

Sunday, January 8, 2011

The Birth of the Prince of Peace

This is how Isaiah saw Him through the prophetic eye and recorded it for us in his amazing book nearly 740 year before His birth: ***“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”*** (Isaiah 9:6). He is the Prince of Peace and the fountain of peace for us and for the whole world. His birth in our midst is a dawning of true peace in a world full of the darkness of tribulations, fears, and struggles. We might wonder **how is He the Prince for Peace?**

+ Christ, as Saint Paul the Apostle said, ***“Is our peace, who has broken down the middle wall of separation, the enmity...Thus making peace and that He might reconcile [us] with God in one body through the cross...”*** (Ephesians 2:14-17)

He made peace and reconciliation between man and God, as He is the Son of God in His divinity and the Son of Man in His humanity. Thus, He was able, through **His incarnation**, to bless our nature and enables us to unite with God. Through **His redemption**, He was able to fulfill the divine justice and reveal the love of God and his tender mercies, which captivates the hardest hearts. **Therefore, through incarnation and redemption, reconciliation was accomplished and offered to mankind,** to whoever accepts it and



enters with God in a new covenant through baptism, so he dies with Christ and rises with Him in a new life. Additionally, the power of dying and the power of living that we obtained in baptism continue to work within our lives through repentance: The power of dying to sin, and the power of living through grace.

+ When man establishes a relationship with God through uniting with Christ, peace overflows in his heart as water overflows upon the thirsty grounds. This is also what Isaiah has prophesized about when he spoke about the church of the new covenant: ***“Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river... then you shall feed on her sides shall you be carried, and be dandled on her knees. As one whom his mother comforts so I will comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem*** (the church).” (Isaiah 66:12-13). Truly, this is what we enjoy now, as a natural fruit for repentance and clinging to God through the holy sacraments of the church.

+ When man reconciles with God, grace overflows in his heart. And when his life becomes filled with the heavenly peace, then he reconciles with himself. That is to say, all the inner powers of his soul become reconciled and in harmony with each other. Additionally, his inner peace would overflow upon all those around him, so he goes about doing good to everyone. On the other hand, he whose heart has not yet been filled with true peace, cannot make peace, or overflow with peace upon those around him! The heart that is filled with hatred can never bring about true peace, even if the words of peace adorn his lips.

+ The Holy Bible emphasizes to us that there is no peace for the wicked (Isaiah 48:22). A wicked environment is like a troubled sea, no one can enjoy peace within it. However, through the birth of Christ in our world, we have a quite harbor for peace amidst this raging sea, whoever enters and takes refuge in it, would enjoy true peace. Christ was born in our world to be born in the life of every one of us, who accepts and believes, to grant us His peace. Hence, **being firm in Christ is the only way for the soul to keep its peace through the difficult journey in this world.** This is what the Lord Jesus emphasized to us saying: ***“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”*** (John 16:33).

Nonetheless, regrettably, we still hear some ignorant voices here and there arguing that Christianity is a religion of violence, and that it calls for using the sword. But it seems that the devil can never hide himself. Spreading lies is one of his main traits that he cannot abandon. And regardless of how his lies are exposed, as long as he finds a person that obeys him, he will use that person to spread lies and falsehood. Perhaps in that he may hunt some weak souls in that snare.

As for us, ***“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us”*** (Romans 8:37). Regardless of the challenges, we rejoice in the king of peace, the one Who was born in the flesh of human race, who always consoles us with His presence among us. We also rejoice in His peace that surpasses all understanding which He gives to his children whom He loves to the end, and whom they also love Him and will walk with Him in all faithfulness, carrying His cross, devoted to His name, commandment, and His church to the last breath.

Fr. Yohanna Naseef

fryohanna@hotmail.com

St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, Palatine, IL

Merry Christmas to all of you.

