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Sunday, April 24, 2011

THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST: HOLY PASCHA

PASCHAL TROPARION - TONE ONE:

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

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 myrrhbearing women, granting peace to Your disciples, and bestowing resurrection on the fallen!

INSTEAD OF THE TRISAGION:

As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!

INSTEAD OF "IT IS TRULY MEET...":

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, all 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 8TH TONE:

This is the day which the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

ACTS 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.”

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

You did arise and have mercy on Zion. The Lord looked down from heaven and saw all the sons of men.

COMMENTARY ON ACTS 1: 1-8

The “former account” refers to Luke’s Gospel, since Luke is also the author of the Book of Acts. Theophilus was a prominent Gentile who had received instruction in the Christian faith. Saint Ambrose noted that “Theophilus” can simply mean any “lover of God,” and therefore he wrote: “If you love God, it was written to you.” The disciples are still fixated on an earthly kingdom because they will only “receive power [to fully understand] when the Holy Spirit has come upon [them];” this is the “Promise of the Father” to which Jesus referred.



GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

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.

COMMENTARY ON JOHN 1: 1-17

Only God has life in Himself. Thus, the Word, being God, is the source of life together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. John now introduces mankind as receiver of the divine light. By participating in the life of the Son, believers themselves become children of the light (John 12: 36; Ephesians 5: 8; 1 Thessalonians 5: 5).

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES



From The Prologue for April 11/24 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Hieromartyr Antipas, Bishop of Pergamum in Asia Minor

Antipas is mentioned in the Book of Revelation as, *Antipas, my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth* (Revelation 2:13), that is, in the city of Pergamum. The inhabitants of this city lived in the darkness of idolatry and in extreme impurity. They were slaves to passions. They were slanderers, tyrants and incestuous people. In other words, they were the servants of Satan. Here among them lived Antipas, “as a light in the midst of darkness, as a rose among thorns and as gold in the mire.” In this city, he who captured and killed a Christian was deemed good and just. The totality of their pagan belief consisted of soothsaying, interpretation of dreams, serving demons and extreme perversion. Being frightened of Antipas as of fire, the demons appeared to the soothsayers in a dream and confessed how afraid they were of Antipas—and how, because of him, they had to depart from the city. The pagan priests assembled a large number of people against Antipas and interrogated him, trying to force him to deny Christ and worship idols. Antipas said to them: “When your so-called gods, lords of the universe, are frightened of me, a mortal man, and must flee from this city, do you not recognize by this that your faith is a delusion?” The saint spoke to them further about the Christian Faith as the One, True, Saving Faith. They became as enraged as wild beasts and dragged the aged Antipas to the temple of Artemis, before which stood an ox cast in bronze. They heated the bronze ox and hurled the servant of God inside. From within the fiery ox, St. Antipas glorified God with thanksgiving, like Jonah in the belly of the whale or the Three Youths in the fiery furnace. Antipas prayed for his flock and for the entire world, until his soul parted from his weakened body and ascended among the angels into the Kingdom of Christ. He died in torments and was crowned with unfading glory in the year 92.

The Holy Martyrs Processus and Martinian

Processus and Martinian were jailers in the Roman prison where the Apostles Peter and Paul were imprisoned. Hearing the words and witnessing the miracles of the apostles, they were baptized, and released the apostles from prison. The apostles left Rome, but the Lord appeared to Peter on the way. “Lord, where are you going?” Peter asked. The Lord answered: “I’m going to Rome, to be crucified a second time.” Ashamed, the apostles returned to Rome, where they were apprehended and slain. Also slain with the apostles were these two brave martyrs, Processus and Martinian.

HYMN OF PRAISE: Saint Antipas

In a fiery ox as in a luminous temple,
Antipas, the Christian, does not suffer loneliness:
In his pure heart the Lord abides.
The fire does not burn him, nor is he afraid of it.
For Christ the saint patiently endures all,
And his prayers to Christ ascend from the fire:
“O All-powerful Christ, King of all ages,
For these sufferings, a hundredfold thanks be unto Thee!
Let burn with fire all that is sinful in me,
That I may be more precious according to heavenly worth.
I pray to Thee, O Savior, protect my flock

In this town, in this awful dung!
May my blood strengthen them in the Faith,
And may their hearts be fixed on Thee.
And for the heathen, also, I pray to Thee, O Blessed One:
Tear them away, once and for all, from demonic lies.
I pray for all sinners who mock Thy law:
Direct them to serve none but Thee.
Behold, all is in the power of Thy holy will.
Finally, I further pray: may it be better for the Church!”

REFLECTION

“There can be no rest for those on earth who desire to be saved,” says St. Ephraim the Syrian. The struggle is unceasing, be it external or internal. The adversary acts at times visibly, through men and other things, and at other times invisibly, through thoughts. At times the adversary appears openly and behaves brutally and cruelly like an enemy and, at other times, under the guise of a flattering friend, he seduces by shrewdness. That which occurs in battle between two opposing armies also occurs to every man individually in battle with the passions of this world. Truly, “there can be no rest for those on earth who desire to be saved.” When salvation comes, rest also comes.

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the resurrected Lord Jesus:

1. How Simon Peter and the other disciple ran quickly to the tomb to confirm the news of the Resurrection;
2. How one after the other entered the tomb and saw the linen clothes and the napkin;
3. How they both saw and believed, and then witnessed; and how, for their witness, they died.

HOMILY

on the two Adams: the death-creating and the life-giving

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (I Corinthians 15:22).

In Adam, life is sown in shame; in Christ, life is raised in glory. Sin is from Adam and justice is from Christ. Weakness and death come from Adam, and strength and life come from Christ. Thus, in Adam we all die. And thus, in Christ we shall all be brought to life. That one is the earthly man; this one is the heavenly man. That is the bodily man and this is the spiritual man. Christ did not resurrect for His sake but for our sake, just as He did not die for His sake but for our sake. If His Resurrection does not signify our resurrection, then His Resurrection is bitterness and not sweetness. Where, then, would the love of God be? Where, then, would the meaning of our miserable earthly experience be? What, then, would be the purpose of Christ’s coming to earth? Where Adam ends, Christ begins. Adam ends up in the grave, and Christ begins with the Resurrection from the grave. Adam’s generation is the seed underground that rots and decays, that does not see the sun. It does not believe that it can emerge from beneath the earth to blossom into a green plant with leaves, flowers and fruit. Christ’s generation is a green field upon which wheat grows, turns green, puts forth leaves, blossoms and bears much fruit. “In Adam” does not only mean that we will die one day; rather it means that we are already dead—dead to the last one. “In Christ” does not only mean that we will revive one day,

but rather that we are already alive—that the seed in the ground has already begun to germinate and to break through to the light of the sun. The complete expression of death is in the grave, but the complete expression of eternal life is in the Kingdom of God. The mind of the sons of Adam is in accordance with death, reconciled with being in a state of decay, and it sinks even deeper into the ground. The mind of the sons of Christ rebels against death and decay, and strives all the more, so that a man burgeons toward the light, with the help of the grace of God. O resurrected Lord, sober the minds of all the sons of men, that they would flee from darkness and destruction and reach out toward light and eternal life, which is in Thee. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

2011 Dates to Remember

Diocesan Camp St. Sava

GOLDEN JUBILEE - REUNION AND FUNDRAISER

Memorial Day Weekend, May 28 – May 29, 2011

July 17 – August 6

Diocesan Summer Camp - Saint Sava Mission, Jackson, California

Week One begins July 17, 2011 - Week Two begins July 24, 2011 -

Week Three begins July 31, 2011

Thursday, September 1st

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

Annual KSS Assembly - Clergy Seminar - Diocesan Council Meeting

Friday, September 2nd

Annual Diocesan Assembly

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

Friday, September 2nd – Sunday, September 4th

15th Annual Diocesan Days Gathering

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

October 7th

Cathedral Slava, Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

December 4, 2011

Diocesan KSS Slava, Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

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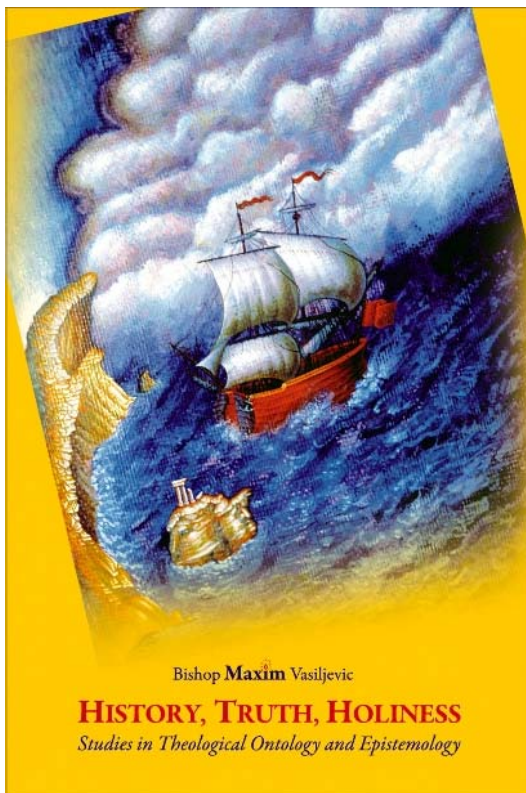
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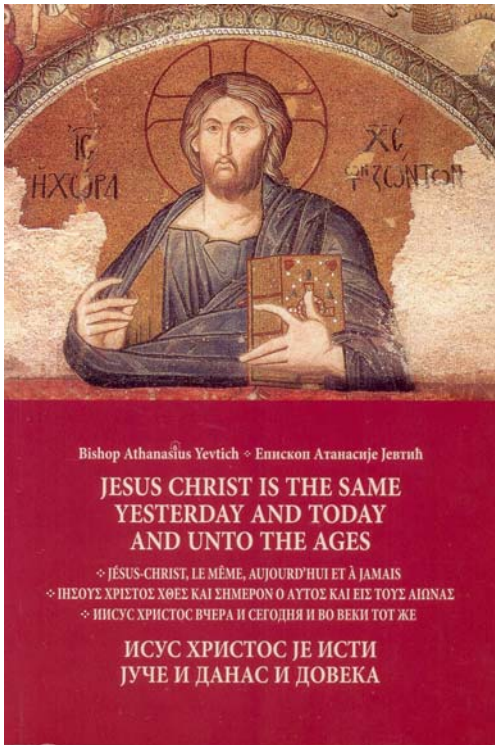


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Bishop Athanasius Yevtich



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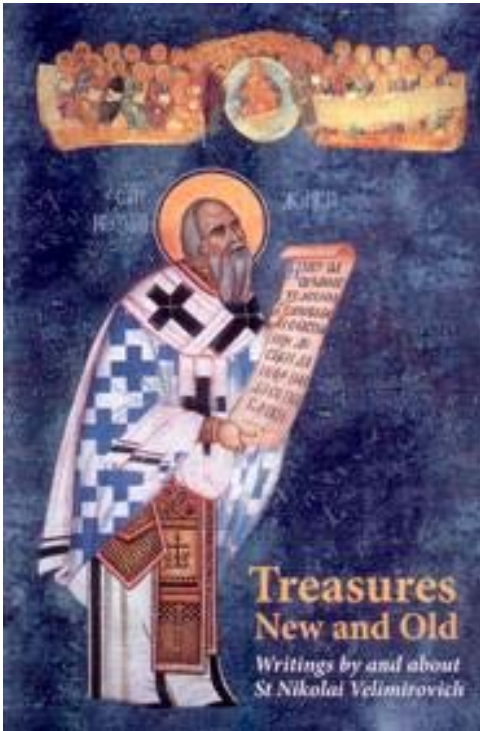
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