



April 18, 2010
THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA;
SUNDAY OF ST. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA AND THE
MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

PASCHAL TROPARION - TONE ONE:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

RIGHTEOUS JOSEPH TROPARION - TONE TWO:

The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Your most pure Body from the Tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. But You rose on the third day, O Lord, granting the world great mercy!

HOLY MYRRHBEARERS TROPARION - TONE TWO:

The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said: "Myrrh is fitting for the dead; but Christ has sown Himself a stranger to corruption! So proclaim: The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

HOLY MYRRHBEARERS KONTAKION - TONE TWO:

You commended the myrrhbearers to rejoice, and stopped the lamentation of Eve, the first mother, by Your Resurrection, O Christ God, instructing them to preach to Your apostles: "The Savior is risen from the tomb!"

PASCHAL KONTAKION - TONE EIGHT:

You did descend into the tomb, O Immortal. You did destroy the power of death. In victory did you arise, O Christ God, proclaiming, "Rejoice" to the myrrh-bearing women, granting peace to Your Apostles and bestowing Resurrection on the fallen!

INSTEAD OF 'IT IS TRULY MEET...' we sing:

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace: "Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: 'Rejoice, your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb! With Himself He has raised all the dead.'"

Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone on you! Exult now, and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 6TH TONE:

O Lord save Your people, and bless Your inheritance!

ACTS 6: 1-7

In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

ALLELUIA

*Lord, You were favorable to Your land; You restored the fortune of Jacob.
Mercy and truth have met; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*

COMMENTARY

This brief pericope describes the necessity for specialized ministry. While the ministries of the word and of serving widows are both important, they cannot be served by the same people and still receive the proper attention. Therefore, the Church develops diversified ministries. In the Orthodox Church to this day, the bishops and presbyters are called to focus on prayer and the ministry of the word, with the other ministries being accomplished by the deacons and the laity. While the multitude submitted the names of the seven deacons, the apostles were the ones to ordain them. Thus, the synergy between the laity and clergy is demonstrated in the selection of the Church leaders. The growth of the Church only happens when three great pillars of Church life are fully in place. These pillars are 1) worship, 2) evangelism, and 3) charity. Furthermore, this growth happens after external and internal struggles have been addressed. May our Risen Lord help us in addressing our own struggles today, so that we may dedicate our lives to furthering the growth of His Church!



GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

MARK 15:43 - 16:8

At that time, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus observed where He was laid. Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away - for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples - and Peter - that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

COMMENTARY

The Resurrected Christ frees all humanity from death's grip. And yet, humanity still was expecting to find Christ in the tomb. The faith of the women, while stronger than that of the hiding disciples, was still imperfect in that they too prepared for the corruption of Christ's body. His rest in the tomb fulfills the image of His birth in a cave and reveals the ultimate purpose of His coming. In order to dispel any doubt, the angel confirms his message by recalling Christ's own words. The specific mention of Peter here reveals a special care for the one who had denied Christ. In the words of St. Theophylact, Peter would have said of himself, "I denied the Lord, and therefore am no longer His disciple." The angel's command is a promise that Peter is forgiven. May our Resurrected Lord inspire a renewed and invigorated faith so that we too might proclaim to the world, "HE IS RISEN AS HE SAID!"

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From *The Prologue* for Apr. 5/Apr. 18 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Holy Martyrs Agathopodes and Theodulus

Agathopodes was a deacon and Theodulus was a reader in the church at Thessalonica. Agathopodes was adorned with the gray hairs of age and Theodulus with youthful chastity. At the time of Diocletian's pursuit of Christians these two were summoned to court. They responded with rejoicing, and, holding each other's hand, they walked along crying out: "We are Christians!" All the advice of the judges that they deny Christ and worship idols was in vain. After extended imprisonment and starvation, they were sentenced to death by drowning in the sea. Their hands were bound behind their backs, a heavy stone was hung around their necks, and they were led out to be drowned. When they prepared to hurl Agathopodes into the deep, he cried out: "Behold, by this second baptism we are washed of all our sins, and in purity do we depart to Christ Jesus." Shortly afterward, the sea cast their drowned bodies upon the shore, and Christians buried their bodies with honor. St. Theodulus appeared to his acquaintances as a bright angel in radiant attire and ordered them to distribute all of his remaining estate to the poor. These glorious and wonderful soldiers of Christ suffered honorably during the reigns of Diocletian and the Thessalonian Prince Faustinus, in the year 303.

The Venerable Mark of Trache

He is also called "Mark the Athenian" because Athens was the place of his birth. His parents died after he completed his higher education in Athens. He thought within himself that death was unavoidable for him as well, and that one should sufficiently prepare beforehand for an honorable departure from this world. Distributing all his possessions to the poor, he sat on a plank in the sea and, with firm faith in God's help, prayed that God might direct him wherever He willed. God, in His providence, protected him and brought him to Libya (or Ethiopia), to a mountain called Trache. Mark lived an ascetic life on this mountain for ninety-five years, seeing neither man nor beast. For thirty years, he waged violent combat with evil spirits and suffered from hunger, thirst, frost and heat. He ate earth and drank sea water. After thirty years of the most vehement suffering, the defeated demons fled from him and an angel of God began to bring him food daily in the form of bread, fish and fruit. St. Serapion visited him before his death and, afterward, made known the miraculous life of Mark. Mark asked Serapion: "Are there any Christians in the world now who, if they were to say to this mountain, 'Arise from here and cast yourself into the sea,' it would be so?" At that moment, the mountain upon which they stood moved toward the sea. Mark raised his hand and stopped it. Such was the miracle-working power that this man of God possessed. Before his death he prayed for the salvation of mankind and then gave up his soul to God. St. Serapion saw angels bear St. Mark's soul heavenward, and he also saw a hand extended from heaven that received it. St. Mark lived to be 130 years old and reposed in about the year 400.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Prayer of Saint Mark of Trache

Behold, the final hour tolls for me on earth.
I go where the Lord shines instead of the sun.
I emerge from my dusty, fleshly garment,
And am traveling toward Thy countenance, O Christ.
Just one more wish do I stretch forth over the earth.
Before Thy throne with prayer I come:
I desire salvation for all mankind,
Freedom from sin for everyone and for all.
I desire that the virtuous fasters be saved,
And all diligent laborers in Thy field.
I desire that those who are prisoners for Thy sake,
Who sacrifice themselves for the sake of Thy love, be saved;
And cruel sinners that commit violence,
And those who endure violence for Thy sake.
Salvation to the lavras, plentiful with monks;
Salvation to the faithful, the tearful and the poor;
Salvation to the churches, throughout the world;
To the shepherds of the Church, to all and to me,
To all the servants of God and all the handmaidens,
Whom the world knows or who hide in loneliness.
Salvation to the baptized and adopted,
Enlivened with the Life-giving Spirit of God.
Salvation to the humble and the merciful,
To faithful emperors and faithful princes,
To every heart of man, the healthy and the infirm.
And salvation to my brother Serapion.
O Powerful Lord, this is my desire
And my final prayer. Let it be Thy will!

REFLECTION

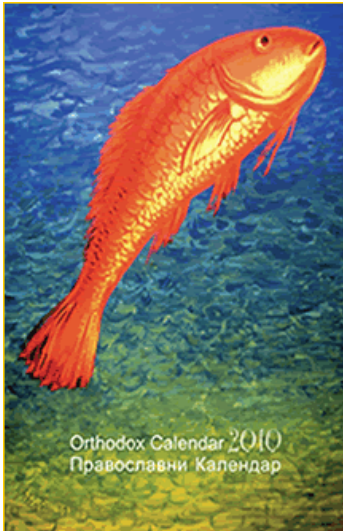
“Live as though you were not of this world and you will have peace.” Thus spoke St. Anthony to his disciples. An amazing lesson but truthful. We bring about greater misfortunes and uneasiness upon ourselves when we desire to associate and identify ourselves with this world as much as possible. The more a person retreats from this world, the more often he contemplates this world as existing without him, and the deeper he immerses himself in reflecting upon his unworthiness in this world, the closer he will stand to God and the deeper will be the spiritual peace he will have. *I die daily*, says St. Paul (I Corinthians 15:31), that is, every day I feel that I am not in this world. That is why he daily felt like a heavenly citizen in the spirit. When the torturer Faustinus asked St. Theodulus, “Is not life better than a violent death?” St. Theodulus replied, “Indeed, I think that life is better than death. Because of this, I have decided to abhor this mortal and temporal life on earth, that I may be a partaker of life eternal.”

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Prayer Request

His Grace, Bishop Maxim is asking all of our clergy and faithful to offer prayers for the recovery of our brother in Christ, V. Rev. Miladin Garic, who is seriously ill and currently at the Amador Sutter Hospital, in Jackson, California.

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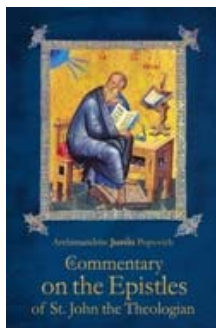
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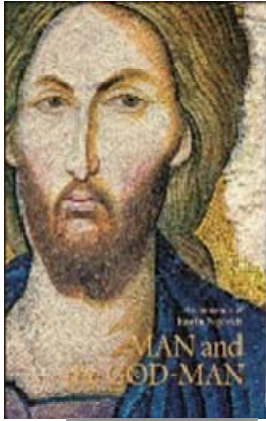


Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian

By Archimandrite Justin Popovic

This Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian - published now, three years after the blessed repose of Venerable Fr. Justin (on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1979) - was written by the tireless Messenger of Christ forty years ago, in circumstances similar to those in which Christ's Holy Evangelist John wrote his sacred Epistles. The text of this 93-page soft-bound book has been translated from the Serbian

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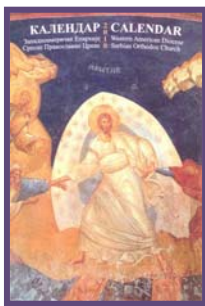


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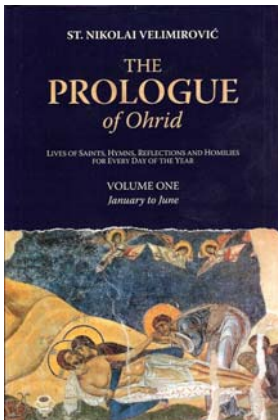
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