



**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA**

**PARISH OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY, “EVANGELISMOS”**

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**SUNDAY 28 APRIL 2019 – GREAT AND HOLY EASTER  
(PASCHA)**

**EPISTLE The Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles [1:1-8]**

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which”, He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**EXPLANATION:** Throughout His earthly life **“Jesus worked through the Holy Spirit”**. Similarly, after Pentecost, the Apostles will also teach with the grace of the Holy Spirit. **(1:1-2)** After His Resurrection and before His Ascension, Jesus appeared to His disciples and taught them about the Kingdom of Heaven. **(1:3)** He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem and to wait for the **“promise of the Father”**, ie. the gift of the Holy Spirit to be poured out on the faithful. This happened on Pentecost **(1:4)**, when they were **“baptised with the Holy Spirit” (1:5)**. The concern of the disciples is still fixed on the idea of an earthly kingdom which would liberate the Jews from the humiliation of subjection to Rome. But Christ’s concern is with the heavenly kingdom. He also tells them not to be concerned with the end of times which are known only by the Father **(1:6)**. After Pentecost, the Apostles will be enlightened by the Holy Spirit and they will understand that Christ’s Kingdom is not of this world. They will also be **“engaged”** by the Holy Spirit to give them the courage, spiritual knowledge and wisdom to go out into the entire world to preach the Gospel. **(1:7-8)**

**GOSPEL** **The Reading is from the Gospel of St John [1:1-17]** **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those**

who believe in His name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out saying, "This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**EXPLANATION:** "In the beginning was the Word", emphasizes that Christ has no beginning, ie. He existed before the existence of time. "The Word was with God", means that He is a distinct person from the Father and in communion with the Father. But there never was a time when the Word did not exist. "The Word was God", reveals that the Son is one in essence co-equal and co-eternal with the Father; one in Divinity with Him. "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) **(1:1-2)** All three Persons of the Holy Trinity have the same will, operation and power. They differ only in origin, ie. the Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten of the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. Both the Word and the Holy Spirit owe their existence to the Father. He is the source of their existence before all time. "Through the Son", signifies Christ's eternal birth is by generation from the Father, so the Son did not come into Being or Existence by His own will. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit are like two rays of the Sun (the Father), the source of their existence. Christ is the ray of light that illuminates and the Holy Spirit is the ray that comforts and guides man towards God with the warmth of His grace. **(1:3)** "In Him was life, and the life was the light of man", that is, even when Christ took on human flesh, He did not cease to be fully God. He is the source of all life and enlightenment. He is life because only God has Life in Himself. The **light of man** is indeed Christ, Who illuminates by the presence of His

knowledge all the hearts of human beings who participate in Christ's life and are worthy to be enlightened. Believers in Christ become light and children of God. (John 12:36) **"But the darkness did not comprehend it."** The **"darkness"** refers to the Jewish leaders who actively opposed the light because they could not comprehend it with their reason and heart and failed to receive Him. Though the world has embraced darkness (John 3:19), the Word freely offers light to all in the hope they may repent. **(1:4-5)** Those who believe and follow Christ have the **"Light of Life"**, they do not walk in darkness. Such children are **"not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh"**, that is they are born of a spiritual and not of a carnal generation. **(1:13)** **"And the Word became flesh"**, refers to the mystery of the Incarnation. Christ assumed complete human nature, both a physical body and a rational soul; everything we are except sin. As God and Man in one Person, Christ accomplishes a redemption that fully heals and saves fallen humanity. His two natures are in union, without change, confusion or division. His **Grace** manifests His divine presence. **Truth** is His faithfulness to His promises and covenants in which we enjoy union and communion with God. **(1:14-15)** **"And of His fullness we have all received."** That is, because Christ is God by nature, God's uncreated grace filled His human nature, thus deifying it. So in union with Christ's deified humanity we participate in the fullness of grace. Through Christ, God's children become "gods by grace", without ceasing to be human by nature. **"No one has seen God at any time"**, means that no one has had a direct vision of God the Father's essence. "To see God is to die." (Exodus 33:20) Since to see God in His essence is to be God, the Son Who is **"in the bosom of the Father"** can declare God. As the **"Light of Light"**, Christ reveals the Father. When we see Christ we see the Father. **(1:18)** Since God became man and we are united with Him in Baptism we experience His incarnation. God became man so that we could become gods by grace and share with Him all the gifts of the Kingdom of Heaven.