

## The Feasts of the Lord

### *The Resurrection of Christ*

St. Gregory the Theologian divides Easter into three, the Passover of the law, that of divine grace, and that of the age to come.

The Passover of the law, in which the Hebrews celebrated the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea, was a reminder of their bitter slavery in Egypt and their freedom by God's help. It was the Passover "of thanksgiving and entreaty". In reality, this Passover was the prototype of our Easter.

The Easter of divine grace is the Resurrection of Christ, through which the crossing "from death towards life and from earth towards heaven" takes place. St. Gregory the Theologian says: "O Easter, the great and holy purification of all the world". Without the participation of Christ and communion with Him there is deadness and slavery. According to St. Gregory of Sinai, "He who does not see and hear and feel spiritually is dead". Therefore Easter is the coming of Christ into the heart. St. Maximos the Confessor says very characteristically: "Easter, the coming of the Word upon the human nous". Actually, when man receives Christ, he lives spiritually and Christ becomes his life, the soul of his soul. "The resurrection is a second soul for men" (St. Neilos).

The Easter of the age to come is "more perfect and more pure". When Christ celebrated the Passover shortly before His Passion, and especially when He celebrated the Last Supper, He said: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26, 29). Clearly here He is speaking of the Easter of the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet also the Easter of the present life is symbolic of the Easter of the age to come. Then the saints will have greater communion with Christ, because the Word will reveal and teach "what He has now indicated in a mild way" (St. Gregory the Theologian).

The Christians struggle to pass from the symbolic Easter to the Easter of divine grace, and from there to the eternal Easter. Such a feast has significance and meaning. No other celebration has deeper purposes, or satisfies man's hungry and thirsty spirit.

During the Hebrews' feast of the Passover an innocent, young and perfect lamb was slain. This was a prototype of the Christian lamb, which is Christ Himself, innocent, young and perfect. He was sacrificed and is offered for the Christians to be united with Him.