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Fr. Robert's Remarks



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC
VICAR GENERAL

Greetings; the Lord be with you!

One can be reasonably assured that a theologian somewhere will keep the secular media happy with pronouncements denying either that Jesus truly died or that He truly rose from the dead. This is nothing new or particularly threatening to a believer.

That Jesus rose from the dead is one of the credal statements on which hang our Christian faith. St. Paul tells us:

“[I]f Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. ... If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” 1

Corinthians 15. 14, 19

Now, happily, St. Paul does go on to reassure us,

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.”

Several years ago, I was given a copy of *Father Stanton's Last Sermons in S. Alban's, Holborn*, a

(Continued on page 13)

Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Lenten Sermon



FR. DAVID MARRIOTT, SSC

A priest had been in the hospital, visiting a member of the parish, as was his wont: bringing the pastoral care to those of his flock who had not been able to attend Mass on Sunday, or through the week for that matter, because of sickness.

As he was walking away from the ward, and towards the elevators, to move ahead to the next thing he had to do: a normal busy day: he was interrupted by a man who was seated in a little alcove, accompanied by his wife, as far as the priest could determine. They were clearly

in some distress, but their clothes and their language between each other clearly showed that they were not long in the country, and that they, perhaps in all likelihood, might not be Christian.

But he stopped, and went across to them, as they indicated a seat in the little alcove. The woman produced a little picture frame, in which was the photograph of a young girl, perhaps 5 or 6 years of age: she was dressed in what were clearly special clothes for some important occasion: perhaps simply having the photo taken had been that special occasion: it wasn't really important. She looked happy, a smile on her face, and sparkling eyes seemed to be full of mischief. What was the phrase? Ah yes, 'full of beans'!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Bonnie's Reflections</i>	3
<i>The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way</i>	4
<i>St. Gregory Nazianzen: A Homily for Holy Week</i>	8
<i>St. John of Damascus: Concerning the Cross and Faith</i>	9
<i>St. Athanasius the Great: A Paschal Homily</i>	11
<i>St. Epiphanius of Cyprus: A Paschal Homily</i>	12

(Continued on page 2)

Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Lenten Sermon

The woman had tears in her eyes: this was clearly something serious: and the father tried, in somewhat fractured English, to explain. The family had only recently arrived in the city: they had travelled a long and hard route – via several internment camps and hostels over a long time, several years even - before they had finally been given the permits that were needed for them to come to the country, and to the city, with the hope of a new life, new hope.

But somewhere along this hard pathway, tragedy had struck – unseen and unknown, wreaking its damage: so that after their arrival in this new and promised land, their beloved daughter had become very sick: and was at this moment in the hospital ward next to the alcove, in desperate need of prayer and the intervention of Divine assistance, so that she might once more become that smiling, that full of beans little girl in the photograph.

“ . . . WHAT WAS
HE TO DO?”

The priest heard all this with great care and patience: but what was he to do?

You see, as he managed to find out from the father, the family had never heard of Jesus Christ: they were from a remote corner of the globe: they, if you could call their faith truthfully, would be classified by one faith as infidels, by another as pagan, and perhaps even by a third, as no better than the dogs which hung around the village, looking for any scraps of food which they could steal from the children.

But the mother’s eyes were full of hope in this man, this priest, whose language she was not able to understand, whose faith she did not comprehend, but whose very manner indicated: how he, the priest, was not able to understand - that here was someone who had the ability and the gift to bring help to her daughter, to the mother, and to the father, as they suffered fearfully in that little alcove.

And so the priest, taking each of them by the hand: prayed, as Our Father has taught us – and the father translated his words, so that the mother might be able to understand: but in fact, there was no need, because she did understand – if not the words, she understood the intent and the purpose.

‘Thy will be done – Give us each day our daily bread – Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us - Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil’. He then went into the ward, spoke with the nurse in charge, was led across to a bed, where there lay the now not smiling little girl from the photograph. He blessed her. He laid his hands on her, and anointed her.

There was no more that he could do: but it was what he had to do, because as the woman had said, ‘Truth, Lord; yet the little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table’.

‘Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.’



Bonnie's Reflections: *THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING*



MRS. BONNIE IVEY

Our little town has lost ten citizens to death recently. A friend is fading away as I write this. In the world's eyes, it makes a harsh contrast; Easter lambs, bunnies, and chocolate eggs juxtaposed to a string of funerals. We Christians should know better.

"The Harrowing of Hell" is a theme in Christian teaching that dates from the early Church Fathers. In the middle ages, the English performed "Mystery Plays" in churches to teach about this, and other, parts of the faith. In The Apostles' Creed we say "He was cruci-

fied, dead, and buried; **He descended into hell...**" This startling statement is made more understandable when we look at the different words in Scripture translated into English as "hell". The Hebrew *sheol* and Greek *Hades* both refer, not to the final hell of punishment, but "the place of the dead". "*Harrowing*" is an old term of warfare meaning to despoil, to violently remove valuable possessions.

Orthodox Christians use icons, such as the Harrowing of Hell, to meditate upon. In such icons we see Jesus appearing in the place of the dead even while his body lies in its tomb. All is rocky and sterile, and here are the "gates of hell"; but they have been wrenched or blasted open. They lie in a cross shape, trampled under the feet of Jesus. The ground is littered with shattered locks and bars. Beneath them Satan lies helpless, the "*strong man bound*". (Mark 3:27) Jesus reaches out to grasp the hands of Adam and Eve, as they rise from their tombs. They represent all the dead who heard the proclamation, the "preaching" of Jesus, and responded to him. (I Peter 3:19-20) Here we see Satan's prisoners liberated.

St. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) taught a way to minister to a believer who seems to be struggling with approaching death. He said to ask these questions, and let the person answer "Yes" to each.

"Are you glad that you will die in the Faith?"

Do you confess you have not lived as well as you should have? Are you sorry for this?

Are you willing to better yourself if you should have further time to live?



"Praying with Icons," revised edition (Orbis Books, 2008)
Jim Forest

Bonnie's Reflections: THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for you?

Do you believe that you cannot be saved *except through his death*?

Do you heartily thank him for this?"

"Then always give thanks to him while your soul is in you, and on this death alone place your whole confidence. Commit yourself wholly to this death; with this death cover yourself; wrap yourself in it completely..."

This powerful image of the blanket of mercy can give us confidence if we are hesitating on the cold threshold of death. Jesus has gone before us to this place.

"Whither shall I go then from your Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there: If I go down to hell, thou art there also." (Ps. 139: 6, 7)

"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." (Rev. 17,18)

"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40)

This changes everything.



The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way



The Rev. Vernon
Staley

**The Christian Way.: A Simple Guide to Doctrine,
Devotion, and Duty**

continued

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

At the close of His earthly life, Jesus Christ underwent His Passion. By this word we mean the sufferings and death of our Lord. The Passion of Jesus had been foretold long before, by types and prophecies, as we learn from the Old Testament. The sin of man was the real cause of the Passion. The death of our Lord on the cross is the measure of human sin, and it bears witness to the truth that "without shedding of blood is no remission," or forgiveness. Our Blessed Saviour suffered as the Sin-bearer, of Whom the Baptist had spoken, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the

THIS
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The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way

sin of the world.” The sin of the world was fully laid upon Jesus, when He endured His Agony and Bloody Sweat in Gethsemane, His Cross and Passion, and His precious Death on Calvary. He so truly took the sins of man upon Himself, as to bear their penalty. “God made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin.” The Sufferings and Death of our Saviour gained their value as the sufferings and death of the Son of God in human nature. As God, He was able to satisfy justice, but not to suffer pain ; as Man, He was able to suffer, but not to satisfy.

We can never fully understand all that is meant by the Redemption. Almighty God is perfectly just: He cannot wink at sin and pass it over, as if it was of no moment. His perfect justice demanded an offering for sin, which is an outrage to His Divine Majesty and holiness: this offering for sin Jesus our Redeemer made in our name and on our behalf on the cross. The sacrifice required by God was not that of pain or even death itself; but the offering of a perfect obedience. The justice of God demanded a life of obedience, to *make* amends for the disobedience of all men. This obedience Jesus Christ, the head of our redeemed race, offered all through His life on earth, and sealed by His death. “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” He carried obedience to its extreme limit. It was not His death in itself that was pleasing to God, but His obedience in freely giving up His life. The awful sufferings which our Redeemer endured, were the evidence of His complete fulfilment of the will of God. His obedience was so great and so perfect, that not even death had power to turn Him aside.

“He died for all, that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him Who for their sakes died and rose again.” The great act of obedience made by our Redeemer, in our nature, in our name, on our behalf, calls for a like obedience on our part. His death will not benefit us, unless we too obey God. Every Christian ought to be able to say—I would rather die than wilfully disobey God; and I am ready to bear any pain or loss, rather than do wrong.

Our Saviour was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve Apostles ; and was condemned to death by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judaea. He hung upon the cross for six hours, before He died ; and, during that time, He uttered seven sayings. The seven sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ from the cross are :---

“Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.”

“To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.”

“Woman, behold thy son ! ” . . . “ Behold thy mother ! ”

“My God, My God, why bast Thou forsaken *Me?*”

“I thirst.”

“It is finished.”

“Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.”

The Church keeps Holy Week and Good Friday in memory of the Sufferings and Death of our Blessed Saviour.

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The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way

He descended into hell. When our Lord died on the cross, His Soul left His Body, and went to the place of departed spirits in the unseen world. This place is called hell' in the creed; but it was not the place of torment, prepared for the devil and his angels. Our Lord, on the cross, spoke of the place of departed souls as Paradise: it is the place or condition of souls between death and the last judgment.

The condition of the departed is connected with our Lord's descent into hell. The soul at death does not find its full and final joy or misery: it will not reach one or the other, until its reunion with the body at the resurrection, and after the last judgment. The place and state of the faithful departed is a preparation for the life of heaven. We may believe that cleansing from sin, and a growing conformity to the will of God, form an important part of this preparation for eternal joys. The faithful departed are with Christ, in rest and peace, and we may remember them before God in our prayers.

THE
RESURRECTION
OF JESUS
CHRIST IS A
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HAPPENED..

The third day lie rose again from the dead. After our Lord was dead, His sacred Body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in winding-cloths, and buried by two of His disciples. His Body was laid in a tomb hewn out of the rock, and a great stone was rolled to cover the opening of the tomb. There His Body lay, until the third day after the crucifixion. Very early in the morning of the third day, the Soul of Jesus returned from the realms of the dead, and re-entered his lifeless Body in the tomb. The sacred Body, thus brought to life, passed out of the winding-cloths, and through the rock, into the outer world. This great event is known as the Resurrection, and it was accomplished by our Lord's Own Divine power ; as He said, " I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a great event that really happened. We know from the New Testament, that He was seen alive at least eight times after He rose again, by His most intimate friends, who could not have been mistaken. The resurrection of Christ is the proof of His victory over sin and death, and of the truth of His claim to be the Son of God. By rising from the grave, Jesus Christ conquered death, which is the penalty of sin, and gained for us eternal life.

The Church commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Day. Every Sunday is a lesser commemoration of the resurrection, as every Friday is of the crucifixion. For these reasons every Sunday is a festival, and every Friday a fast.

Our Lord remained on earth for forty days after His resurrection, in order to make it plain that His rising was a real event, and that He might give His final instructions concerning the Church. "He was seen of the Apostles forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

The Rev. Vernon Staley: The Christian Way

He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of Clod the Father Almighty. On the fortieth day after our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He went up into heaven in the presence of His Apostles. This great event is known as the Ascension, which the Church commemorates on Ascension Day. By His ascension, our Lord opened heaven to mankind. He has gone to heaven to prepare a place for us. When it is said in the Creed, that “He sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty,” it is meant that our Lord has entered into a state of glory. Jesus Christ is still, and ever will be, man in heaven. We are to think of Jesus Christ in heaven as always offering Himself to the Eternal Father, and pleading for us. Because He has our nature, He is fitted to offer Himself for man. The gifts of grace and our acceptance with God depend upon His priestly work in heaven.

Before He ascended to exercise His office as our High Priest, He ordained a solemn Service, in which we below may have a real part in that which He does above. This Service is the Holy Communion, wherein we show forth His life and death before God on earth, as He pleads the same in heaven.

From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is now in heaven, will come again at the last day to judgment. His second coming will differ in many ways from His first coming. He came first in great humility, when He did not abhor the Virgin's womb; His second coming will be in awful majesty. He first came to be the Saviour of the world; He will come again to be our Judge. It is in commemoration of these great events (the one in the past, the other in the future) that the Church keeps the season of Advent.

By the words “the quick and the dead,” in the Creed, we are to understand that our Lord will come to judge all who are alive at His coming, as well as all who are dead. He will come to judge the world as the Son of Man. “The Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.” We shall therefore be judged by Him Who is both God and Man; that is to say, with perfect fairness and perfect sympathy.

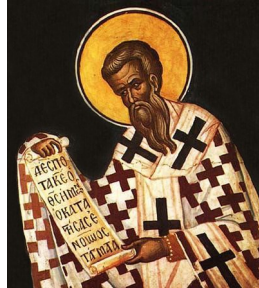
The day of judgment will be the day of justice, when all life's inequalities will be put right, and every man will get his due. That our Lord will come again is quite certain, for He has said so: but the time of His coming is quite uncertain. “Of that day and hour knoweth no man.” And it is because of this uncertainty that we should never be unprepared to meet our Judge. “Therefore be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.” The result of the judgment will be the separation of the evil from the good, for ever and ever.

To be continued

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St. Gregory Nazianzen: A Homily for Holy Week



ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN

We are soon going to share in the Passover, and although we still do so only in a symbolic way, the symbolism already has more clarity than it possessed in former times because, under the law, the Passover was, if I may dare to say so, only a symbol of a symbol. Before long, however, when the Word drinks the new wine with us in the kingdom of his Father, we shall be keeping the Passover in a yet more perfect way, and with deeper understanding. He will then reveal to us and make clear what he has so far only partially disclosed. For this wine, so familiar to us now, is eternally new.

It is for us to learn what this drinking is, and for him to teach us. He has to communicate this knowledge to his disciples, because teaching is food, even for the teacher.

“ . . . WE MUST
SACRIFICE
OURSELVES TO
GOD, EACH DAY
AND IN
EVERYTHING WE
DO, . . .

So let us take our part in the Passover prescribed by the law, not in a literal way, but according to the teaching of the Gospel; not in an imperfect way, but perfectly; not only for a time, but eternally. Let us regard as our home the heavenly Jerusalem, not the earthly one; the city glorified by angels, not the one laid waste by armies. We are not required to sacrifice young bulls or rams, beasts with horns and hoofs that are more dead than alive and devoid of feeling; but instead, let us join the choirs of angels in offering God upon his heavenly altar a sacrifice of praise. We must now pass through the first veil and approach the second, turning our eyes toward the Holy of Holies. I will say more: we must sacrifice ourselves to God, each day and in everything we do, accepting all that happens to us for the sake of the Word, imitating his passion by our sufferings, and honouring his blood by shedding our own. We must be ready to be crucified.

If you are a Simon of Cyrene, take up your cross and follow Christ. If you are crucified beside him like one of the thieves, now, like the good thief, acknowledge your God. For your sake, and because of your sin, Christ himself was regarded as a sinner; for his sake, therefore, you must cease to sin. Worship him who was hung on the cross because of you, even if you are hanging there yourself. Derive some benefit from the very shame; purchase salvation with your death. Enter paradise with Jesus, and discover how far you have fallen. Contemplate the glories there, and leave the other scoffing thief to die outside in his blasphemy.

If you are a Joseph of Arimathea, go to the one who ordered his crucifixion, and ask for Christ's body. Make your own the expiation for the sins of the whole world. If you are a Nicodemus, like the man who worshipped God by night, bring spices and prepare Christ's body for burial. If you are one of the Marys, or Salome, or Joanna, weep in the early morning. Be the first to see the stone rolled back, and even the angels perhaps, and Jesus himself



St. John of Damascus: Concerning the Cross and Faith



THE word ‘Cross’ is foolishness to those that perish, but to us who are saved it is the power of God.¹ For he that is spiritual judgeth all things, but the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit.² For it is foolishness to those who do not receive in faith and who do not consider God’s goodness and omnipotence, but search out divine things with human and natural reasonings. For all the things that are of God are above nature and reason and conception. For should any one consider how and for what purpose God brought all things out of

nothing into being, and aim at arriving at that by natural reasonings, he fails to comprehend it. For knowledge of this kind belongs to spirits and demons. But if anyone, under the guidance of faith, should consider the divine goodness and omnipotence and truth and wisdom and justice, he will find all things smooth and even, and the way straight. But without faith it is impossible to be saved.³ For it is by faith that all things, both human and spiritual, are sustained. For without faith neither does the farmer cut his furrow, nor does the merchant commit his life to the raging waves of the sea on a small piece of wood, nor are marriages contracted nor any other step in life taken. By faith we consider that all things are brought out of nothing into being by God’s power. And we direct all things, both divine and human, by faith. Further, faith is assent free from all meddlesome inquisitiveness.

Every action, therefore, and performance of miracles by Christ are most great and divine and marvelous: but the most marvelous of all is His precious Cross. For no other thing has subdued death, expiated the sin of the first parent, despoiled Hades, bestowed the resurrection, granted the power to us of contemning the present and even death itself, prepared the return to our former blessedness, opened the gates of Paradise, given our nature a seat at the right hand of God, and made us the children and heirs of God, save the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. For by the Cross all things have been made right. So many of us, the apostle says, as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into His death⁴, and as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.⁵ Further, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.⁶ Lo! The death of Christ, that is, the Cross, clothed us with the enhypostatic wisdom and power of God. And the power of God is the Word of the Cross, either because God’s might, that is, the victory over death, has been revealed to us by it, or because just as the four extremities of the Cross are held fast and bound together by the bolt in the middle, so also by God’s power the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, that is, every creature visible and invisible, is maintained.

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St. John of Damascus: Concerning the Cross and Faith

This was given to us as a sign on our forehead, just as the circumcision was given to Israel: for by it we believers are separated and distinguished from unbelievers. This is the shield and weapon against, and trophy over, the devil. This is the seal that the destroyer may not touch you⁷, as saith the Scripture. This is the resurrection of those lying in death, the support of the standing, the staff of the weak, the rod of the flock, the safe conduct of the earnest, the perfection of those that press forwards, the salvation of soul and body, the aversion of all things evil, the patron of all things good, the taking away of sin, the plant of resurrection, the tree of eternal life.

So, then, this same truly precious and august tree, on which Christ hath offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sakes, is to be worshipped as sanctified by contact with His holy body and blood; likewise the nails, the spear, the clothes, His sacred tabernacles which are the manger, the cave, Golgotha, which bringeth salvation, the tomb which giveth life, Sion, the chief stronghold of the churches and the like, are to be worshipped. In the words of David, the father of God, Let us enter into His tabernacles, let us do reverence to the place where His feet stood.⁸ And that is the Cross that is made clear by what follows, Arise, O Lord, into Thy Rest.⁹ For the resurrection comes after the Cross. For if of those things which we love, house and couch and garment, are to be longed after, how much the rather should we long after that which belonged to God, our Saviour, by means of which we are in truth saved.

Moreover we worship even the image of the precious and life-giving Cross, although made of another tree, not honouring the tree (God forbid) but the image as a symbol of Christ. For He said to His disciples, admonishing them, Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven,¹⁰ meaning the Cross. And so also the angel of the resurrection said to the woman, Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified.¹¹ And the Apostle said, We preach Christ crucified.¹² For there are many Christs and many Jesuses, but One crucified. He does not say speared but crucified. It behooves us, then, to worship the sign of Christ. For wherever the sign may be, there also will He be. But it does not behoove us to worship the material of which the image of the Cross is composed even though it be gold or precious stones, after it is destroyed, if that should happen. Everything, therefore, that is dedicated to God we worship, conferring the adoration on Him.

The tree of life which was planted by God in Paradise pre-figured this precious Cross. For since death was by a tree, it was fitting that life and resurrection should be bestowed by a tree.¹³ Jacob, when He worshipped the top of Joseph's staff, was the first to image the Cross, and when he blessed his sons with crossed hands,¹⁴ he made most clearly the sign of the cross. Likewise also did Moses' rod, when he smote the sea in the figure of the cross and saved Israel, while it overwhelmed Pharaoh in the depths; likewise also the hands stretched out crosswise and routing Amalek; and the bitter water made sweet by a tree, and the rock rent and pouring forth streams of water,¹⁵ and the rod that meant for Aaron the dignity of the high priesthood¹⁶: and the serpent lifted in tri-

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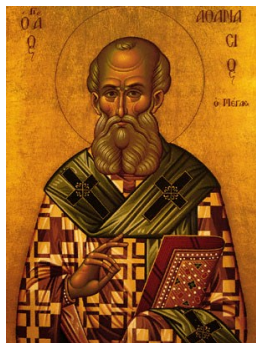
St. John of Damascus: Concerning the Cross and Faith

umph on a tree as though it were dead,¹⁷ the tree bringing salvation to those who in faith saw their enemy dead, just as Christ was nailed to the tree in the flesh of sin which yet knew no sin. The mighty Moses cried, You will see your life hanging on a tree before your eyes, and Isaiah likewise, I have spread out my hands all the day unto a faithless and rebellious people.¹⁸ But may we who worship this obtain a part in Christ the crucified. Amen.

(1) 1 Cor. 1:23; (2) *ibid* 2:14-15; (3) Heb. 11:6; (4) Rom. 6:3; (5) Gal. 3:27; (6) 1 Cor. 1:24; (7) Ex. 12:23; (8) Ps. 131:7; (9) *ibid* 8; (10) Mt. 24:30; (11) Mk. 16:6; (12) 1 Cor. 1:22; (13) Gen. 2 and 3; (14) Heb. 11:21; (15) Num. 20; (16) Ex. 4; (17) *ibid.*; (18) Isai. 65:2.



St. Athanasius the Great: A Paschal Homily



ST. ATHANASIUS THE
GREAT

Brethren, how fine a thing it is to move from festival to festival, from prayer to prayer, from holy day to holy day. The time is now at hand when we enter on a new beginning: the proclamation of the blessed Passover, in which the Lord was sacrificed. We feed as on the food of life, we constantly refresh our souls with his precious blood, as from a fountain. Yet we are always thirsting, burning to be satisfied. But he himself is present for those who thirst and in his goodness invites them to the feast day. Our Saviour repeats his words: If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He quenched the thirst not only of those who came to him then. Whenever anyone seeks him he is freely admitted to the presence of the Saviour. The grace of the feast is not restricted to one occasion. Its rays of glory never set. It is always at hand to enlighten the mind of those who desire it. Its power is always there for those whose minds have been enlightened and who meditate day and night on the holy Scriptures, like the one who is called blessed in the holy psalm: Blessed is the man who has not followed the counsel of the wicked, or stood where sinners stand, or sat in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

Moreover, my friends, the God who first established this feast for us allows us to celebrate it each year. He who gave up his Son to death for our salvation, from the same motive gives us this feast, which is commemorated every year. This feast guides us through the trials that meet us in this world. God now gives us the joy of salvation that shines out from this feast, as he brings us together to form one assembly, uniting us all in spirit in every place, allowing us to pray together and to offer common thanksgiving, as is our duty on the feast. Such is the wonder of his love: he gathers to this feast those who are far apart, and brings together in unity of faith those who may be physically separated from each other.



“GOD NOW
GIVES US THE
JOY OF
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THAT SHINES
OUT FROM THIS
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BRINGS US
TOGETHER . . .”

St. Epiphanius of Cyprus: A Paschal Homily



EPIPHANIUS OF CYPRUS

Something strange is happening—there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began.

God has died in the flesh and Hell trembles with fear. He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, He who is both God and the Son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the Cross, the weapon that had won him the victory.

At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone, 'My Lord be with you all.' Christ answered him: 'And with your spirit.' He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying:

'Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.

'I am your God, who for your sake have become your son. Out of love for you and your descendants I now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake. I did not create you to be held a prisoner in Hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead. Rise up, work of my hands, you who were created in my image. Rise, let us leave this place, for you are in Me and I in you; together we form one person and cannot be separated.

'For your sake I, your God, became your son; I, the Lord, took the form of a slave; I, Whose home is above the heavens, descended to the earth and beneath the earth. For your sake, for the sake of man, I became like a man without help, free among the dead. For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed to the Jews in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden.

'See on My Face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On My back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See My hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree.

'I slept on the Cross and a sword pierced My side for you who slept in Paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side has healed the pain in yours. My sleep will rouse you from your sleep in Hell. The sword that pierced Me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.

'Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly Paradise. I will not restore you to that Paradise, but will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the

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St. Epiphanius of Cyprus: A Paschal Homily

tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The Bridal Chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.'



Fr. Robert's Remarks

book to which I have had occasion to return from time to time. In an Easter Sermon, Fr. Stanton preached from the text "Christ both died, and rose." (Romans xiv.9). Fr. Stanton reminds us emphatically that "He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. That is the fact we teach today." He went on to say, "Now this fact is our philosophy. It is the philosophy of our religion. As Christ rose, so will all His people rise with Him. That is our faith."

Having spoken of our resurrection and our resurrection bodies, he says,

"The resurrection of our bodies belongs to the Almightyness of God. Of course, I believe in God, and God giveth us a body, the resurrection body, as it hath pleased Him, and to everyone His own body. Do you feel sure? Do you feel happy about that? That is our philosophy. As Christ died and rose, so shall we die and rise again."

Fr. Stanton insisted that beyond being a fact and being our philosophy, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus is also our inspiration. Speaking to a congregation which like all of us was not getting any younger, he said,

"Look at it, all of you—you who have got the pang of death at heart—look at it all in the light of the risen Christ, and admit Easter Day is our inspiration.

Strong Son of God, immortal love,
Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
By faith, and faith alone embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove." (Tennyson's *In Memoriam*)

It is our inspiration!"

(Quotes from *Father Stanton's Last Sermons in S. Alban's, Holborn, pp 174-177*

Recently I have been reminded that our experience of time is such that in our fallen world we experience many things temporal—one of which would be that of our own mortality to which Fr. Stanton refers—as causing anxiety, despondency, fear, etc.

We have had this wonderful, penitential, season of Lent in which to learn more

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GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

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Fr. Robert's Remarks

about ourselves, to return ourselves to God, to learn that repentance is, as one writer put it, "The Joy Filled Life".

Our Lenten discipline has no other purpose than to bring us back to God.

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly remembrance of the resurrection from the dead of thy only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we who celebrate this Paschal feast may die daily unto sin, and live with him evermore in the glory of his endless life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord Who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

The experience of Easter is the point of intersection where we meet the Risen Christ through whom we are able to be all that God calls us to be.

May you have a blessed and Joy-filled Easter!



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