

Christ is Risen!

For behold through the Cross joy has come to all the world.

Dearly Beloved Brothers and Sisters,

Who is man's greatest enemy? Is it the devil? No, it is not he. Though malicious and powerful, he is not the ultimate enemy. There is something far worse: Death. If it had been only the devil that had been overcome and defeated by Christ's Resurrection, then even so man would have continued to be subject to death. But as the Father gave His only-begotten Son Christ our God up to death on the cross, He has destroyed our death. And by this act He has destroyed the dominion of the devil as well.

Without our asking, the Almighty granted us His own Son, Who offered Himself as a sacrifice, and by His death trampled down death. Did anyone ask the Father to do this for us? Who entreated the Son to die for us sinners? Did it occur to anyone who has faced the crushing tragedy of death, that mankind could ever be delivered, and in such a fashion? Furthermore this deliverance of man from death is an act performed freely out of the graciousness of our loving God.

"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die" (I Cor. 15:35-36). God has provided us with an image of the general Resurrection in the seed. If a seed is not planted in the ground, it cannot be lost; it cannot give itself for the life contained within. Therefore, it is not that we resurrect after we die. It is that we resurrect because we have died.

Apostle Paul, giving his life for his

flock, said of himself: *"I die daily"* (I Cor 15:32). And so he also resurrected daily, as he bore the life of Christ within himself. Every man dies daily due to his infirmity and due to the onslaughts of the devil. *"As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter"* (Rom 8:36). The question becomes do we accept this death that we may have life, or do we flee from it, avoid it? If God gave the most Precious -- His only-begotten Son -- for us transgressors, will He not give everything else related to our life, now and in the age to come?

Dear Brothers and Sisters, such joy comes in the face of sorrows! Our Lord Jesus Christ Who suffered for us says: *"A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you"* (Jn 16:21-22). Our Lord "sees us again" this holy night of the Resurrection! May nothing, no man or unclean spirit take the joy of this night from us. Let us behold our glorious King and God with all our might.

*Archpriest Paul Volmensky
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