered one of the best homilies for Easter ever given. And as I mentioned already, the clergy in the Orthodox churches throughout the world read this homily as the first sermon for Easter.

[2 : 57] So let us now hear this homily and you are free to follow along and read as we hear from one of the great fathers of the church, one of the great saints of the undivided Christian church.

If there are devout and God loving people here, let them enjoy this beautiful, radiant festival. If there are prudent servants, enter joyously into the Lord's joy. Whoever may be spent from fasting, enjoy now your reward.

Whoever has toiled from the first hour, receive today your just settlement. If any came after the third hour, celebrate gratefully.

If any of you arrived after the sixth hour, have no misgivings, you have lost nothing. If some have been as late as the ninth hour, come forward, do not be at a loss.

[4 : 07] If any of you have arrived only at the eleventh hour, do not be dismayed for being late. The master is gracious. He accepts the last even as the first.

He gives rest to those of the eleventh hour as well as to those who have labored from the first. He is lenient with the last while looking after the first.

To the one he gives, to the other he gives freely. He accepts the labors and welcomes the effort, honors the deed, but commends the intent.

So all of you enter into the joy of our Lord, first and second. Share the bounty. Rich and poor alike celebrate together.

Sober or heedless, honor the day. Those who fasted and those who did not rejoice today. The table is full.

[5 : 12] Everyone fares sumptuously. The calf is fatted. No one go away hungry. Everyone savor the banquet of faith.

Relish the riches of his goodness. No one need lament poverty. For the kingdom is seen as universal. No one need grieve over sins.

Forgiveness has dawned from the tomb. No one need fear death. The Savior's death has freed us from it.

While it's captive. While it's captive, he stifled it. He despoiled Hades as he descended into it. It was angered when it tasted his flesh.

Forseeing this, Isaiah proclaimed, Hades, he said, was angered when he met you below. It was angered because it was abolished.

[6 : 15] It was angered because it was mocked. It was angered because it was slain. It was angered because it was shackled. It received a body and encountered God.

It took earth and came face to face with heaven. It took what it saw and fell by what it could not see.

Death, where is your sting? Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are overthrown.

Christ is risen and demons have fallen.

Christ is risen and angels rejoice. Christ is risen and life rules. Christ is risen and not one dead remains in the tomb.

For Christ, having risen from the dead, has become the firstfruits of those that slept. To him be the glory and the dominion forevermore.

[7 : 25] Amen. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Amen.