



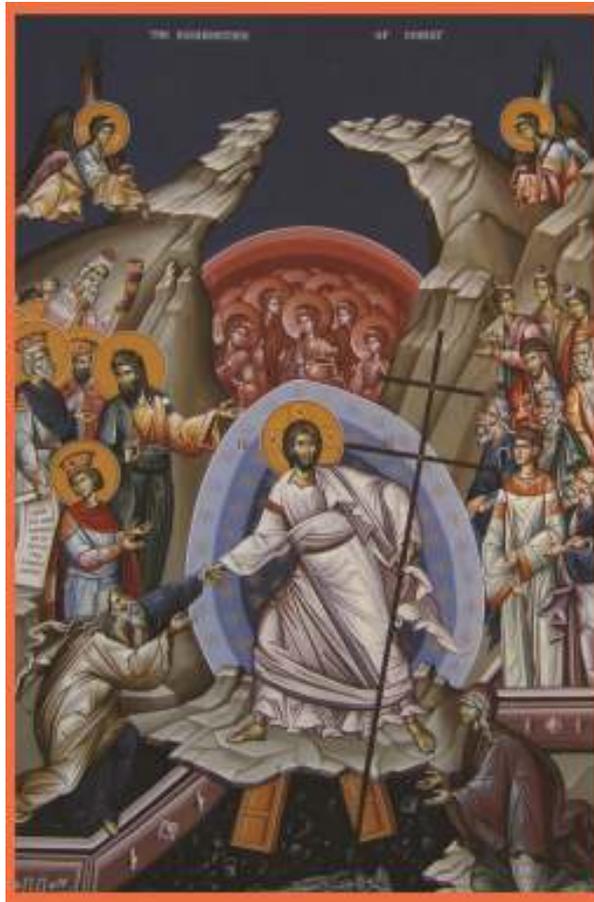
The Feast of Real Joy!

Christ, the Passover great and most Holy! O Wisdom, Word and Power of God! Grant that we may more perfectly partake of Thee in the day of Thy Kingdom which knows no night. (Orthodox Paschal Hymn).

Easter is the feast of real joy because it celebrates ‘Christ, the Passover’, our Saviour’s sacrifice and His Resurrection! These great events powerfully reveal God’s love for all humankind, and they have allowed us to hope in the miracle of eternal life. Such a life no longer ‘knows night’, since Christ’s sacrifice has decisively destroyed the power of death, darkness and decay.

Easter begins on the night of the Paschal celebration. For fifty days after Easter, everyone is invited to enter ‘this great joy of their Lord,’ so eloquently expressed by St John Chrysostom in his Easter sermon, where he states, ‘rich and poor, come to the feast, receive all the riches of loving-kindness...for the universal Kingdom has been revealed.’ This statement explains why Easter is a celebration of real joy because it tells us that God’s mercy is directed to **all** people since Christ became our Pascal sacrifice, through which He delivered us from the consequences of our sins, our sense of hopelessness and despair.

Easter gives us hope in eternal life. In other words, we know that life does not end at the grave because our Lord has overcome death and opened up our passage to His eternal Kingdom. Easter, however, does not only affect how we view existential matters such as where we go to



from this life, but it also can influence how we deal with issues and problems which challenge us in our day-to-day experience. This is because, as Alexander Schmemmann writes: ‘Easter transforms the year into a “Christian year.”’¹ Everything, from this moment onwards takes on a new meaning because of the joy that ‘Christ is Risen! And so, no matter how difficult our circumstances may be, no matter what challenges we have from ourselves, our family, our peers, or from our society, the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ overcame death gives us hope.

He gave us back the gift of life which we had lost because of the consequences of sin. He can transform our night into light, because only He can raise our fallen nature, and show us through His example of service and sacrifice, how to live in this

world so we can attain true and eternal life. Because of Christ’s Resurrection we now know that life does not end at the grave. Death is not eternal rest, but opens our way to eternal life.² His sacrifice and victory over sin, frees us from the tyranny of our own sins. His death leads us to life. This Easter may we appreciate this great gift of joy, the ‘Feast of Feasts and the Triumph of Triumphs’³ which has been granted to us because of the Resurrection of our Lord.



¹ A. Schmemmann, *For the Life of The World: Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1973, p. 58.

² Ibid, p. 57.

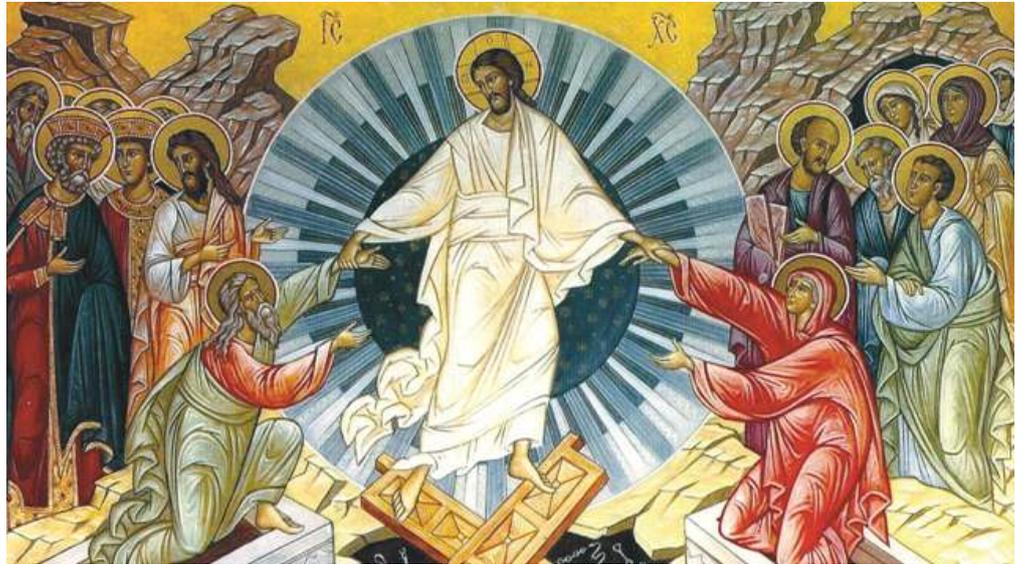
³ Pascal Hymn.

Θάνατος και Ζωή

Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος ο Θεολόγος επιγραμματικά λέγει πώς ο Χριστιανός ευρίσκει τη σωτηρία του: **«Έδεήθημεν Θεού σαρκουμένου και νεκρουμένου ἵνα ζήσωμεν».**

Έπρεπε ο Θεός να γίνει άνθρωπος, να νεκρωθεί για να κερδίσει ο άνθρωπος τη ζωή του.

Έτσι η πανσοφία του Θεού επιτελεί την Ανάσταση του Ανθρώπου από την αιώνια καταδίκη του θανάτου.



Με την νέκρωση του Χριστού στο Σταυρό και τη κάθοδό Του στον Άδη, συγκλονίζονται τα επίγεια, τα υπερκόσμια και τα καταχθόνια. Αλλάζει η πραγματικότητα του θανάτου και οδηγεί τον άνθρωπο και όλη τη κτίση σε μιά νέα κατάσταση. Στην Ανάσταση που μας φέρνει στο Φως της αιώνιας ζωής.

Αυτό τον τρόπο διάλεξε η Αγάπη του Θεού για να σώσει τον κόσμο. Με το θάνατό Του ο Χριστός καταργεί αυτόν που εξουσίαζε τον θάνατο, δηλ. τον διάβολο.

Ο θάνατος του Χριστού είναι ζωοποιός. Φέρνει τη ζωή. Και η Ανάστασή Του ανασταίνει τον κόσμο της φθοράς. Αυτή τη νέα κατάσταση που φέρνει στο κόσμο ο θάνατος του Χριστού και η Ανάστασή Του, την ζούμε εμείς οι Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί μέσα στην Εκκλησία μας. Με το μυστήριο της Βάπτισής μας ζούμε μιά νέκρωση και ταφή που μας οδηγεί στη Νέα ζωή της Εκκλησίας.

Η τριπλή κατάδυση στην Αγία κολυμβήθρα παριστάνει μιά ταφή. Έναν θάνατο:

«ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν» (Ρωμ. στ' 3).

Είναι μιά εικόνα του θανάτου και της ταφής του Κυρίου. Εδώ δεν πρόκειται για απλό συμβολισμό. Εδώ έχουμε μιά νέα Δημιουργία. Μιά Νέα πραγματικότητα. Στο βάπτισμά μας πεθαίνει ο παλιός άνθρωπος της αμαρτίας. Βγαίνουμε από την κολυμβήθρα ντυμένοι το Χριστό που μας ανασταίνει μαζί Του στην νέα, την καινούργια ζωή και μας κάνει υιούς Θεού. Ζούμε την αναστημένη ζωή, τη ζωή του Πνεύματος του Θεού.

Είναι καινή κτίση!

Θάνατος λοιπόν και ταφή στο Βάπτισμα. Την ίδια στιγμή Ανάσταση και Ζωή. Αυτή όμως τη Νέα ζωή πρέπει να τη διατηρήσουμε.

Πρέπει διαρκώς να αγωνιζόμαστε, να νεκρώνουμε τον αμαρτωλό εαυτό μας που ζητά να ζωντανέψει, κάθε φορά που η αμαρτία χτυπά την πόρτα της καρδιάς μας και να μας οδηγήσει στο θάνατο. Για να κερδίζουμε τη ζωή πρέπει να παραμένουμε νεκροί. Στην ουσία αυτό σημαίνει πως πρέπει να απαρνούμεθα τον εαυτό μας, να σηκώνουμε το σταυρό μας και να ακολουθούμε πιστά το Χριστό. Σημαίνει πως πρέπει να παλεύουμε για να υπερνικάμε τα αμαρτωλά μας θελήματα, να συγκρατούμε τον εαυτό μας από το κακό. Να διακονούμε τις ανάγκες του πλησίον μας. Να γινόμαστε **«εις ἀλλήλους χρηστοί» (Εφ. δ' 32)**. Να ζούμε, κατά κάποιο τρόπο, μιά νέκρωση.

Τότε τούτο το θαυμαστό και παράδοξο επιτελείται. Η νέκρωση αυτή είναι ζωοποιός. Δεν πεθαίνουμε για να χαθούμε. Πεθαίνουμε για να ζήσουμε!

Αυτού του είδους ο θάνατος ανασταίνει. Όπως ακριβώς και ο θάνατος του Χριστού στο Σταυρό. Θάνατος και Ανάσταση βιούνται ταυτόχρονα. Και εδώ είναι το μεγάλο μυστικό.

Όσο δεν αποφασίζεις ένα τέτοιο θάνατο, είσαι ουσιαστικά νεκρός. Και κάθε φορά που τολμάς να πεθάνεις, τότε αρχίζεις αληθινά να ζεις.

Όλοι οι Άγιοι γνώριζαν πως δεν υπάρχει άλλος τρόπος αληθινός υπάρξεως και ζωής.

«Αποθάνομεν οὖν, ἵνα ζήσωμεν» (Μ. Βασ).



FROM THE SAINTS OF OUR CHURCH

Saint Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamina Commemorated on May 12th

St Epiphanius was born around AD 315 in Palestine, to Jewish parents. He received a good education, which developed his zeal for studying the Holy Scriptures. One day he passed by a Christian monk who had taken off his garment to give to a poor man. A brilliant white light from heaven covered the monk, at which Epiphanius fell to his knees begging the monk to baptise him.

Epiphanius became a Christian, left the world behind him and became a disciple of the holy ascetic St Hilarion. He began a life of strict asceticism and continuous study. He took a particular interest in the doctrines of the Church and dedicated much of his life to fighting the heresies that plagued the early Church. After spending four arduous years in the Egyptian desert, Epiphanius established a monastery near his village in Palestine. The miracles God worked through Epiphanius drew many people towards him. Seeking to escape the glory of this attention, Epiphanius, after serving for 30 years as abbot, went to Cyprus where he was joyfully reunited with St Hilarion. Under the pressures of the time, Epiphanius was appointed bishop of Salamina in AD 376, and continued to work miracles of healing and enlightenment. The Saint was known to have been graced with seeing the Holy Spirit whenever he celebrated the Divine Liturgy.

He died while travelling back to Cyprus after addressing the Origen heresy in Constantinople. Prior to his death, he urged his disciples to preserve the purity of the true Faith and to turn away from the corruption of riches. When the ship arrived in Cyprus with the Saint's body, an enormous crowd bearing candles greeted it and solemnly accompanied him to the church of his diocese.



Miracles of our Times

Elder Paisios and the Paralysed Man

A paralysed man named Constantine visited Mount Athos in 1981. He had been suffering from a chronic neurological syndrome for 30 years which confined him to a wheelchair. At the Monastery of Grigoriou, he met a rich businessman who offered to pay for him to be operated on in America. Constantine became very excited at the idea of being healed but he went to ask Elder Paisios for his opinion.

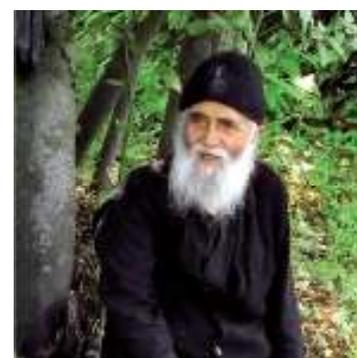
He met the Elder at Karyes and spoke to him about this situation. The Elder crossed his head with the relics of St Arsenios of Cappadocia. The following is the account of Constantine himself of what happened next:

"Then he grabbed my puny, paralysed legs. Kissing them, he said, 'These little legs – they're going to take you to paradise, and you don't realise it.' And then he added, 'Don't go to America – they'll make you a guinea pig!' Then, he looked me in the eye and said, 'Get up so we can take a walk.' I thought he was joking. He said it again: 'Come on – are you getting up or what?'"

He took me in his arms, helped me off the bed, and we began walking. He was praying with tears in his eyes, saying something I couldn't make out. I felt like I had wings, and, seeing myself standing, I started weeping from emotion.

Finally, he set me down in my wheelchair, sat next to me, and said, 'Listen, my child – God doesn't want you to get better ever. In fact, you'll get worse. But you should know that the people who surround and serve you are all being saved without realising it – they help, and they're helped. You become a means for the salvation of their souls. This is what God is asking from you.'"

Source: Elder Paisios of Mount Athos, by Hieromonk Isaac, pages 607 – 608



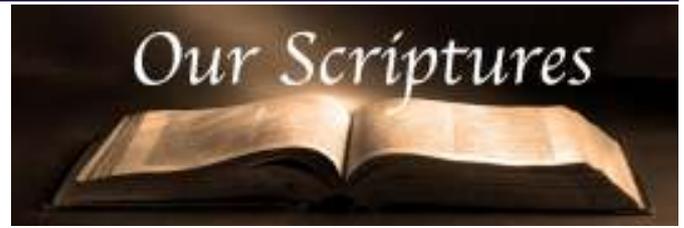
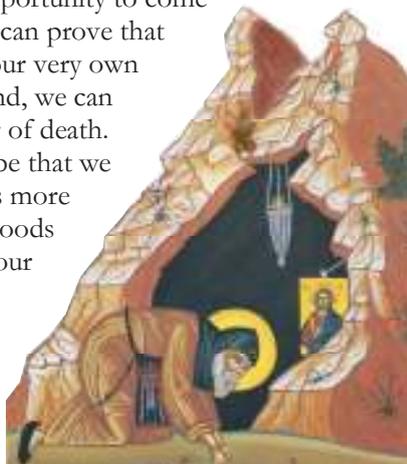
FROM THE HOLY FATHERS...

St Athanasios – On Incarnation



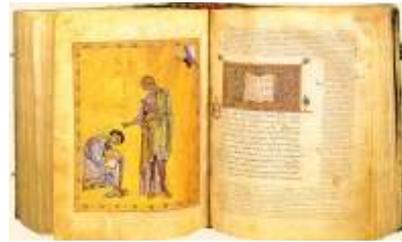
The fifth chapter of St Athanasios' *On the Incarnation* is titled 'The Resurrection'. For St Athanasios, the Resurrection of Christ is the ultimate purpose of Christ's incarnation (God becoming man). Without the Resurrection, Christ's coming would have been meaningless. The plan of salvation could not have been realised if Christ had died without later raising Himself from that death. The Resurrection crucially puts an end to death. And we can all exclaim "O Death, where is your victory? O Grave, where is your sting? (1 Cor 15:55). It is because Christ made death ineffective that we no longer need to fear death. St Athanasios writes: "Shall we call death dead, which effects nothing whatever, but lies as lifeless and ineffective as the evil spirits and the idols? The Son of God, *living and effective*, is active every day and effects the salvation of all..."

St Athanasios attempts in his chapter on the Resurrection to prove that death has been destroyed, and that it can no longer have any power over the person who lives in Christ. His proof is that people are willing to die for God. By overcoming our fear of death and understanding that physical death is an opportunity to come closer to God, we too can prove that death is powerless in our very own lives. On the other hand, we can continue to live in fear of death. The result could only be that we would attach ourselves more than ever to material goods and forget to nourish our souls. Christ's Resurrection is for the Christian the death of death and the evidence of life. ❖



Gospel Reading April 12th (John 11: 1-45)

Lazarus Saturday



This Gospel passage narrates the circumstances in which Christ raised Lazarus from the dead. Coming only two days before Holy Week, Lazarus Saturday is a powerful reminder to Orthodox faithful of one of the key purposes of Christ's approaching Passion and suffering – that we might learn that He has complete power over death. It is the 'tremor' which precedes the coming 'earthquake' of the Resurrection.

St John Chrysostom's homily on this passage focuses our attention on why Christ, despite being informed of Lazarus's illness, nevertheless lets him die. He could have spoken a single word from a distance and that would have been sufficient to save Lazarus from death. Christ, however, wanted to prove a point – "*I am the Resurrection and the Life*" (v. 25). He needed to do this because, despite the many miracles He had performed, there were people who still doubted Him. Even Martha and Mary (who were both devoted to Christ) doubted that Christ could do anything after Lazarus had died.

Christ wanted to silence these doubts. Not only did He allow Lazarus to die from his illness, but He left him buried four days in the tomb while He took His time in travelling to Bethany. He then instructed that the stone be removed from Lazarus's tomb so that all who were present could smell the stench from Lazarus's decaying body. It is at that point that He commanded - "*Lazarus, come forth!*" (v. 43). St John Chrysostom emphasizes that Christ did not invoke the Father to raise Lazarus. The command was issued under Christ's own authority. Lazarus responded to this command by returning to life and walking from the tomb, leaving no one in doubt as to Christ's power over death. The event also confirmed the truth of Christ's words – "*He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live*" (v. 25). ❖

Questions & Answers

A clergyman of our Archdiocese answers ...

Why do we say in the Creed: “I expect the Resurrection of the Dead”?

Death is painful. It hurts and it hurts deeply. Is there a greater personal sadness than the death of a mother, a father, a son, a daughter, a brother, a sister, a friend, or a spouse? At such moments, the words of Saint John of Damascus ring true: “What earthly sweetness ever remains unmixed with grief? All things are more feeble than a shadow, all are more deceptive than dreams. Yet in one moment death supplants them all”?



has risen victoriously from the dead, so that we might have life everlasting. He Himself declared: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jn 5:28-29).

My life here and now should be a preparation and expectation for my resurrection, which I hope will be to

It is hard to look at death, and yet this line of the Creed, “I expect the resurrection of the dead”, enables us to do so, softening our inconsolable sadness into a patient hopefulness through the light of Christ’s countenance, as Saint John concludes the same hymn.

The verb “I expect” in Greek is “προσδοκῶ” which is in turn composed of the prefix (πρός) for movement towards something and another verb (δοκᾶω) meaning to accept graciously. Hence we are saying that we expect the resurrection of the dead, we are moving towards it and welcoming it with all our heart. This expectation has a blessed influence on our lives. After all, expectations about the future are known to affect thought, emotion, and behaviour in the present, especially when there is expectation of a concrete goal of value in the future. In this case, it is the resurrection of the dead unto life with Christ, which has an infinite value, should be infinitely motivating for our spiritual life.

Saint John of Damascus writes: “If there is no resurrection, let us eat and drink: let us pursue a life of pleasure and enjoyment. If there is no resurrection, how do we differ from the irrational beasts? If there is no resurrection, let us hold the wild beasts of the field happy who have a life free from sorrow. If there is no resurrection, neither is there any God nor Providence, but all things are driven and borne along of themselves” (An Exact Expression of the Orthodox Faith, Book 4, chapter 27). But there is the resurrection of the dead! We expect it. And in expecting it, we live lives of Christian virtue assured of God’s presence and comforted by His providence.

The resurrection of the dead is part of a greater mystery, the Person of Christ, the God-man, who in His humanity

life eternal with God. I will ultimately stand before Christ, face to face.

If the words, “I look for the resurrection of the dead”, would only become rooted deep in our souls and orient us in our approach to life, then no funeral would be a final farewell. No mishap or tragedy could deprive us of faith in God’s providence. No enticement could distract us from the aim of enjoying our resurrection from death to life forever with Christ. Like Saint Paul, we would shout “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38-39). All of this will imbue our lives with an unquenchable hope and an unflinching optimism, just like Apostle Paul who says: “eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor 2:9). That is what it means to expect the resurrection of the dead.

† Fr N. S. ✠





Abbot Iscu the Martyr

The following is an edited excerpt from the book, *Tortured for Christ*, by Richard Wurmbrand, a Lutheran pastor, about his experience in a Romanian prison:

When I was in jail I fell very, very ill... I was near to death.

At my right hand was a priest by the name of Iscu. He was abbot of a monastery. This man, perhaps in his forties, had been so tortured he was near to death. But his face was serene... He radiated joy.

On my left side was the Communist torturer who had tortured this priest almost to death. He had been arrested by his own comrades... And he was dying near me. His soul was in agony...

Then I saw a miracle. I saw the agonized priest calling two other prisoners. And leaning on their shoulders, slowly, slowly he walked past my bed, sat on the bedside of this murderer, and caressed his head—I will never forget this gesture. I watched a murdered man caressing his murderer! That is love - he found a caress for him.

The priest said to the man, "You are young; you did not know what you were doing. I love you with all my heart." But he did not just say the words. You can say "love", and it's just a word of four letters. But he really loved. "I love you with all my heart."

Then he went on, "If I who am a sinner can love you so much, imagine Christ, who is Love Incarnate, how much He loves you! And all the Christians whom you have tortured, know that they forgive you, they love you, and Christ loves you. He wishes you to be saved much more than you wish to be saved. You wonder if your sins can be forgiven. He wishes to forgive your sins more than you wish your sins to be forgiven. He desires for you to be with Him in heaven much more than you wish to be in heaven with Him. He is Love. You only need to turn to Him and repent."

In this prison cell in which there was no possibility of privacy, I overheard the confession of the murderer to the murdered...

They prayed together, embraced each other, and the priest went back to his bed. Both men died that same night. It was Christmas Eve... Jesus was born in the heart of a Communist murderer.

These are things which I have seen with my own eyes.



Part 4: Encounter with the Youth

In November 2012, with the blessings of His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos and His Eminence Metropolitan Konstantinos of Singapore, eight men from the Greek Orthodox Christian Society travelled to Medan, Indonesia, at the request of Fr Chrysostomos Manalu, an Orthodox priest of Indonesian background. This is the fourth of a series of articles outlining aspects of this missionary visit.

As young members of this mission group we had a number of blessed encounters with the youth at St Paul's Theological College, who welcomed us warmly and with great enthusiasm.

During the first seminars that we presented at St Paul's, we came across young students who showed a deep eagerness to learn, and possessed a genuine thirst for the word of God. With Bibles open and at the ready, they didn't hesitate to ask us questions regarding the Sacraments, Holy Tradition and Icons, and the satisfaction was evident on their faces with even the simplest answers we gave them.

After the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, we had the unique opportunity to attend the Orthodox fellowship at St Paul's. Some members were in the process of being catechised, but most of them were Orthodox and had been baptised by Fr Chrysostomos.

Amongst animated discussion on topics including Orthodoxy, the Church, differences between our way of life and theirs, one young lady was very candid with us when she asked us for guidance about how to go about becoming Orthodox, and how to know if it was the right thing to do. Another very special moment was when Themistocles, a newly baptised Orthodox Christian, spoke to us from his personal experience: **"As an Orthodox Christian, I feel that God's Grace is mine. I am Orthodox and I am sure that with the Orthodox way of life I will gain salvation"**.

Afterwards, we were invited to play indoor soccer with members of the Orthodox youth. Although it was night time, it was extremely humid and 30 °C. We were completely exhausted, but at the same time in awe at the display of pure Christian brotherhood among the youth on the soccer field.

Chanting together with the Orthodox youth in Medan also left a deep impression on us. When we held an introductory lesson to Byzantine chanting with the youth, we were again impressed by their great eagerness, speed of learning and most of all the deep sense of prayer that accompanied their chanting.

Although almost all our encounters with the youth involved communicating with an interpreter, the barrier of language was transcended by the deep Christian brotherhood and friendship that we shared. We felt that we had become a part of a living community that left us with the sensation that we had somehow been transported to the very first Christian Church.





The Youth Orthodox Fellowship of Medan met with members of the missionary team to discuss issues common to all Orthodox young people.



The Byzantine chanting class was enthusiastically received by our Indonesian hosts.



The indoor soccer game brought the Indonesians and Greeks closer together.

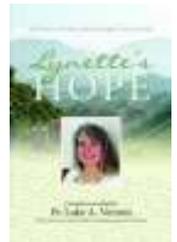
book review

Lynette's Hope - The witness of Lynette Katherine Hoppe's life and death.

Compiled and edited by Fr Luke A. Veronis

Published by Conciliar Press Ministries, 2008

This book is a profoundly personal insight into the life and death of a devout Orthodox missionary of our time. Lynette Hoppe was born in Indiana, USA, in 1960 into a protestant missionary family. She completed Bible College and a degree in graphic design. Lynette married Nathan, a protestant missionary. Their conversion to Orthodoxy was miraculous. Interested readers will find more details in a related book "Becoming Orthodox" by Peter Gillquist (reviewed in April-May 2013 edition of Lychnos).



Lynette and Nathan became Orthodox missionaries in Albania during the late 1990's and early 2000's. Albania was resurrecting itself from communism. Nearby Kosovo was being torn apart by war. The local people were suffering from poverty, hunger, displacement and spiritual ignorance.

In the first part of the book, Fr Veronis, a fellow missionary, recounts Lynette's life story. The rest of the book consists of Lynette's journals and newsletters. Lynette describes daily family life in Albania: raising her children in the church and celebrating the Orthodox feasts. Her family would feed the hungry, look after the sick and take in refugees. Lynette worked as a graphic designer and English editor for Church publications as well as a youth leader.

Lynette was diagnosed with breast cancer while in Albania. She accepted that it was God's plan for her salvation. She was active in missionary work until her death in 2006. Several weeks before she died, she gave a talk at a girls' youth camp and organised craft activities. The book contains photographs of her missionary work and her funeral. She was buried in Albania, in the monastery of St Vlash.

The book is a beautiful portrait of a convert to Orthodoxy, who was dynamic in her faith and found ultimate expression of her Christian love as a missionary in Albania. The reader feels they are travelling with Lynette on her journey. The book emphasises that our life in this world is transient and a preparation for the next life. Lynette's step into the next world was made natural, fearless and painless by her great love for God. ❖

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Πασχαλινά Έθιμα

Ένα Κράμα και Χάρμα Φύσις και Ζωής

Ανοιξη! Η Μάνα Γη ανοίγει τα' αχνιστά της σπλάχνα απ' τα χιονόνερα της χειμωνιάς. Ο Ήλιος τοξεύει τις ακτίνες του σαν σαϊτίες σε κάθε φύλο και κλωνί και τρυφερό βλαστάρι. Και το ζευγάρι αυτό υφαίνει πέπλο κεντητό, καλειδοσκόπιο σωστό, απ' άνθη. Μα και τα ζωντανά και οι άνθρωποι μονιάζουν.



Άνοιξη! Μαρτίου 25. Ο Γαβριήλ Αρχάγγελος «Καταπλαγείς» την «Χάρη» Ευαγγελίζεται στην «Κεχαριτωμένη», «Σήμερον» «Ο Υιός του Θεού Υιός της Παρθένου γίνεται!»....

Άνοιξη! Και για στερνή φορά Ο «Κύριος των Πάντων» στη Γή βαδίζει αργά με τον βαρύ Σταυρό στον δρόμο προς τον Γολγοθά. Και γύρω τα «κρίνα του αγρού» κι οι παπαρούνες κόκκινες σκύβουν λυπητερά και στάζουν αίμα και δάκρυα, τα «πετεινά» του ουρανού σωπαίνουν στο Θείο Δράμα!...

Και ξάφνου στο «Τετέλεσθαι!»...

Τρέμει η Γη κι ανατριχιάζει σύγκορμα και σκοτεινιάζει και με βροντές και με βροχή να πλύνει θέλει να μαζέψει το Αθώο Αίμα Του στης γης τα Σπλάχνα. Και με την κάθοδο στον Άδη συντρίβονται τα πάντα, και Κήρυγμα Ανάστασης ακούνε όλοι, και στον Παράδεισο με τον Ληστή πρωτοδιαβαίνουν ψυχές Αγίων. Και την επαύριον «τη μιά των Σαββάτων» Λαμπρύνονται τα πάντα: και Γη και ουρανός και λούλουδα και Πασχαλιές και Άγγελοι και οι Μυροφόρες και οι Απόστολοι χαίρονται και αγάλλονται στην Αναστάσιμη χαρά!...

Από τότε μέχρι σήμερα η Χριστιανοσύνη πέρασε από πολλές δοκιμασίες με διωγμούς και σχίσματα, και γιορτάζει Πάσχα με τρόπους διαφορετικούς.

Στον Ορθόδοξο Χριστιανικό κόσμο, και στους Έλληνες ιδιαίτερα, το Πάσχα είναι «Εορτή εορτών και Πανήγυρης Πανηγύρεων». Την Μ. Εβδομάδα αποκορυφώνονται όλα σε μια Μυστηριακή Πνευματική ανάταση απερίγραπτη.

Στο διάβα των αιώνων γνώρισε πολέμους και σκλαβιές. Δημιούργησε παρ' όλα αυτά Ορθόδοξη Ιερά Παράδοση και Θεολογία απaráμιλλη. Εκεί μέσα ζυμώθηκε και η Δημοτική παράδοση και τα έθιμα. Κάθε χωριό και πόλη και περιοχή έχει πολλά κοινά στοιχεία όπως: Κόκκινα αυγά, Αρνί ψητό κτλ., αλλά και πολλές παραλλαγές. Παραθέτονται μερικές μόνο.

Την Μ. Παρασκευή με μεγάλη ευλάβεια στολίζεται ο Επιτάφιος. Στα χωριά μαζεύουν αγριολούλουδα και παπαρούνες κόκκινες. Στις πόλεις με πολλές ενορίες γίνεται και ένας συναγωνισμός. Στο Μεσολόγγι όλοι οι Επιτάφιοι μαζεύονται γύρω από το Ηρώων και κάνουν Τρισάγιο.

Στην Γαργαλιάνη της Μεσσηνίας, μια γιαγιά 85 ετών θυμήθηκε από το Πάσχα κάτι που της είχε μάθει η γιαγιά της για την Μ. Εβδομάδα. Μ.Δευτέρα Ο Χριστός με την μαχαίρα, Μ.Τρίτη Ο Χριστός εκρίθη, Μ.Τετάρτη Ο Χριστός εχάθη, Μ.Πέμπτη Ο Χριστός εβρέθη, Μ.Παρασκευή θλίψη κι αναστεναγμοί πολλοί, Μ.Σάββατο χαρές γιομάτο. Πάσχα: «Χάσκα μπούσκα το τυρί με την τσίτσια/φτσέλα(βαρελάκι) το κρασί ώσπου να ψηθεί τ' αρνί». Στην ίδια περιοχή, στο Μεσολόγγι και στην Κέρκυρα και στον κάμπο της Ηλίας πετάνε στάμνες κι άλλα πήλινα αγγεία από τα μπαλκόνια το Μ. Σάββατο πρωί μετά την πρώτη Ανάσταση. Πιθανόν να συμβολίζει «ταις Πύλες Άδου» το κομμάτιασμα. Σε χωριά της Λάρνακας της Κύπρου στον Πόρο και σε άλλα μέρη καίγανε τον Ιούδα Μ. Παρασκευή ή Μ. Σάββατο ή της Ζωοδόχου Πηγής σε χωριό της Μυτιλήνης. Σχεδόν σε όλα τα μέρη πριν την Ανάσταση συμφιλιώνονταν. Σε πολλά χωριά ο Παπάς περίμενε και τον τελευταίο κάτοικο του χωριού πριν αρχίσει το «Δεύτε Λάβετε Φως», και πρώτος έσερνε τον χορό μετά τον Εσπερινό της Αγάπης. Μετά μικροί και μεγάλοι συνέχιζαν τον χορό, στην Ήπειρο με φουστανέλες, στα νησιά οι άνδρες με βράκες και οι γυναίκες με παραδοσιακές τοπικές φορεσιές.

Τα φαγώσιμα - κάθε νησί και τόπος έχει τα δικά του. Έτσι τις τυρόπιτες στην Κύπρο τις λένε φλαούνες, στην Κρήτη καλτσούνια κτλ. Το φαγοπότι της Λαμπρής, ο κατά τα άλλα αυστηρός Ιερός Χρυσόστομος, στον Κατηχητικό του Λόγο στο τέλος της Αναστάσιμης Λειτουργίας το τονίζει έντονα. Να μην μείνει κανείς νηστικός, «η τράπεζα γέμει» λέει. Γι' αυτό και οι συγχωριανοί μοιράζονται με τους φτωχούς και κρέας και άλλα πλούσια φαγητά το Πάσχα.

Αυτά και πολλά άλλα μπορεί να απαριθμηθούν, μα ο σκοπός είναι για τον καθένα μας να θυμηθούμε τα δικά μας ιδιαίτερα έθιμα και να τα μεταλαμπαδεύσουμε στα παιδιά και εγγόνια μας. Χριστός Ανέστη! Χρόνια Πολλά!



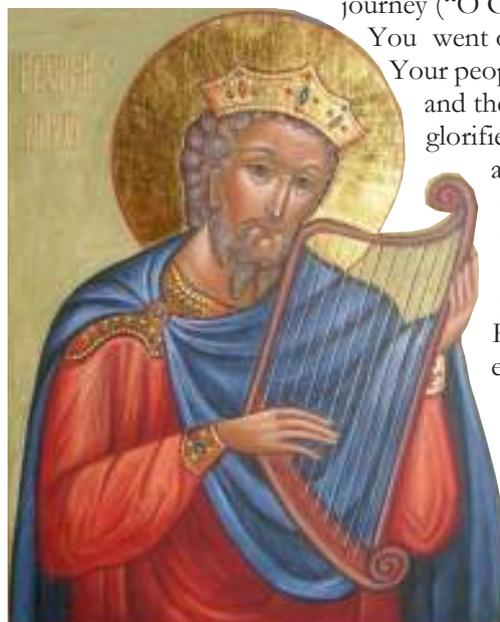


Let God arise let His enemies be scattered Psalm 67 (68)

The first use of the opening lines of this Psalm was by the Israelites when the Ark of the Covenant was carried during their wanderings in the desert. The enemies to be scattered were those who fought against Israel on their way to the Chosen Land: the Amalekites, Moabites, Amorites and so forth. The wandering of Israel through the desert was a kind of procession, and so it makes sense that this Psalm was eventually used in Jewish liturgical processions, and later on by Christians for the same purpose.

The Orthodox Christian use of this Psalm is clear: The first three verses are recited after the Procession of Holy Saturday night. After the Procession, we hear St Mark's account of the Resurrection and we chant "Christ is risen from the dead...". Between the chanting of this hymn, we recite the opening verses of Psalm 67 (68): "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let those who hate Him flee before Him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God" (Psalm 67:1-3).

The interpretation of the whole Psalm can thus be summarised in the following way: Jesus Christ, arising from the dead ("Let God arise", Verse 1), is triumphant over sin and death ("let His enemies be scattered", Verse 1), bringing with Him Saints from Hades ("I will bring back from Bashan, I will bring them back from the depths of the sea", Verse 22), leads the Church in her journey ("O God, when



You went out before Your people", Verse 7) and the Church glorifies Christ for all that He has done for her ("Sing to God, sing praises to His name, extol Him who rides the clouds", Verse 4).



Job the Long-Suffering



Job was a blameless man who "feared God and shunned evil" (Job 1:1). So righteous was he, that there was "none like him on the earth" (Job 1:8). But Satan argued that Job was faithful only because God had blessed him with much wealth and health and ten children. Thus God allowed Job to be tested and in a single day he loses all of his children, his servants and his livestock. Yet instead of cursing God (which is what Satan wanted), he fell down upon the ground and worshiped God saying, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord". (Job 1:21).

It must be stated here that as we read this book, we realise that God allows misfortunes not just to sinners in order to coerce them to repentance, but even to the righteous for an even greater confirmation in righteousness, but He never sends a greater temptation than we can handle and always provides a way out (1 Cor 10:13).

Having put the evil one to shame, and while he was too proud to admit defeat, Satan asks God to allow him to also take away Job's health and reputation. Knowing well the spiritual state of His servant, God allowed this also and Job broke out with boils and sores all over his body. Showing superhuman integrity and a firm faith in God, Job answers again saying, "Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?" (Job 2:10). He continues to pray humbly and patiently enduring all of his misfortune until finally God appears and justifies him, blesses him with twice as much wealth as before and grants him ten more children and a long life.

From all this we can see that strong faith in God gave Job clear spiritual sight to see the hand of God in times of prosperity as well as in poverty, helping him to acquire great patience in suffering despite the unexplainable and difficult path he had to endure.





What we Hear in Church



Matins Hymn of the Resurrection

Ανάστασιν Χριστοῦ θεασάμενοι, προσκυνήσωμεν Ἅγιον, Κύριον, Ἰησοῦν τὸν μόνον ἀναμάρτητον.

Having seen the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the Holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one.

The Orthodox Icon of the Feast of Pascha depicts Christ descending into Hades and liberating Adam from the bonds of death, while many luminaries of the Old Testament look on. Who then witnessed Christ's own Resurrection? We know that none of the four gospels describes the actual Resurrection Itself. So how can we sing and pray that we have **seen** the Resurrection of Christ? Has poetic license been liberally used in this Paschal hymn? St Symeon the New Theologian provides answers: *"How then, does the Holy Spirit exhort us to say, "Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ," which we have not seen, as though we had seen it, when Christ has risen once for all a thousand years ago and even then without anyone seeing it? Surely Divine Scripture does not wish us to lie? Far from it! Rather, it urges us to speak the truth, that the Resurrection of Christ takes place in each of us who believes, and that not once, but every hour, so to speak, when Christ the Master arises in us, in splendid raiment and flashing forth rays of incorruption and Divinity"*.

The Resurrection of Christ is a Mystery. It is unobservable and inaccessible to our created eyes. This is why it has never been depicted on a traditional Orthodox Icon (despite some attempts which have been strongly influenced by Western Church art). However, we can experience the Resurrection as members of Christ's Body, His Church. We behold the Resurrection every time we commune of the Resurrected Body and Blood of Jesus at each Divine Liturgy.

The Hymn as a whole is read at every Sunday Orthros (i.e. Matins) service before the worship of the Holy Gospel, the Word of God. It is also said by the clergy as they place the Holy Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Chalice before the calling forth of the people to commune, *"With fear of God etc."* According to Prof. P. Trembelas, it is a very ancient hymn which can be traced back to the Egyptian Church of the 5th/6th century.²

¹ Syméon le Nouveau Théologien, Catéchèses, Vol. II, Discourse 13 "Concerning the Resurrection of Christ", (Sources Chrétiennes, No. 104; Paris: Cerf, 1964), pp. 191-202. *trans. Archbishop Basil Krivoshein.*

² P.Trembelas, A Selection of Hellenic Orthodox Hymnography, Athens, 2nd Ed. 1978 p. 99 & p.179.



Church of the Resurrection

The Church of the Resurrection in the old city of Jerusalem is undoubtedly the most significant shrine of the Christian Faith. This is because under its roof is the original place of Christ's Crucifixion, Burial and Resurrection.

The building is an enormous edifice which incorporates many structures. Its interior is made up of chapels, shrines, basements, storerooms, living quarters, staircases, courtyards, balconies and corridors. Every space is covered with a different roof, some with Byzantine and others with Gothic domes.

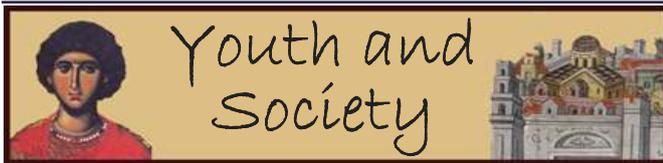
The internal architecture is a representation of the many influences over the centuries and can be seen in its Jerusalem stonework, its Byzantine murals and icons, its statues from the Reformation and its more contemporary mosaics. The diversity of influences can also be seen in its many chapels: Greek, Roman-Catholic, Armenian and Coptic.

Every Chapel in the Church has its history and is linked to the Passion of Christ and His Resurrection, with the Tomb of Christ and Golgotha being authentic sites, and others such as where Christ was taken off the Cross and the tomb of Joseph being there in order to connect events. All are joined by the same building, and are blessed by the same religious event, the Passion of Christ. In 137 AD the Roman Emperor Hadrian built a city over the area where Christ was Crucified and Buried. Between 325 and 335 AD, the Emperor Constantine and his mother Helen dug in the area to find the Holy Cross and built the Church which was blessed by the Bishops at the Synod of Tyron.

Over the centuries, the Church of the Resurrection suffered much at the hands of various conquerors. Between the 7th and 12th centuries it was destroyed by the Persians, the Saracens and the Muslims. Each time it was rebuilt. During the 13th century, the Crusaders took the keys from the Orthodox until they were banished from Jerusalem when the Orthodox reclaimed the keys, only to have them taken by Suleman in 1520 AD. Fires and earthquakes in the 19th century also damaged the Church and by the beginning of the 20th century, the Church was in a state of disrepair. The three key jurisdictions, that is, the Orthodox, Roman-Catholic and Armenian Churches agreed to take shared responsibility for its refurbishment.

Today, the Church of the Resurrection is visited by millions of pilgrims each year.





14. The Unexpected Encounter

Can you describe the emotion in the depths of your heart when you meet a person very dear to you, whom you had not seen for a long time, so as to be regarded as lost? Your face sparkles as you meet, your eyes fill with tears and your lips can only utter a few simple words!

Such meetings are not so rare. But unique are some meetings which took place 2000 years ago.

The first took place in a garden on the outskirts of Jerusalem, when Mary Magdalene stood outside the empty tomb of Jesus crying. She peers inside the tomb, but sees only two angels sitting inside. As she turns around she sees Jesus standing behind her, but does not recognise Him. He asks her why was she weeping, and then addresses her: *María!* She recognises His voice and cries: *Rabboni*, meaning Teacher. And fell on her knees to kiss His feet.

Other meetings of the risen Jesus took place also: when He appeared to the ten disciples in a closed room, to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, to the four disciples as they were fishing in the sea of Tiberias, and again in the plains of Bethany.

All these meetings had the same effect: they were spreading hope and consolation, to all those who were mourning -- because next to them there stood *Life* itself. The risen Jesus. His Resurrection was now an undeniable reality. Its meaning was deep and wide, and its significance world shattering.

As the news of the Resurrection was spreading, the world began to change. Until then wrapped in the black despair of death, it now started assuming a bright appearance. Earth and heaven were filled with the glorious news: The enemy of man, Death, is defeated.

The Paschal hymns of the Orthodox Church chant the great message with enthusiasm and joy. And the hearts of the people are filled with the great expectation of their own Resurrection and their meeting with the risen Lord.

Χριστός Ανέστη!

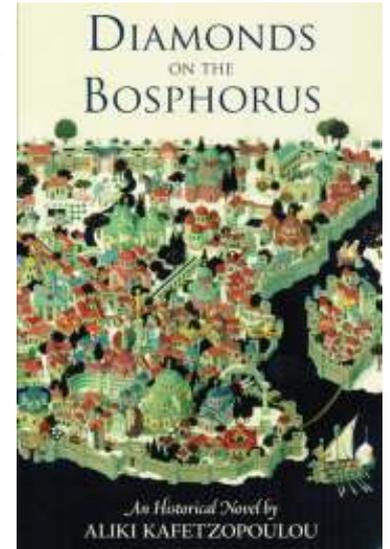


Diamonds on the Bosphorus

by Alikí Kafetzopoulou

Published by St Herman Press, 2011.

'Diamonds on the Bosphorus' is an historical novel incorporating both fictional and non-fictional characters. The story is set in Constantinople, 400 AD, when Empress Eudoxia was persecuting St John Chrysostom. In the story, there are two followers of St John, Juliana and Nicephorus, aged around 16. They live a simple life practicing the teachings of St John. However towards the end of the novel, there is a big-twist in the storyline, which has a huge impact on their lives, displaying their great love for God.



Much inspiration can be taken from this novel, such as the many virtues of the young Nicephorus. He faced many hardships but always tried to abide by Jesus' words: "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them" (Mat 6:26). In the hardest and easiest times of our life, we too should turn to God, as He will protect and provide for us. The novel provides the analogy of clouds that cover the stars, rendering them unable to be seen. The meaning to be taken is that through hard times, these clouds represent our sins, which cover our view of God. In these times, we should have hope and faith, then slowly through Confession, prayer, and Holy Communion, the clouds will be removed.

This novel is a beautiful story of triumph of the Christian spirit, and is highly recommended for young and old alike.



A wider range of Orthodox Christian books for people of all ages in both Greek and English is available from the Orthodox Bookstore, 217 Bexley Rd, Kingsgrove.

For further enquiries.

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NEWS and VIEWS

Greek Independence Day March

On Sunday 23rd March, the Greek Orthodox Christian Society, the Greek Orthodox Ladies Fellowship, and the Youth Fellowships (Ομάδες) of Sydney, participated in the annual 25th March commemoration of Greek Independence Day. Following a memorial service at Martin Place officiated by His Eminence Archbishop Stylianos, the various parishes, schools, communities and Greek organisations subsequently marched towards Sydney's Domain, where a large crowd was waiting to enthusiastically greet their entry. The event was honoured by the attendance of numerous national, Greek and state political leaders, who warmly spoke of the historical and spiritual significance of the Day, as well as the strong contribution of Greeks to Australian society.



Flag and Banner Bearers



Crowds gather at Martin Place, Sydney, before marching to the Domain.



Young men of the Greek Orthodox Christian Society and young women of the Ladies' Fellowship entering the Domain.

Ακούτε το ραδιοφωνικό πρόγραμμα
«Η ΦΩΝΗ ΤΗΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΙΑΣ»

κάθε Κυριακή:

10:45 π.μ. στο 2MM-AM 1665

11:00 π.μ. στο 2ERA-FM 151.675 (scanner)

5:30 μ.μ. στο Galaxia FM 151.850 (scanner)

κάθε Πέμπτη:

3:30 μ.μ. στο Radio Club AM 1683

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