

REJOICE!

INFORMATIVE BULLETIN OF THE PAPHOS LATIN PARISH

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This is the night...we should praise...

The words of our liturgy are powerful and, reverberating in the darkness of the world, disperse the obscurity and strip off sin's and death's hold on humanity.

The Good News of Christ's resurrection goes beyond the limits of the universe and floods in its life-giving light everything that exists, everything that has ever existed and everything that will come into existence!

"Christ is risen, rejoice heavenly powers, exult all creation!

Christ is risen, rejoice o earth, in shining splendour!

Christ is risen, rejoice o Mother Church, exult in glory!"



This is how the Easter Proclamation begins.

And participating through faith and Baptism in the Living Word we let ourselves be transformed by its creative and regenerating power.

The Resurrection of the Lord is also our resurrection, our restoration, our new life.

The Church never ceases to proclaim that Jesus is Lord.

How does the Church proclaim the Risen Christ?

The Church is not an abstract reality, but the Apostolic community which was founded on the day of Pentecost and which has the mission to bring the good news to all the earth.

We must not imagine that the Church fulfills her mission independently from ourselves; **we have the charge of make the good news known.**

Every baptized person is called to be active in his faith, firm in his hope and generous in his love of God and neighbour.

There is no other way to bring the Gospel in every corner of the world: first we live it ourselves, then we share it. What a great responsibility and what an amazing grace!

Exull!

Most blessed of all nights, chosen by God to see Christ rising from the dead!

Of this night scripture says: "The night will be as clear as day: it will become my light, my joy."

The power of this holy night dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy; it casts out hatred, brings us peace, and humbles earthly pride.

Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth and man is reconciled to God.

*(from the liturgy of the Church; the hymn **Exultet**, excerpts)*

The Exultet Scroll

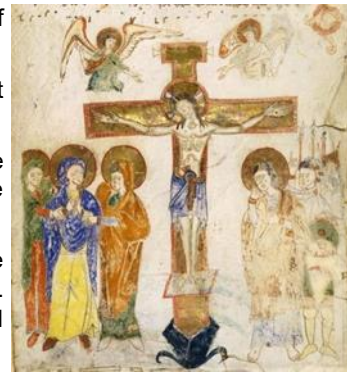
The top picture on our current bulletin depicts Christ descending into the Hades in order to bring salvation to the departed too.

It is one of the many exquisite illuminations of the famous Exultet Scroll, work of the 12th century from Benevento, Italy, and on it the hymn Exultet is written.

The scroll is accompanied by illustrations that step by step represent the different stages of the rite in order to be of more easy comprehension to the faithful.

In order to make the rite more accessible, the illuminations were placed upside down so that as the deacon unfolded the roll letting it fall from the pulpit, the worshippers would see the images right side up.

Some of the scenes featuring in the outstanding iconographic apparatus are the parting of the red sea and the Crucifixion (*right*) from the Old and New Testament. It is worth noticing the lavishness of the color scheme which, featuring vivid shades of red and blue, was intended to catch the eye and impress the viewers.



The art of illuminated manuscripts

In the Middle Ages all books were hand-written original works of art. These “illuminated” manuscripts were so called because of their frequent incorporation of gold or sometimes silver leaf onto the page. Illumination comes from the Latin word *illuminare*, meaning “light up,” and when one sees one of these brilliant manuscripts in person, the term makes sense.

The earliest surviving illuminated manuscripts date from the 5th century, though it was not until about 1100 that the production of manuscripts began to flourish in earnest. This “golden age” of manuscript illumination lasted until the arrival of Gutenberg’s printing press in 1450-55, signalling the beginning of the end of hand-made illuminated manuscripts.

During the early Middle Ages most books were used by priests and monks for liturgical purposes. New books appeared most often when a new monastery was founded. Books began to be produced for individuals as well as religious institutions as early as the 12th century. The movement of books into the secular world encouraged the increase of lay workshops run by professional scribes.

(source: *The Illuminated Page*)

(On the right, an illumination from the Exultet Scroll; please note, the text is upside down as explained above)



Did you know...

The **Exultet Chant** accompanies one of the oldest and most evocative rites of the Christian liturgy, i.e. the Lighting of the Paschal candle as the culmination of the night celebration of Easter.

The **Exultet** is traditionally sung by the deacon after the Paschal candle has been lit and the clergy have processed to the altar.

The **lighted Paschal** candle contains a twofold symbolism. First, it **represents the pillar of fire** that went before the Israelites during their flight from Egypt. Second, it **represents Christ**, who is the light of the world. The procession likewise has a twofold meaning. It symbolizes the journey of the Israelites out of Egypt, and also the arrival of Christ who is the Saviour of the world.

The **Exultet** sings of this symbolism and recalls for us the history of our salvation; from the fall of Adam, to the events of that first Passover held by Moses and the Israelites, and then finally the events of that last Passover at which Jesus suffered, died, rose from the dead and by which mankind was redeemed. The tone of the hymn is very much one of joy at having received so great a gift as our redemption and eternal life.

(source: *The Apostolic Library, Vatican*)

Passion Sunday

On the 25th of this month the Church remembers and celebrates the Passion of the Lord and it has become a tradition, on that day, to organize a representation of the Passion in our parish at the archeological site of Saint Paul's Pillar.

We sincerely thank the archeological department of the Republic of Cyprus for their kind permission to use this venerable site.

This practice is very popular and much loved in numerous places around the globe. It is an occasion, for anyone who so wishes, to participate in an active, yet reflective way in the enactment of the Passion of Christ.

It is an open invitation to all, Christian and non-Christian alike, to follow Christ from the Last Supper in the Upper Room through to His Crucifixion, death and burial in an attempt to discern God's love and presence in every aspect of our lives.



The crux of the matter

IT WILL appear only a jest to say that all religious history has really been a pattern of noughts and crosses. But I do not mean noughts mean nothings, but only things that are negative compared with the positive shape or pattern of the other. And though the symbol is of course only a coincidence, it is a coincidence that really does coincide. The mind of Asia can really be represented by a round 0, if not in the sense of a cypher at least of a circle. The great Asiatic symbol of a serpent with its tail in its mouth is really a very perfect image of a certain idea of unity and recurrence that does indeed belong to the Eastern philosophies and religions. It really is a curve that in one sense includes everything, and in another sense comes to nothing. In that sense it does confess, or rather boast, that all argument is an argument in a circle. And though the figure is but a symbol, we can see how sound the symbolic sense that produces it is, the parallel symbol of the Wheel of Buddha generally called the Swastika. The cross is a thing at right angles pointing boldly in opposite directions; but the Swastika is the same thing in the very act of returning to the recurrent curve. That crooked cross is in fact a cross turning into a wheel. Before we dismiss even these symbols as if they were arbitrary symbols, we must remember how intense was the imaginative instinct that produced them or selected them both in the east and the west. The cross has become something more than a historical memory; it does convey, almost as by a mathematical diagram, the truth about the real point at issue; the idea of a conflict stretching outwards into eternity. It is true, and even tautological, to say that the cross is the crux of the whole matter.

"In other words the cross, in fact as well as figure, does really stand for the idea of breaking out of the circle that is everything and nothing. It does escape from the circular argument by which everything begins and ends in the mind."

~G.K. Chesterton: *The Everlasting Man*, Part I, VI.— The Demons and the Philosophers.

Our fundamental consecration

Looking at the People of God is remembering that we all enter the Church as lay people. The first sacrament, which seals our identity forever, and of which we should always be proud, is Baptism. Through Baptism and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, (the faithful) "are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood" (Lumen Gentium, n. 10). Our first and fundamental consecration is rooted in our Baptism. No one has been baptized a priest or a bishop. They baptized us as lay people and it is the indelible sign that no one can ever erase. It does us good to remember that the Church is not an elite of priests, of consecrated men, of bishops, but that everyone forms the faithful Holy People of God. To forget this carries many risks and distortions in our own experience, be they personal or communitary, of the ministry that the Church has entrusted to us. We are, as firmly emphasized by the Second Vatican Council, the People of God, whose identity is "the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in His temple" (Lumen Gentium, n. 9). The faithful Holy People of God is anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and thus, as we reflect, think, evaluate, discern, we must be very attentive to this anointing.

Pope Francis, March 2016 (excerpt)