

RUTHENIAN RESOURCES FOR THE DOMESTIC CHURCH SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

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 Give 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 8

You descended from on high, O merciful One.
You accepted burial for three days to free us from our passions.
O Lord, our Resurrection and our Life, glory to you.

EPISTLE: GALATIANS 2:16 - 20

Brethren, we know man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Hence we also believe in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law, because by the works of the Law no man will be justified.

But if, while we are seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore the minister of sin? By no means. For if I rebuild the things I destroyed, I make myself a sinner.

For through the Law I have died to the Law that I may live for God. With Christ I am nailed to the cross. It is now no longer I who live, but Christ is living in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live within the faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me.¹

GOSPEL: MARK 8:34 - 9:1

The Lord said, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For anyone who would save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will save it.

For what does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, but suffers the loss of his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes with the holy angels in the glory of his Father."

And he said to them, "Amen I say to you, there are some of those standing here who will not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God coming in power."²

CATECHETICAL SUMMARY

The Epistle which is proclaimed in the Church today is one that has been misused by many non-Apostolic Christians who would look to reject the Church's teaching on salvation. "Faith" in our understanding is the union of our entire self to Christ. This union which entrusts my intellect, spirit, soul and body to the Savior joins me to Christ in such an intimate way that my life is transformed into his life. This is the process of Theosis or divinization. As Saint Paul says "it is now no longer I who live, but Christ is living in me."

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

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

Faith, then, is an aspect of love by which I give my life to the one that I love. In this act of total self-gift we can discern two important truths. The one who loves first must die to himself in as much as the lover's life is no longer about himself but totally about the one whom he loves and whom he sustains through the gift of his life. The second truth that results from the first is that the lover, having died to himself, comes to life or is "resurrected from the dead" in the life of the beloved.

The Gospel which is proclaimed today confirms and makes explicit for us the above explanation of loving faith. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For anyone who would save his life will lose it; but anyone who loses his life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will save it." The cross, the exaltation of which we celebrated this past Thursday, is the sign of the Lord's total self-giving love. The cross reveals to us the breadth and depth of God's love. What remains is our response to that gift and our union with that love.

Practical Questions:

1. How can we understand Saint Paul's teaching that he is "nailed to the cross" with Christ?
2. How can we unite ourselves to the cross of Christ and why would Jesus want us to do so?
3. How do we save our life by losing it?
4. What kind of life are we called to give up and what kind of life do we gain?