

RUTHENIAN RESOURCES FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

Parents: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.

Parents: Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things, Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.

Children: Holy ✠ God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us. *(Three times)*

Glory be to the Father ✠ and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy! *(Three times)*

Glory be to the Father ✠ and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION – TONE 4

The joyful message of the resurrection was heard by the women disciples from the angel, and being freed from the ancestral curse, they boasted to the apostles:

Death is despoiled;

Christ our God is risen, giving great mercy to the world.

EPISTLE: ROMANS 10:1 - 10

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God in their behalf is for salvation. For I bear witness to them that they have zeal for God, but a zeal that is not informed. For ignorant of God's holiness and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to the sanctification offered by God. For Christ is the consummation of the Law in terms of justification for everyone who believes.

For Moses has written that *the man who brings about that justification which is of the Law shall live by it* (Lv.18:5). But the justification which is of faith says, *Do not ask in your heart, who shall go up to heaven that is, -- to bring down Christ. Or, Who will descend into the abyss* (Dt. 30:12) that is, to bring up Christ from the dead?

But what does it say? *The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.* (Dt.30: 14) that is, the word of faith which we preach. For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is the Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. For a man believes with the heart and attains justification, but he professes his faith with his mouth and attains salvation.¹

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:28 - 9:1

At that time as Jesus reached the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two men who were possessed, coming from the tombs, so exceedingly fierce that no one could pass by that way. And behold, they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with you, Jesus Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

Now at a distance from them there was a herd of many swine, feeding. And the devils kept begging him, saying, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine."

And he said to them, "Go!" And they came out and entered into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed from the top of the cliff into the sea, and perished in the water. But the swineherds fled, and going away into the town, they reported everything, and what had befallen the men possessed by - demons. And behold, all the town came out to meet Jesus; and on seeing him they insisted that he leave their district. And getting into a boat, he crossed over and came into his own town.²

CATECHETICAL SUMMARY

The Holy Trinity, who from all eternity has lived a life of loving communion, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, lives a life of interdependency. St. John can say that "God is love," because from all eternity the Father has given his life to the Son in the Holy Spirit. Thus, man, made in the image and likeness of God, is made to live a life of dependency. We are

¹ Epistle Book, English (Apostolos): Bishop Joseph Raya, Alleluia Press, 1980

² Gospel Book, English: Bishop Joseph Raya, Alleluia Press, 1978

dependent first upon God from whom we receive life, and second, we are dependent upon those around us, our parents and others that God has placed in our lives so as to live a life of loving communion.

When we walk away from God, when we turn our back on those in whose communion God has placed us, we do not find independence but simply dependence on someone or something else. We see this in today's Gospel in the story of the demoniacs. A demoniac is someone who is under the dominion of the devil. This is exactly what the devil wants. He entices us with a false notion of freedom, of so-called "independence" to get us to turn from our true dependence on God, on each other, on the Church, to seek so-called "freedom." "You will be like God," the devil told Adam and Eve – the world of the self, or rather self-delusion – is the dominion of the devil.

Jesus, in healing the demoniacs, reveals and pours out God's life back into these people. He puts them back into communion with God who is love and with the entire community of God which is bound together in love.

However, notice the curious response of the townspeople to Jesus' freeing the demoniacs from their suffering, their dominion from the Evil One. They ask him to leave. Why is this? Shouldn't they have been happy to see the men freed from their suffering? By saving the demoniacs, casting the demons into the herd of pigs, Jesus disrupted their economy. It inconvenienced the townspeople, who made their livelihood from the pigs. They were more concerned with the financial impact of this healing than they were on the well-being of the two men.

Jesus has not only come to free us from the devil dominion of the devil, but to restore our communion with God and with one another. This is the heart of Jesus' healing ministry, to be the Incarnation of God's love, and the restoration of our communion.

Challenge Questions

1. Does Jesus have dominion over my life? In what practical ways does my relationship with Christ impact my daily life.
2. Are there ways in which I demonstrate that I do not want God in my life when his presence is inconvenient or painful?
3. Do I value the well-being of my brothers and sisters in Christ above my material goods?
4. How do I show the love of Christ with those whom I depend on, or who depend upon me?