

Why have so many people not heard of Christianity? It depends on where one is. In traditionally Christian countries of the West (Europe, the Americas) the problem is that we now live in societies that know parts of Christianity well but are woefully ignorant of much of the teachings of Christ. For that matter, a lot of what people believe is wrong. Islamic-majority societies legally forbid preaching the Gospel to Muslims, and forbid the conversion of Muslims on pain of imprisonment or even death. Communist China forbids the religious instruction of anyone under 18. The collapse of Catholic Religious Orders in the 1960s sharply reduced missionary outreach, and for a good 40 years there was a feeling that Catholics should not preach the Faith to non-Catholics and instead only emphasize the social justice and human improvement projects (e.g. helping the poor and sick, improving health, providing clean water). All of that combined to create our current conditions of religious ignorance. But the internet gives the opportunity for outreach on the Faith on a scale never seen before. That's why dictatorships work so hard to block the internet. Also new Religious Orders have arisen in Africa, Russia, the Americas and Asia dedicated to missionary work. Pray for the salvation of those who do not know Christ, who do not truly know the Catholic Faith, and for the conversion of sinners. And study on your own from the Catechism and good solid Catholic websites. And when in doubt about something "ask a priest!"

**T**HE ARTOS (adopted from the article by Msgr. Ernest Dunda) Artos is a Greek word which means bread made with yeast. The Artos is blessed on Easter Sunday after the Ambon Prayer which is said at the end of the Liturgy. The prayer used in the blessing of the Artos is as follows: "We bless and sanctify this bread on this Paschal day, for the honor, praise and memory of the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we are released, freed ... We further ask Almighty God to bless this bread and that all who partake of it may share in His Heavenly gifts and be free of all pain and sickness, and be granted salvation of soul and health of body."

Sunday of Saint Thomas  
Second Sunday of Pascha  
Tone Festal Tone

*Menologion*

The holy martyr Sabbas the Goth in Cappadocia. When Athanaricus the king of the Goths was pursuing the Christians, on the third day after the celebration of the Pasch, the general Sabbas spit out food sacrificed to idols and, after fierce tortures, was thrown into a river. (272)

*May*

- 1 Third Sunday of Pascha (Myrrh-Bearing Women)
- 8 Fourth Sunday of Pascha (Healing of the Paralytic)
- 11 Mid-Pentecost, Feast of SS Cyril & Methodius
- 15 Fifth Sunday of Pascha (Samaritan Women at the Well)
- 22 Sixth Sunday of Pascha (Man Born Blind)
- 26 Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ
- 29 Seventh Sunday of Pascha (Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council)
- 30 Memorial Day (USA)

S Bohom Father Michael.  
Dzkumem pekne.  
Köszönöm

Thank you for your service and dedication to a parish that was not an official assignment. Without the authority of an administrator you guided us and gathered us under your spiritual wings to protect us.

I was constantly amazed by your God given talents which are too numerous to list here.

## PROTECTION OF THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER VIRGIN MARY

(Pokrov)

April 24th

**D**uring the Bright Week, the blessed bread, covered with an icon of the Resurrection, remains on the Tetrapod to be kissed until St. Thomas Sunday, when the Artos is distributed to the faithful. In the former centuries the faithful would preserve little pieces of bread for those who were seriously ill or in danger of death and unable to receive Holy Communion. They would be given a piece of Artos as a substitute for Holy Communion.

**T**he Artos reminds the faithful that Christ came from Heaven to Earth, took on a human body, suffered for us, was crucified, and on the third day arose from the dead to be with us always to the end of the world. Our Lord said of Himself: "I am the living bread who came down from Heaven"(John 6:51).

**A**ccording to the oldest tradition, the Apostles, after the Ascension of Our Lord, placed bread on the table (altar) each time during the services, for the Divine Master. This they did for their Master, confessing or believing in His invisible presence among them. At the end of the services they took the bread and lifted it up with the words: "Glory be to You, O Christ, Our God, Glory be to You. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit." The Apostles, after receiving the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day, went to preach the Gospel throughout the world and, according to tradition, left a loaf of bread on the altar in remembrance of His Glorious Resurrection.

**T**he origin of the blessing of bread can be found in the Old Testament, where we read that on a table set on the right side of the Sanctuary of the Temple were twelve loaves of bread representing the twelve tribes of Israel. This bread was replaced each Saturday (Sabbath) by the celebrating priest, who alone was permitted to eat this bread. The Holy Bible does tell us about the exceptional case when David and his soldiers were permitted to eat the bread because of being near starvation (Matt 12:4).

**A**s the unleavened bread had a great significance to the Jews in the Old Testament, so the Artos has for us in the New Testament. As bishop, St. Cyril, the great writer and preacher in the 12th century writes: "As the Jews in Egypt were preparing unleavened bread for their big journey through the Red Sea, and after crossing the Sea they did eat the bread, so we, Christians, saved through the Resurrection of our Savior from sin, lift up the Artos, which is exposed on the table during Bright Week and eat it on Saturday, the last day of Bright Week. As the unleavened bread was eaten for the health of the people who ate it, so is this bread given for the health and sanctification of our soul and body." This example which was set by the Apostles is still followed in many monasteries and some parishes today. After the Holy Liturgy during Bright Week, with the singing of "Christ is Risen," the celebrant elevates the Artos and carries it from the church to the monastery dining room. After dinner, he again elevates the Bread and welcomes the brethren with the words, "Christ is Risen," and they respond "Indeed He is Risen." The celebrant then takes the Artos Bread back into the church as the singing of "Christ is Risen" continues. May we note that in the Byzantine Church, at the Vespers with the Litija, on the solemn holy days, we have the blessing of five loaves of bread, wheat, wine and oil. The celebrant in prayer asks God to "bless these loaves, wheat, wine and oil" and "multiply them in this city and throughout the world and to sanctify the faithful who partake of them." The blessing of the five loaves brings to mind the miracle of Jesus Christ when He blessed the five loaves in the wilderness and thus fed 5,000 men, not counting the women and children (Mt.14:20-21). The Blessed Bread should remind us of the Heavenly Bread -- the Holy Eucharist -- our daily bread, which we need in order to sustain our spiritual life. In the first centuries when Services called for an all-night vigil, this bread was distributed to all participants to give them the strength the body needed to fulfill the all-night vigil.