

The Paschal Sermon

If anyone is a sincere lover of God, let them enjoy this beautiful and radiant festival.

If anyone is a wise servant, let them, rejoicing, enter into the joy of their Lord.

If anyone has wearied themselves in fasting, let them now receive their recompense.

If anyone has laboured from the *first hour*, let them today receive their just reward.

If anyone has come at the *third hour*, with thanksgiving let them keep the feast.

If anyone has arrived at the *sixth hour*, let them have no misgivings; for they shall suffer no loss.

If anyone has delayed until the *ninth hour*, let them draw near without hesitation.

If anyone has arrived even at the *eleventh hour*, let them not fear on account of their delay.

For the Master is gracious and receives the last, even as the first; he gives rest to the one that arrives at the eleventh hour, just as to the ones who have laboured from the first. He has mercy upon the last and cares for the first; to the one he gives, and to the other he is gracious. He both honours the work and praises the intention.

Enter all of you, therefore, into the joy of our Lord, and, whether first or last, receive your reward. O rich and poor, one with another, dance for joy! O you faithful and you negligent, celebrate the day! You that have fasted and you that have disregarded the fast, rejoice today! The table is rich-laden; feast royally, all of you! The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry!

Let all partake of the feast of faith. Let all receive the riches of goodness.

Let no one lament their poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed.

Let no one mourn their transgressions, for pardon has dawned from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the Saviour's death has set us free.

He that was taken by death has annihilated it!

He descended into Hades and took it captive!

He dumbfounded it when it tasted his flesh!

Anticipating this Isaiah exclaimed, "Hades was dumbfounded when it encountered you!"

It was dumbfounded, for it was mocked!

It was dumbfounded, for it was plundered!

It was dumbfounded, for it was purged!

It was dumbfounded, for it was chained!

It was dumbfounded, for it was abolished!

It took a body and met God, face-to-face!

It took earth and encountered heaven!

It took what it saw but crumpled before what it had not understood!

"O death, where is thy sting?

O Hades, where is thy victory?"

Christ is risen, and you are overthrown!

Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen!

Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice!

Christ is risen, and life reigns!

For Christ, being raised from the dead, has become the first-fruits of them that have died.

To him be glory and power forever.

Amen.