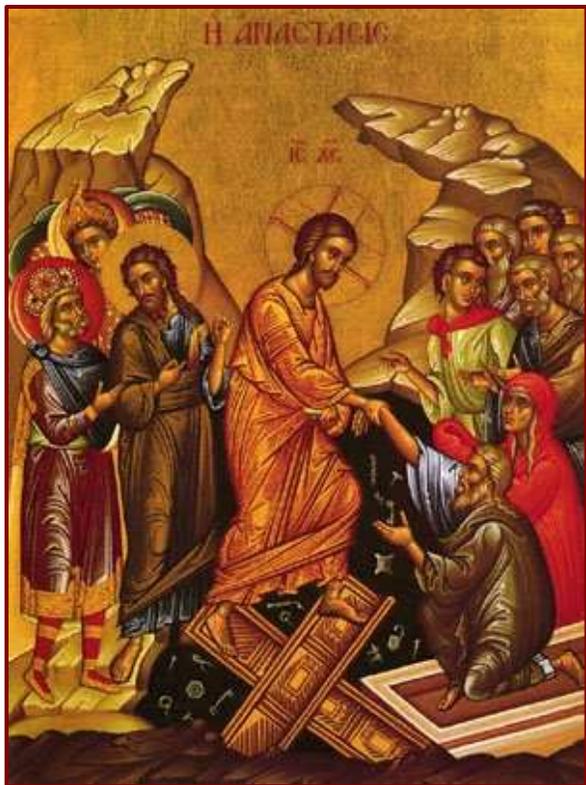


Leavetaking of Pascha



On Wednesday of the sixth week of Pascha, we celebrate the Leavetaking of the Feast. While most Feasts have their Leavetaking on the eighth day, Pascha, the Feast of Feasts, has its Leavetaking on the thirty-ninth day.

The fortieth day is the Feast of the Lord's Ascension which marks the end of the Lord's physical presence on earth. He does not abandon us, however. He has promised to be with us always, even until the end of the age (MT 20:28). As we sing in the Kontakion for Ascension, "Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love Thee, but remaining with them and crying: I am with you and no one will be against you." There is a similar thought expressed in the Troparion for the Dormition: "In falling asleep, you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos."

The services today are celebrated just as on the day of Pascha itself. The daily readings from Holy Scripture, of course, will differ. After the Dismissal at Liturgy, the paschal hymns are no longer sung. The prayer "O Heavenly King" is not said or sung until Pentecost. The Winding Sheet (Plaschanitsa) is taken from the altar and is put in its proper place. Even though today is a Wednesday, fish, wine, and oil are permitted.

Today we also commemorate the Finding of the Icon of the Mother of God "Of the Meeting" in Kalamata in the Peloponnesus.

Apolytikion of Pascha (Plagal of the First Tone)

Christ is risen from the dead, by death, trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

Kontakion of Pascha (Plagal of the Fourth Tone)

Though You went down into the tomb, You destroyed Hades' power, and You rose the victor, Christ God, saying to the myrrh-bearing women, "Hail!" and granting peace to Your disciples, You who raise up the fallen.