

## “Why the Pascha\* Vigil?”

The Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ takes place outside the boundaries of earthly time.

In this day in age, we are very accustomed to “our” schedule,” “our comforts,” and “the way things are done.”

However, in Christ, or His Great Church of Orthodox Christianity, these things are not eternal realities. It is not possible, as the saying goes, “to have our cake and eat it too.” We cannot always be comfortable, in the earthly sense, and live a true life in God.

In the eyes of the Great Church of Christ, the body and the soul are not separate from each other. Nor, in the age to come, will the body and soul be separate from one another.

For example, this is why we do not believe in cremation. We believe that during the Second Coming of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ there will be a general resurrection when souls and bodies will be reunited. If the body is burnt and not to be found, what will the soul do?

Also, for example, this is why we do believe in fasting. False spirituality says, “I don’t fast, but I still have God in my mind.” However, when the flesh/body is not comforted with foods and pleasures, the soul is in fact more alive towards God.

The more we think about externals the less we think about internals.

The less we think about externals the more we think about internals.

God is within us.

True spirituality is recognizing that we meet God in fasting of body and soul, just like we will meet Him in body and soul during the Second Second Coming. We strain the body because it enlivens our attention to the soul, which knows God.

With these things in mind, heart and soul, we celebrate Pascha Vigil at midnight because then the body and soul are very alert to the fact that something truly extraordinary is taking place. The body and the soul can feel from the change in “schedule” that this is not just another 10AM Sunday service, but a life changing event, the True Resurrection of Jesus Christ, that once and for all SAVED THE WORLD! Something this true and extraordinary takes place outside the ordinary boundaries of our clocks. This occurred, occurs, and will occur in God’s time.

So, at the Pascha Vigil, no matter how old or how young someone is, time becomes irrelevant to the present and eternal reality of the Lord’s Resurrection. In Orthodox Churches throughout the world there will be men and women over a hundred years old, children sleeping in their mother’s arms, and all ages in between. The Orthodox world will be waiting in body and soul with bated

breath (well after midnight) to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, The Only True Reality.

Especially during times such as the present, what could possibly be more spirituality comforting than the opportunity to experience God outside the confines of earthly time (no matter how sleepy or physically uncomfortable we may be)?

Just think of how many people who stay awake well past midnight to welcome in the New Year.....

In the Pascha Vigil, the Orthodox Christian Way, the world may find the Truth it has been seeking.

God Bless,

Fr. Dean Franck  
Holy Archangel Serbian Orthodox Church Hibbing, MN

\*Pascha in Orthodox Christianity refers to the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior, Jesus Christ. In the western world this is called "Easter."