

2) *The Works of Christ*

- 211 In addition to the words of his preaching, Christ points to other signs that indicate the arrival of God's kingdom: "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up" (Lk 7:22; see Is 35:5-6; 61:1). The works of Christ witness to the presence and action of God among his people. "As a man, he fasted forty days and became hungry, and as God he defeated the tempter. As a man he went to the marriage in Cana of Galilee, and as God he turned the water into wine. As a man he slept on the ship, and as God he rebuked the wind and the sea and they heeded him."¹⁷³
- 212 Human ailments, suffering, and death are consequences of the Fall. Christ came to conquer sin, the cause of all our woes. Only Christ, as the God-man, has the power to free us from sin. He accomplishes this by means of forgiveness: "Friend, your sins are forgiven you" (Lk 5:20). Quite often, a physical cure or healing—as a result of forgiveness—becomes the visible sign of a spiritual change (in Greek, *metanoia*) within a person: "Stand up and take up your bed and go home" (Lk 5:24). Christ heals us by forgiving our sins and restoring our physical health.
- 213 Healing is only possible when faith—one's openness to God—is present: "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" (Mt 9:28). Faith opens a person to receive God's gift, whereas unbelief becomes an obstacle to the reception of this gift: "And [Jesus] did not do many deeds of power [in Nazareth], because of their unbelief" (Mt 13:58).
- 214 As the signs of God's action in the time of Christ were his miracles, so in the life of the Church the signs are the Holy Mysteries. The grace of God acts in the Holy Mysteries through external signs such as water, oil, bread, and wine, as well as various liturgical gestures and actions. By receiving the Holy Mysteries, a person conquers sinful inclinations and grows in virtue.

¹⁷³ ILARION, METROPOLITAN OF KYIV, Sermon on Law and Grace, 26.

*He was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died, and was buried.
On the third day, he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. (Symbol of Faith)*

*And when he had descended through the Cross into Hades,
so that he might fill all things with himself, he loosed the pangs of death
And rising on the third day
and making a way for all flesh to the resurrection of the dead.,,
He became the first fruit of those that sleep, the first-born of the dead
so that he might have pre-eminence in all things.
And he ascended into heave
and took his seat at the right hand of your majesty on high,
(Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great)*

3. 'The Pascha (Passover) of Christ

- 215 the word Pascha, derived from the Hebrew, Pesach, means to pass by, to pass through. The Pascha of Jesus Christ is his passing through suffering and death to his glorification in the Resurrection and Ascension. In the deepest sense, Christ himself is the Pascha (Passover) (see 1 Cor 5:6-8), for the passage from death to life takes place in him: "Pascha, Pascha of the Lord, for from death to life, and from earth to heaven Christ God has led us."¹⁷⁴ Without him, all the efforts of the human race to free itself from slavery to sin and death would be in vain.
- 216 In the Old Testament, the celebration of Passover commemorated the liberation of God's People from the slavery of Egypt. When Pharaoh refused to let the people go, an angel of death took the lives of the Egyptian first-born. He passed by the Israelite homes, the door-posts o which by the directions of Moses had been anointed with the blood of a sacrificed lamb, so that no first-born Hebrew child would die (see Ex 12:12-13). In the celebration of Passover, the Jews also commemorated the passing through the Red Sea, when the Lord God saved the people of Israel from Pharaoh's army (see Ex 14).
- 217 The Old Testament Passover was a prefiguration of Christ's Passover (Pascha). It prepared the People of God for final liberation and salvation in the kingdom of God: Christ—the Lamb of God—by his Blood (see 1 Pt 1:19) leads the human race in an exodus from slavery to sin and the dominion of death, bringing us to resurrection and eternal life

¹⁷⁴ Floral Triodion, Sunday of Pascha, Paschal Matins, Canon of Pascha, Ode 1, Irmos.