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The Easter Festival - Unknown Early Church Father



Saint Paul rejoices in the knowledge that spiritual health has been restored to the human race. Death entered the world through Adam, he explains, but life has been given back to the world through Christ. Again he says: The first man, being from the earth, is earthly by nature; the second man is from heaven and it is heavenly. As we have borne the image of the earthly man, the image of human nature grown old in sin, so let us bear the image of the heavenly man: human nature raised up, redeemed, restored and purified in Christ. We must hold fast to the salvation we have received. Christ was the first fruits', says the Apostle; he is the source of resurrection and life. 'Those who belong to Christ will follow him. Modelling their lives on his purity, they will be secure in the hope of his resurrection and of enjoying with him the glory promised in heaven. Our Lord himself said so in the gospel: Whoever follows me will not perish, but will pass from death to life.

Thus the passion of our Saviour is the salvation of mankind. The reason why he desired to die for us was that he wanted us who believe in him to live for ever. In the fullness of time it was his will to become what we are, so that we might inherit the eternity he promised and live with him for ever.

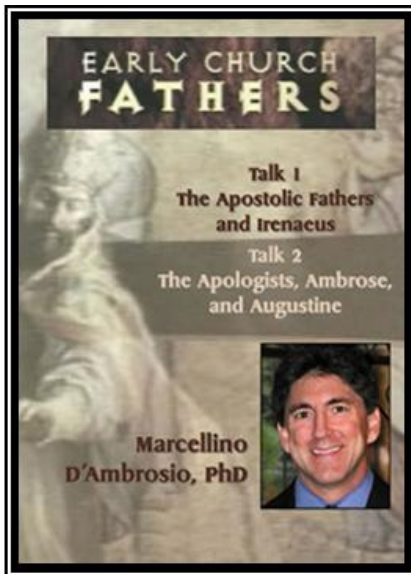
Here, then, is the grace conferred by these heavenly mysteries, the gift which Easter brings, the most longed for feast of the year; here are the beginnings of creatures newly formed: children born from the life giving font of holy Church, born anew with the simplicity of little ones, and crying out with the evidence of a clean conscience. Chaste fathers and inviolate mothers accompany this new family, countless in number, born to new life through faith. As they emerge from the grace giving womb of the font, a blaze of candles burns brightly beneath the tree of faith. The Easter festival brings the grace of holiness from heaven to men. Through the repeated celebration of the sacred mysteries they receive the spiritual nourishment of the sacraments. Fostered at the very heart of holy Church, the fellowship of one community worships the one God, adoring the triple name of his essential holiness, and together with the prophet sings the psalm which belongs to this yearly festival: This is the day the Lord has made; let

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us rejoice and be glad. And what is this day? It is the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the author of light, who brings the sunrise and the beginning of life, saying of himself: I am the light of day; whoever walks in daylight does not stumble. That is to say, whoever follows Christ in all things will come by this path to the throne of eternal light.

Such was the prayer Christ made to the Father while he was still on earth: Father, I desire that where I am they also may be, those who have come to believe in me; and that as you are in me and I in you, so they may abide in us.

Though this reading comes from an Easter homily preached in Latin during the era of the Early Church Fathers, its author is unknown (Sermo 35, 6-9 in PL [ed. 1879], 696-697). Nonetheless, this reading is used in the Roman Office of Readings for Wednesday in the Octave of Easter.



The Early Church Fathers

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