

Tarrying in Jerusalem

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In the Eighth Day now “buried” in the seven days of our earthly life, we live as we die in Christ (Jn 11:25, Rom 6:5). Carrying in our body the dying of Jesus (2 Cor 4:10), we receive Power not just to go forth into the world but to make disciples of all nations—that is, to raise people from the dead. If we thereby attain to the goal of human life, we may discover, again following St. Seraphim, that thousands around us, too, are being saved. Is this not the joy of the Church that the work of IOCC makes incarnate? May it be so!

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If you wish to contribute a reflection to the next issue of Priest to Priest, please email rloumiotis@iocc.org

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PRIEST *to* PRIEST

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Summer 2019

Tarrying in Jerusalem

Power from on High in Everyday Life

Fr. Paul Wesche

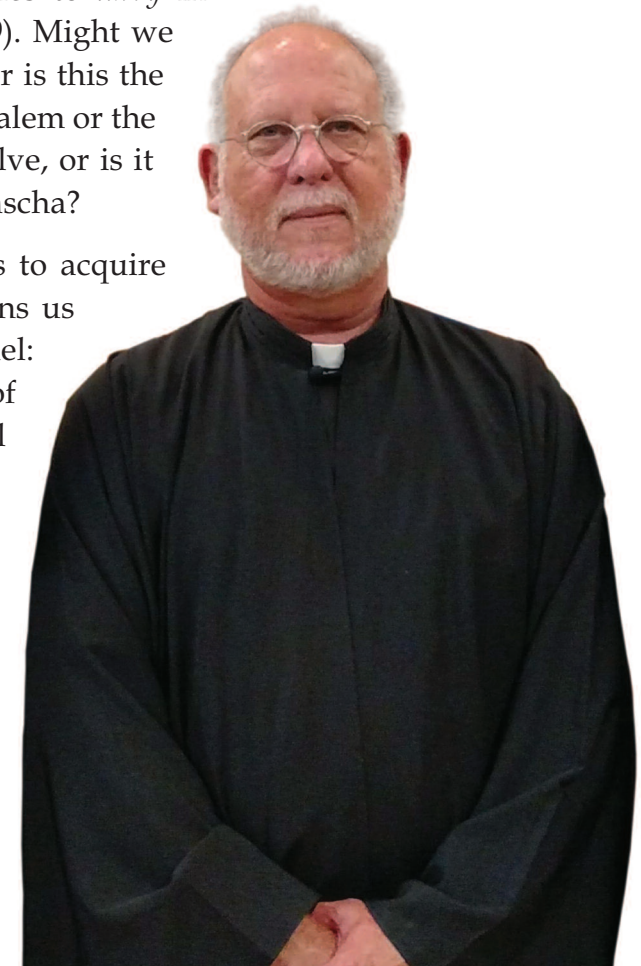
The Great Fast is seven weeks; Pascha is eight weeks. Having descended through the Fast into the Lord’s Tomb, at the midnight hour of Pascha we ascend into the “invisible Church” of the heart. Midnight of Pascha is a mystical gate that opens in time onto another world beyond time, the world of the heart, the inner chamber (Mt 6:6). As the end of creation (the seven), Pascha opens onto the beginning of the New Creation (the Eight).

Before He ascends, the risen Lord commands His disciples to *tarry* in Jerusalem until they receive Power from on high (Lk 24:49). Might we translate it to *dwell* in the Psalms (the word is *kathizete*)? For is this the earthly Jerusalem or the New Jerusalem; the temple of Jerusalem or the Temple of the Lord’s Body, the Church? Is it only the Twelve, or is it all who stand with them in the ageless Age of the Lord’s Pascha?

The purpose of human life, says St. Seraphim of Sarov, is to acquire the Holy Spirit. Lent brings us to Pascha, and Pascha opens us onto Pentecost—as we heard on Holy Saturday from Ezekiel: “I will open your graves and cause you to come up out of your graves. I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land.” See how the purpose of life is poured out on us in the Church.

The “true activity” of the Church, then, as St. Gregory Palamas calls it, is to dwell, let’s say, in the inner chamber of the Psalter until we are clothed with Power from on high. In that Power, we do not lay down the Cross we took up throughout Great Lent. The Cross has become the wood of our being. Its Power, the Holy Spirit, has become active in us; it makes us strong enough to follow Christ up to our “own land.”

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