

RUTHENIAN RESOURCES FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH FOURTH 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 3

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
for the Lord has shown the might of his arm.
By his death the Lord has trampled Death;
he has become the first born of the of the dead;
he has delivered us from the depths of Hades and has granted great mercy to the world.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.
Amen.

EPISTLE: ROMANS 6:18 - 23

Brethren, now that you have been freed from sin, you have come to serve justification. I speak in a human way because of the weakness of your flesh. For as you yielded your members as slaves to uncleanness and iniquity, so now yield your members as slaves of justification so as to be sanctified. For while you were the slaves of sin, you had nothing to do with justification. But what fruit did you gather then of those deeds of which you are now ashamed? For the end of such things is death. But now, set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have your fruit resulting in sanctification, and as your end, life everlasting. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 8:5 - 13

At that time when Jesus had entered Capernaum, there came to Him a centurion who entreated Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying sick in the house, paralyzed, and is grievously afflicted." Jesus said to him, "I will come and cure him."

But in answer the centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man subject to authority, and have soldiers subject to me; and I say to one, 'Go', and he goes; and to another, 'Come', and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this', and he does it."

And when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following Him, "Amen I say to you, I have not found such great faith in Israel. And I tell you that many will come from the east and from the west, and will feast with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom will be put forth into the darkness outside; there will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; as you have believed, so be it done to you." And the servant was healed in that hour.²

CATECHETICAL SUMMARY

There is a tendency in our culture to separate the mind from the body, as if the mind is who we really are, while the body is merely a machine that we move wherever we want. Even some Christians would go so far as to say that as long as a man believes that Jesus is Lord, he is saved, regardless of what he does with his body. But, this is not the vision of the human person found in Sacred Scripture or the tradition of the Church. Instead, the human person is a union of spiritual and physical realities, mind and body, soul and flesh. So, what a man does with his body can be a physical sign of the state of his heart and his progress in the spiritual life. Writing to the Church in Rome, St. Paul says that before faith

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

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

in Christ, before grace and baptism, the Roman Christians were slaves to sin. St. Paul calls them, and

now us as well, to be slaves of God instead, to serve righteousness and holiness with our whole life, our whole person, with both our body and our soul.

The Gospel speaks of the Centurion's faith. A spiritual interpretation of the passage could suggest that when a man turns his heart, and all of its thoughts, over to the Lord, he will hand himself over to become a servant of holiness and righteousness and be spiritually healed. If he turns to the Lord often with prayer, and embraces the good thoughts and ignores the evil thoughts, he will easily be able to take command of his unruly body with its passions. Just as the Lord performs miracles by the command of His Word, and the centurion commands his soldiers and servants with his word, likewise, we can offer our bodies and our whole life to bear the fruit of sanctification and holiness. We have two choices: we can be slaves to sin and receive the wages of sin, which is death, hell, and spiritual suffering, or we can repent and become slaves to righteousness, be made right before God, and this will lead us into to life everlasting.

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS:

- 1) What parts of your life are unruly or serve sin? Anger, jealousy, greed, lust, etc.
- 2) If you were to take control of those parts of your life and offer them over to serve holiness, what would it look like? Gentleness, gratitude, generosity, humility, self-control, etc.
- 3) Name 3 practical actions you can do, starting today, that will lead you to be a slave to righteousness instead of a slave to sin.

THE FATHERS ON SCRIPTURE

Some argue that the centurion, by his description, implied the reason why he had not brought his servant to Jesus, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, in terrible distress," as though he was at his last gasp, or even, as Luke said, he was "at the point of death." In my opinion, however, the reason he had not brought him in was itself a sign of his great faith, even much greater than those who let the patient down through the roof. Because the centurion knew for certain that even a mere command was enough for raising the servant up, he thought it unnecessary to bring him.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, HOMILY 26.1.

There is no coercion with God. He has a good will toward us continually. He gives reliable counsel to humans and angels (who also are rational beings), to whom he has given the power of choice. Those who yield obedience therefore possess what is good freely and justly. It is given by God but preserved by themselves... The human spirit is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness humanity

was created. Humanity is advised to hold fast to the good and thereby be responsive to God. This refers not only to works but faith as well. God preserved the human will free and under his own self-control ... as is shown in Jesus' word to the centurion: "Go. Be it done for you as you have believed."

ST. IRENAEUS, AGAINST HERESIES 3.37.1, 4-