

Sunday, April 15, 2012

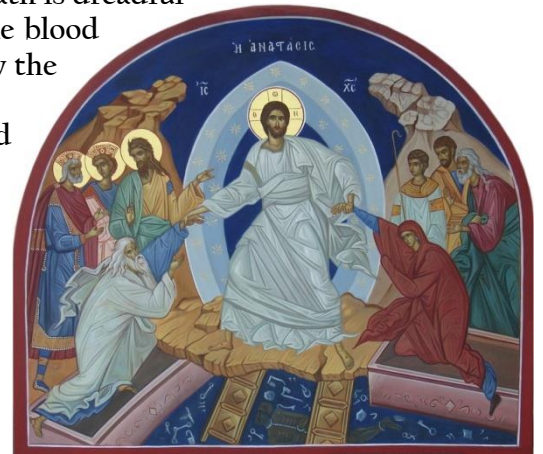
The Resurrection of the Savior

When Jesus confronted death at the tomb of Lazarus, He clarified to Martha, in full confidence, that He is the resurrection and the life. He also assured her that He is the life giver to those who believe in Him, and that death cannot overcome the life He grants, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."* (John 11: 25-26).

These were enduring words, even when Jesus in fact entered into death, and rather He attacked death by His own will. He attacked death in complete power and trampled over it, abolished its dominion, and rose up defeating all its inflictions (Acts 2:24). Thus, He showed the world that He is indeed the Prince of Life and the conqueror of death.

The most important matter to us is that the Lord Jesus granted to all those who believe in His crucifixion and resurrection, the power of His redeeming blood to obtain His powerful life so they can live with Him forever. Thus, He proved that He is the life giver and savior of the world, and who believes in Him would not fear death. Here I recall a beautiful quote for the departed Fr. Pishoy Kamel (1931-1979): "Death is dreadful and very frightening, but the more our lives are intermingled with the blood of the lamb, the more our departure becomes joyful and surrounded by the Angels" (Booklet on the journey of Passover through blood).

In the Old Testament, God revealed that man's life is in his blood (Leviticus 17:11). This means that when we partake of the blood of Christ, His life becomes confirmed in us and it overcomes all the characteristics of death in our flesh. Regardless of our sins (The thorns through which death comes to us), the blood of Jesus purifies us from every sin (1 John 1:7) and erases all consequences of death and gives us new life that overcomes death. St Peter the Apostle confirmed that the Lord saved us, not with a cheap price, but with His Precious blood: *"You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."* (1 Peter 1: 18-19).



When we partake of the blood of Christ, we take the power of His resurrection, which is power of His life that overcomes death. Because of this, our glorious Church was keen on placing the Eucharist at the heart of her worship. Through Eucharist, the believers continuously obtain the divine life within them. They [The believers] partake of the true body and blood of Christ, who died and rose, and through it, they obtain a power of dying to the lusts of the world, and a power of rising and victory over all its evil. This is the ultimate spiritual experience that Christians live, and is summed up by St. Paul the Apostle in this great verse: *"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead"* (Philippians 3: 10-11).

The *"resurrection from the dead"* which the Apostle speaks about, is the glorious eternal life that the believers long for every time they partake of the life-giving sacraments. Through these sacraments, they take power to preach Christ the Savior, the crucified and resurrected, longing for His second coming, which is full of glory. This is asserted by St Paul: *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes"* (1 Cor 11:26). This is also what we pray in every liturgy: "Amen. Amen. Amen. Your death, O Lord, we proclaim; Your holy Resurrection and Ascension into the heavens, we confess. We praise You, we bless You, we thank You, O Lord, and we entreat You, O our God"

We were powerless without Christ the Savior but now *"we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"* (Romans 8:37).

The resurrection of the Savior has assured to us His divinity and his ability to save us, not only in words, but in deeds, and not only offer us salvation in this life, but also after death.

Joyful is he who stays continuously firm in this Divine Savior so he lives through Him forever.

Blessed are those who continuously partake of the tree of life, the second death has no dominion over them (Revelations 2, 20).

May the Lord bring the joy of the Resurrection of the Savior, the fullness of power and victory unto you for many years to come.

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