



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 77 April 2015



Sentenced to Immortality

A Paschal Homily by St Justin of Chelije

Man sentenced God to death; by His Resurrection, He sentenced man to immortality. In return for a beating, He gives an embrace; for abuse, a blessing; for death, immortality. Man never showed so much hate for God as when he crucified Him; and God never showed more love for man than when He arose. Man even wanted to reduce God to a mortal, but God by His Resurrection made man immortal. The crucified God is Risen and has killed death. Death is no more. Immortality has surrounded man and all the world.

By the Resurrection of the GodMan, human nature has been led irreversibly onto the path of immortality, and has become dreadful to death itself. For before the Resurrection of Christ, death was dreadful to man, but after the Resurrection of Christ, man has become more dreadful to death. When man lives by faith in the Risen GodMan, he lives above death, out of its reach; it is a footstool for his feet: “O Death, where is thy sting? O Hades, where is thy victory?” (I Corinthians 15:55). When a man belonging to Christ dies, he simply sets aside his body like clothing, in which he will again be vested on the day of Dread Judgement.

Before the Resurrection of the GodMan, death was the second nature of man: life first, death second. But by His Resurrection, the Lord has changed everything: immortality has become the second nature of man, it has become natural for man; and death – unnatural. As before the Resurrection of Christ, it was natural for men to be mortal, so after the Resurrection of Christ, it was natural for men to be immortal.

By sin, man became mortal and transient; by the Resurrection of the GodMan, he became immortal and perpetual. In this is the power, the might, the allmightiness of the Resurrection of Christ. Without it, there would have been no Christianity. Of all miracles, this is the greatest miracle. All other miracles have it as their source and lead to it. From it grow faith, love, hope, prayer, and love for God. Behold: the fugitive disciples, having run away from Jesus when He died, return to Him because He is risen. Behold: the Centurion confessed Christ as the Son of God when he saw the Resurrection from the grave. Behold: all the first Christians became Christian because the Lord Jesus is risen, because death was vanquished. This is what no other faith has; this is what lifts the Lord Christ above all other gods and men; this is what, in the most undoubted manner, shows and demonstrates that Jesus Christ is the One True God and Lord in all the world.

Because of the Resurrection of Christ, because of His victory over death, men have become, continue to become, and will continue becoming Christians. The entire history of Christianity is nothing other than the history of a unique miracle, namely, the Resurrection of Christ, which is unbrokenly threaded through the hearts of Christians from one day to the next, from year to year, across the centuries, until the Dread Judgment.

The Resurrection of Christ is the mother of us all, all Christians, the mother of immortals. By faith in the Resurrection, man is born anew, born for eternity.

Man is born, in fact, not when his mother bring him into the world, but when he comes to believe in the Risen Christ, for then he is born to life eternal, whereas a mother bears children for death, for the grave. The Resurrection of Christ is the mother of us all, all Christians, the mother of immortals. By faith in the Resurrection, man is born anew, born for eternity. "That is impossible!" says the sceptic. But you listen to what

the Risen GodMan says: "All things are possible to him that believeth!" (Mark 9:23). The believer is he who lives, with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his being, according to the Gospel of the Risen Lord Jesus.

Faith is our victory, by which we conquer death; faith in the Risen Lord Jesus. Death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin. The Lord "has removed the sting of death." Death is a serpent; sin is its fangs. By sin, death puts its poison into the soul and into the body of man. The more sins a man has, the more bites, through which death puts its poison in him.

When a wasp stings a man, he uses all his strength to remove the sting. But when sin wounds him, this sting of death, what should be done? One must call upon the Risen Lord Jesus in faith and prayer, that He may remove the sting of death from the soul. He, in His great lovingkindness, will do this, for He is overflowing with mercy and love. When many wasps attack a man's body and wound it with many stings, that man is poisoned and dies. The same happens with a man's soul, when many sins wound it with their stings: it is poisoned and dies a death with no resurrection.

Conquering sin in himself through Christ, man overcomes death. If you have lived the day without vanquishing a single sin of yours, know that you have become deadened. Vanquish one, two, or three of your sins, and behold: you have become younger than the youth which does not age, young in immortality and eternity. Never forget that to believe in the Resurrection of the Lord Christ means to carry out a continuous fight with sins, with evil, with death.

If a man fights with sins and passions, this demonstrates that he indeed believes in the Risen Lord; if he fights with them, he fights for life eternal. If he does not fight, his faith is in vain. If man's faith is not a fight for immortality and eternity, than tell me, what is it? If faith in Christ does not

bring us to resurrection and life eternal, than what use is it to us? If Christ is not risen, that meant that neither sin nor death has been vanquished, than why believe in Christ? For the one who by faith in the Risen Lord fights with each of his sins there will be affirmed in him gradually the feeling that Christ is indeed risen, has indeed vanquished the sting of sin, has indeed vanquished death on all the fronts of combat. Sin gradually diminishes the soul in man, driving it into death, transforming it from immortality to mortality, from incorruption to corruption. The more the sins, the more the mortal man. If man does not feel immortality in himself, know that he is in sins, in bad thoughts, in languid feelings. Christianity is an appeal: Fight with death until the last breath, fight until a final victory has been reached. Every sin is a desertion; every passion is a retreat; every vice is a defeat.

One need not be surprised that Christians also die bodily. This is because the death of the body is sowing. The mortal body is sown, says the Apostle Paul, and it grows, and is raised in an immortal body (I Corinthians 15:42-44). The body dissolves, like a sown seed, that the Holy Spirit may quicken and perfect it. If the Lord Christ had not been risen in body, what use would it have for Him? He would not have saved the entire man. If His body did not rise, then why was He incarnate? Why did He take on Himself flesh, if He gave it nothing of His Divinity?

If Christ is not risen, then why believe in Him? To be honest, I would never have believed in Him had He not risen and had not therefore vanquished death. Our greatest enemy was killed and we were given immortality. Without this, our world is a noisy display of revolting stupidity and despair, for neither in Heaven nor under Heaven is there a greater stupidity than this world without the Resurrection; and there is not a greater despair than this life without immortality. There is no being in a single world more miserable than man who does not believe in the resurrection of the dead. It would have been better for such a man never to have been born.

In our human world, death is the greatest torment and inhumane horror. Freedom from this torment and horror is salvation. Such a salvation was given the race of man by the Vanquisher of death – the Risen GodMan. He related to us all the mystery of salvation by His Resurrection. To be saved means to assure our body and soul of immortality and life eternal. How do we attain this? By no other way than by a theanthropic life, a new life, a life in the Risen Lord, in and by the Lord's Resurrection.

For us Christians, our life on earth is a school in which we learn how to assure ourselves of resurrection and life eternal. For what use is this life if we cannot acquire by it life eternal? But, in order to be resurrected with the Lord Christ, man must first suffer with Him, and live His life as his own. If he does this, then on Pascha he can say with Saint Gregory the Theologian: "Yesterday I was crucified with Him, today I live with Him; yesterday I was buried with Him, today I rise with Him" (Troparion 2, Ode 3, Matins, Pascha).

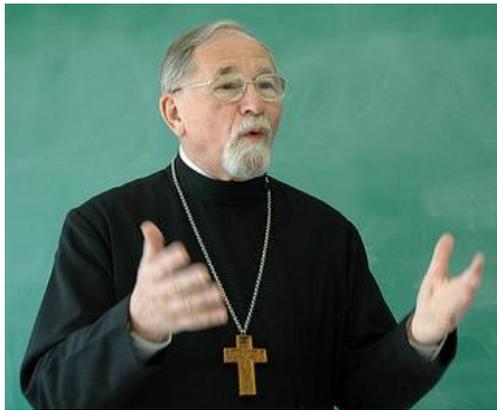
Christ's Four Gospels are summed up in only four words. They are: "Христос воскрес! Воистину воскрес!" (Christ is Risen! Indeed He is risen!). In each of these words is a Gospel, and in the Four Gospels is all the meaning of all God's world, visible and invisible. When all knowledge and all the thoughts of men are concentrated in the cry of the Paschal salutation, "Christ is Risen!", then immortal joy embraces all beings and in joy responds: "Indeed He is risen!"

<http://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2010/04/paschal-homily-of-blessed-justin-of.html>

55 Maxims of the Christian Life

by Fr Thomas Hopko

1. **B**e always with Christ and trust God in everything.
2. **P**ray as you can, not as you think you must.
3. **H**ave a keepable rule of prayer done by discipline.
4. **S**ay the Lord's Prayer several times each day.
5. **R**epeat a short prayer when your mind is not occupied.
6. **M**ake some prostrations when you pray.
7. **E**at good foods in moderation and fast on fasting days.
8. **P**ractice silence, inner and outer.
9. **S**it in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day.
10. **D**o acts of mercy in secret.
11. **G**o to liturgical services regularly.
12. **G**o to confession and holy communion regularly.
13. **D**o not engage intrusive thoughts and feelings.
14. **R**eveal all your thoughts and feelings to a trusted person regularly.
15. **R**ead the scriptures regularly.
16. **R**ead good books, a little at a time.
17. **C**ultivate communion with the saints.
18. **B**e an ordinary person, one of the human race.
19. **B**e polite with everyone, first of all family members.
20. **M**aintain cleanliness and order in your home.
21. **H**ave a healthy, wholesome hobby.
22. **E**xercise regularly.
23. **L**ive a day, even a part of a day, at a time.
24. **B**e totally honest, first of all with yourself.
25. **B**e faithful in little things.
26. **D**o your work, then forget it.
27. **D**o the most difficult and painful things first.
28. **F**ace reality.
29. **B**e grateful.
30. **B**e cheerful.
31. **B**e simple, hidden, quiet and small.
32. **N**ever bring attention to yourself.
33. **L**isten when people talk to you.
34. **B**e awake and attentive, fully present where you are.
35. **T**hink and talk about things no more than necessary.
36. **S**peak simply, clearly, firmly, directly.
37. **F**lee imagination, fantasy, analysis, figuring things out.
38. **F**lee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
39. **D**on't complain, grumble, murmur or whine.
40. **D**on't seek or expect pity or praise.
41. **D**on't compare yourself with anyone.
42. **D**on't judge anyone for anything.
43. **D**on't try to convince anyone of anything.
44. **D**on't defend or justify yourself.
45. **B**e defined and bound by God, not people.
46. **A**ccept criticism gracefully and test it carefully.
47. **G**ive advice only when asked or when it is your duty.
48. **D**o nothing for people that they can and should do for themselves.
49. **H**ave a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim and caprice.
50. **B**e merciful with yourself and others.
51. **H**ave no expectations except to be fiercely tempted to your last breath.
52. **F**ocus exclusively on God and light, and never on darkness, temptation and sin.
53. **E**ndure the trial of yourself and your faults serenely, under God's mercy.
54. **W**hen you fall, get up immediately and start over.
55. **G**et help when you need it, without fear or shame.



Fr Thomas Hopko who reposed on 18 March, 2015



FUNDRAISING RUN IN RUSSIA

In late May Robert Collins, a catechumen who will be received into the Church over Holy Week taking St Seraphim of Sarov as his patron saint, will be doing a fundraising run in Russia to raise money for the charity [Miloserdie](#). Below, he gives more information about the origin of the race, the work of the charity as well as details on how to sponsor him.

In the last week of May I will be completing a fund-raising run in Russia. It's a half-marathon in the small village of Isakovo, on the banks of the river Istra. The church and ikon museum complex were the dream of two local men: Sergei Veremeenko and Vladimir Stokovskii. The first was the president of the regional development fund and the latter a well-known ikon collector with a large collection of ikons of the Mother of God. The local church had disappeared in Soviet times and people could not even remember its exact location so a new church was constructed with help from the regional development fund. On the night of 3 April 2004 the first All-night vigil took place in the new church and at the same time the ikon of the Mother of God of Fadeless Colour started to weep in the house of Sergei Veremeenko. The parish and complex is now thriving, running a large number of fundraising events and festivals of Russian culture.

I will be running to raise money for the amazing Russian charity [Miloserdie](#) (Mercy or Charity in English) which is the official charity of the Russian Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. Their excellent website (sadly, only in Russian) contains a vast amount of information on their projects across Russia. The 'hangar of salvation' (right) is a huge heated tent for the homeless in Moscow where people can get a shower and a change of clothes as well as help and a bed for the night:



On a smaller, but no less important scale, last year the charity gave out over 23,000 Easter greetings to lonely old people, invalids, orphans, prisoners and homeless. The packages consisted of an Easter greeting, an Easter egg and kulich.



Russia is now under attack from the West making life for ordinary people even more of a daily struggle for survival and Orthodox (and all those who call themselves Christians) the world over should rally to her aid. For more information about Robert's run, or the charity, please contact him at rbenedictcollins@hotmail.com. If you would like to make a donation, just click on the link below:

<http://www.gofundme.com/ogjyos>

Notes & Jottings

HOLY WEEK REMINDER & EASTER PARTY

Our Schedule for **Holy Week 2015** can be found [here](#). Don't miss out on the grace-filled services as we prepare to greet the Risen Lord. If you are unable to make our main services due to commitments at other parishes, do try and come for the **Paschal Vespers** followed by **Easter Party and Childrens' Red Egg Hunt** at 3pm on Easter day, Sunday 12 April.

LENTEN GIVING

As well as giving towards Robert Collins' fundraising run, Orthodox Christians around the world are also asked to give what they can for the Presbytera and six children of Fr Matthew Baker - a brilliant young priest of the Greek Orthodox Parish of the Holy Trinity, Norwich Connecticut. On the night of 1 March, Fr Matthew was involved in a terrible car accident on the way home from Vespers which took his life whilst miraculously preserving the lives of his six children. Please hold Presbytera Katherine and the children in your prayers. To give a donation, please [click on the link](#).

WORK COMMENCES

On Wednesday 25 March, curiously the 18th anniversary of our arrival here, work began on the footings for the grave tomb of the foundress. As announced in the November issue last year, the tomb will be made to match the ornamental wall surrounding the cemetery with brick sides, in filled with knapped flints and surmounted by a Russian Orthodox cross and memorial inscription of York stone. It is hoped that the work will be fully completed in time for Radonitsa, the first paschal commemoration of the departed after Easter.

PILGRIMAGE TO BRADWELL

Our first pilgrimage to the wonderful church of [St Peter at Bradwell on Bank Holiday Monday 25 May](#) is less than 8 weeks away. St Peter's lays claim to being one of the oldest churches in the British Isles in continuous use since it was founded by St Cedd in approximately 654AD. Pilgrims are invited to arrive at the church in time for a Moleben to St Cedd at 2pm where we will sing our newly composed canon to the saint in front of Efrem's magnificent ikon of the saint. After the service there will be time to look round this holy site and take in the beautiful views. At 3.30pm we can then go together to the nearby Othona community to have tea, coffee and light refreshments. Please promote this event widely in your parishes and feel free to pass on this [poster](#) advertising the pilgrimage. For more information, please don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

AKATHIST TO ST JOHN THE WONDERWORKER

After a slight delay, we can now confirm that the original text of the akathist to St John the Wonderworker composed by the St Herman of Alaska Monastery is now back in stock. The booklet is 16 pages long, with a colour ikon on the front and retails at **£2.50** per copy. To purchase the booklet, please click [here](#).

NAMEDAYS

To all who are celebrating a nameday at this time we send congratulations and wish them:

Many Years!

1 April – **Martyrs Chrysanthus & Daria** - Daria Pearson

2 April - **Martyr Photina (Svetlana) the Samaritan Woman** – Svetlana Noakes

20 April – **St Daniel, Abbot of Pereyaslavl-Zalesski** - Daniel Dembri



COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE IKON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW

APRIL 2015

Saturday 4 April

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 5 April

10.10am ~ Hours & Festal Liturgy (Palm Sunday)

Great Monday 6 April

7.30pm ~ Vigil

❖ **Great Tuesday 7 April** ❖

10.10am ~ 9th Hour & Vespers Liturgy (Annunciation)

Great Thursday 9 April

7.30pm ~ Matins: 12 Gospels Service

Great Friday 10 April

4pm ~ Great Vespers & bringing out of the Shroud

6pm ~ Light Refreshments in the College

7.30pm ~ Matins: The Burial Service

Great Saturday 11 April

11.30am ~ Great Vespers & Readings

11.30pm ~ Midnight Office & Procession

PASCHA

❖❖ **Sunday 12 April** ❖❖

12Midnight Paschal Matins & Festal Liturgy

3pm ~ Paschal Vespers & Easter Party

Bright Saturday 18 April

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 19 April

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (Thomas Sunday)

Monday 20 April

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Tuesday 21 April

10.10am Hours & Paschal Liturgy for the Departed (Radonitsa)

Saturday 25 April

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 26 April

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (Sunday of the Myrrh-bearing Women)

HOLY WEEK

HOLY WEEK



*Let the heavens rejoice in a worthy manner and let the earth
be glad, and let the whole world, visible and invisible, keep
festival. For Christ our eternal joy is risen!*

From Paschal Canon: Ode 1

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