



Into Holy Week

This column first appeared in the
20 March 2016 Diocesan Chronicle.

At the heart of this Most Holy Week ahead is the harsh truth that death awaits us all—“the last enemy to be destroyed,” St. Paul says. But it has been destroyed in the Resurrection of “the Lamb once slain who lives forever.” Jesus Christ “broke the prison-bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld,” and “in his rising the life of all has risen.”

As the Easter Vigil begins, the newly-lit Paschal Candle and the burning tapers of the worshipers make the darkened church glow with “a fire into many flames divided, yet never dimmed by the sharing of its light.” The death-destroying love of “Christ our light” is not diminished in passing from one heart to another; nor will His flame in us be extinguished when we pass it on to shine in the heart of another.

On Easter morn that light—the Light of Divine Love in the human heart of Jesus—burst forth from the tomb. In the centuries since, the darkness of this world has never overcome it. Throughout the Easter season, I place myself before that light each day with the ancient words of Isaac of Nineveh:

O Christ, who are covered with light

as though with a garment,

who for my sake

stood naked before Pilate,

clothe me with that might

which you caused to overshadow the saints,
whereby they conquered this world of struggle.

May your divinity, Lord,
take pleasure in me
and lead me above the world
to be with you.

O Christ, upon whom the many-eyed cherubim
are unable to look
because of the glory of your face,
yet out of your love you received spit upon your
face;
remove the shame from my face
and grant me an open face before you
at the time of prayer.

May the Risen Lord answer your prayers and
give you an ever deepening share in his victory
over death.