

FRIDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

May 22, 2020 • *Thirty-fourth day of Paschaltide*



CHRIST IS RISEN!

Canticle

When those held by the chains of Hades saw Thy boundless compassion, O Christ, they came quickly to the light with a joyful step, proclaiming and praising the eternal Pascha.

*Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death,
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.*

AT MORNING PRAYER

from the Pentecostarion, at Orthros

The Jews, O my Saviour, nailed Thee to the Tree of the Cross, through which Thou didst summon us unto Thy love from among the nations, O Christ our God. On it Thou didst willingly stretch out Thy divine hands; and the spear that pierced Thy holy side Thou didst welcome. We glorify Thine infinite mercies, O Thou Friend of man.

Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.

Since Thou art immortal, Thou didst rise from hades, O Lord; and with Thee, O Saviour, Thou didst raise Thy world by Thy sovereign power, O Christ God. Thou in strength didst smite down and destroy Death's dominion, showing, O most Merciful, Thy dread Resurrection to all; for which we glorify Thee, O only Friend of man.

Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.

When she of Samaria, as was her custom, was come to draw water from the earthly and corruptible well, she drew living water up; for she found the Well Himself thus seated before her, where the well before was digged by Patriarch Jacob; for Christ God, as the Well-spring, doth quench all the world's burning heat.

AT EVENING PRAYER

from the Pentecostarion, at Vespers

In worshipping Thy life-creating Cross unceasingly, O Christ God, we glorify Thy Resurrection on the third day; for thereby hast Thou renewed the corrupted nature of man, O Almighty One. And Thou hast shown us the way up to the heavens, since Thou alone art good and the Friend of man.

Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.

When the Lord came unto the well, the Samaritan woman entreated Him Who is compassionate, saying: Grant me the water of faith, and I shall receive the streams of the font of baptism, unto exceeding gladness and redemption. O Giver of Life, Lord, glory be to Thee.

Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.

Thou didst annul the sentence of the tree of disobedience O Saviour, by being nailed willingly to the Tree of the Cross. And by descending into hades, O Mighty One, as God Thou didst rend asunder the bonds of Death. Wherefore, we worship Thy Resurrection from the dead, while crying out in gladness: O Almighty Lord, glory be to Thee.

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

Archbishop

†386

~ from his twenty-third catechetical lecture: on the Divine Liturgy ~

PERHAPS YOU HAVE SEEN the Deacon, before the Divine Liturgy, giving the Priest water to wash his hands. The Deacon does not give him the water to wash because of bodily defilement; it is not that. For the Priest did not enter the Church with a defiled body. But the washing of hands is a symbol of purity from all sinful and unlawful deeds; for since the hands are a symbol of action, washing them represents the purity and blamelessness of his conduct. Have you not heard the blessed David opening this very mystery, by saying, *I will wash my hands in innocency and will compass Thine altar, O Lord? (Psalm 25:6)* The washing, therefore, of the hands is a symbol of immunity from sin.

At a later time in the service, the Deacon cries aloud: *Let us love one another.* (and we exchange the Kiss of Peace) Do not think that this kiss is of the same character as those given in public by common friends. It is not. Rather, this kiss blends souls one with another, and courts complete forgiveness for them. The kiss, therefore, is the sign that our souls are mingled together, and all remembrance of wrongs is banished. This is what Christ meant when He said, *If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)* The kiss, therefore, is reconciliation, and for this reason it is holy, as the blessed Apostle Paul says, *Greet one another with a holy kiss, (1 Corinthians 16:20)* and St. Peter says, *Greet one another with the kiss of love. (1 Peter 5:14)*

After this, the Priest cries aloud: *Lift up your hearts.* For truly we ought, in that most awesome hour, to have our heart on high with God, and not below, thinking of earthly things. In effect, therefore, the Priest bids all in that hour to dismiss all cares of this life and all anxieties, and to have their heart in heaven with the merciful God. Then you answer: *We lift them up unto the Lord,* assenting to it by your acknowledgement. But let no one come who says with his mouth, ‘We lift up our hearts unto the Lord’, but in his thoughts have his mind concerned with the cares of this life. At *all* times, God should be in our memory, but if this is impossible by reason of human infirmity, in this particular hour, above all, this should be our earnest endeavor.

Then the Priest says: *Let us give thanks unto the Lord.* For truly we are bound to give thanks that He called us, unworthy as we are, to so great a Grace; that He reconciled us when we were His foes; that He granted to us the Spirit of adoption. Then you say: *It is meet and right;* for in giving thanks, we do a meet and right thing. Yet, He did not do a right thing, but *more* than right, in doing us good and counting us fit for such great benefits.

After this, we make mention of heaven, and earth, and sea; of sun and moon; of stars and all the creation, rational and irrational, visible and invisible; of Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Dominions, Principalities, Powers, Thrones; of the Cherubim with many faces, in effect repeating that call of David’s: *O magnify the Lord with me. (Psalm 33:3)* We make mention also of the Seraphim, whom Isaiah, in the Holy Spirit, saw standing around the throne of God, and *with two of their wings veiling their faces, and with two their feet, while with two they flew, crying Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Sabaoth. (Isaiah 6:2-3)* The reason of our reciting this confession of God, delivered down to us from the Seraphim, is so we may be partakers with the heavenly Hosts in their hymn of praise.

Then having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual hymns, we beseech the merciful God to send forth His Holy Spirit upon the gifts spread forth before Him, that He may make the Bread the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ; for whatsoever the Holy Spirit has touched is surely sanctified and changed.

Then, after the spiritual sacrifice—the bloodless service—is completed, over that sacrifice of propitiation we entreat God for the common peace of the Churches, for the welfare of the world, for kings, for soldiers and allies, for the sick, for the afflicted, and for all who stand in need of help—for these, we all pray and offer this sacrifice. Then, we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us—Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs—that at their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition; and then, on behalf also of the Holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen asleep before us, and of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to their souls, for whom the supplication is offered, while that holy and most awesome sacrifice is set forth.

Now, I wish to persuade you by an illustration. For I know that many say, ‘What does it profit a soul that departs from this world, either with sins or without sins, to be commemorated in the prayer?’ Well, if a king were to banish

certain men who had given him offense, and then those who belong to those men should weave a crown and offer it to the king on behalf of those under punishment, would not the king grant a remission of their penalties? In the same way, we, when we offer to Him our supplications for those who have fallen asleep, though they be sinners, do not weave a crown but offer up Christ sacrificed for our sins, propitiating our merciful God for them as well as for ourselves.

After all these things, we say that Prayer which the Savior delivered to His own disciples, with a pure conscience giving title to God our Father, and saying, *Our Father, Who art in heaven*. O most surpassing loving-kindness of God! On those who revolted from Him and were in the very extreme of misery has He bestowed such a complete forgiveness of evil deeds, and so great participation of grace, that they should even call Him Father. *Our Father, Who art in heaven*: and those *who bear the image of the heavenly Man* (1 Corinthians 15:49) are also a heaven, in whom is God, dwelling and walking in them. (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:16)

Hallowed be Thy Name. The Name of God is, by its nature, holy, whether we say so or not; but since it is sometimes profaned among sinners, according to the words, *through you My Name is continually blasphemed among the Gentiles*, (cf. Romans 2:24) we pray that in us God's Name may be hallowed; not that it comes to be holy from not being holy, but because it becomes holy in us, when we are made holy, and do things worthy of holiness.

Thy kingdom come. A pure soul can say with boldness, *Thy kingdom come*, for he who has heard Paul saying, *Let not therefore sin reign in your mortal body*, (Romans 6:12) and has cleansed himself in deed, and thought, and word, will say to God: *Thy kingdom come*.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. God's divine and blessed Angels do the will of God, as David said in the Psalm: *Bless the Lord, all ye His Angels, mighty in strength, that perform His word*. (Psalm 102:18) So, then, in effect by your prayer you mean this: As Thy will is done in the Angels, so likewise be it done on earth in me, O Lord.

Give us this day our daily bread. Common bread is not substantial bread, but this Holy Bread is substantial, that is to say, appointed for the substance of the soul. For this Bread goes not into the belly and then is cast out into the draft, (cf. Matthew 15:17) but is distributed into your whole system for the benefit of body and soul.

And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. We have many sins: we offend both in word and in thought and in the very many things we do that are worthy of condemnation; and *if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves*, as John says. (1 John 1:8) We make a covenant with God, entreating Him to forgive us our sins, as we also forgive our neighbors their sins. Considering, then, that we receive forgiveness—and in return for what—let us not put off nor delay forgiving one another. The offenses committed against us are slight and trivial, and easily settled; but those which we have committed against God are great, and need such mercy as is His alone. Take heed therefore, lest for the slight and trivial sins against you, you shut out for yourself forgiveness from God for your very grievous sins.

And lead us not into temptation. Is the Lord teaching us to pray that we not be tempted at all? How then is it said elsewhere, 'a man untempted, is a man unproved'? And again, *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations?* (James 1:2) But does, perchance, the entering into temptation mean being overwhelmed by temptation? For temptation is, as it were, like a winter torrent, difficult to cross. Those, therefore, who are not overwhelmed in temptations, pass through, showing themselves excellent swimmers, and not being swept away by them at all; while those who are not good swimmers enter into them and are overwhelmed. As for example, Judas having entered into the temptation of the love of money, swam not through it, but was overwhelmed and was strangled both in body and spirit. Peter entered into the temptation of the denial; but having entered, he was not overwhelmed by it, but manfully swam through it and was delivered from the temptation. Listen again, in another place, to a company of unscathed Saints, giving thanks for deliverance from temptation: *Thou hast proved us, O God, and by fire hast Thou tried us even as silver is tried by fire. Thou hast brought us into the snare, Thou hast laid afflictions upon our back, Thou madest men to mount upon our heads. We went through fire and water, and Thou didst bring us out into refreshment*. (Psalm 65:10-12) You see them speaking boldly in regard to their having passed through and not been pierced. *Thou didst bring us out into refreshment*: now their coming into a place of rest is their being delivered from temptation.

But deliver us from the evil one. If *lead us not into temptation* implied not being tempted at all, He would not have said, *But deliver us from the evil one*. Now, the evil one is our adversary the devil, from whom we pray to be delivered. Then after completing the prayer you say *Amen*. By this *Amen*—which means *So be it*—you are setting your seal upon the petitions of the divinely-taught prayer.

After this the Priest says, *Holy things are for the holy*. Holy are the gifts presented, having received the visitation of the Holy Spirit; you are holy also, having been deemed worthy of the Holy Spirit; the holy things, therefore, correspond to the holy persons. Then you say, *One is Holy, One is the Lord, Jesus Christ*. For One is truly holy, by Nature holy; we too are holy, but not by nature, only by participation, and discipline, and prayer.

After this you hear the canter inviting you with a sacred melody to the communion of the Holy Mysteries, and saying, *O taste and see that the Lord is good*. Trust not the judgment to your bodily palate. No, but to faith unfaltering; for they who taste are bidden to taste, not bread and wine, but the anti-typical Body and Blood of Christ.

Hold fast these traditions undefiled and, keep yourselves free from offense. Sever not yourselves from the Communion; deprive not yourselves, through the pollution of sins, of these Holy and Spiritual Mysteries. And the God of peace sanctify you wholly; *and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: (1 Thessalonians 5:23)* to Whom be glory and honor and might, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. *Amen*.



JOHN OF DAMASCUS

Presbyter & Monk

†c.776

[Note: On the six Sundays before Great Lent, I presented excerpts from St. John of Damascus' first and third Apologies in Defense of the Divine Images. I will be adding these six excerpts as second readings for the next few days, for those who did not have an opportunity to read them at that time—DDO]

Excerpt 2 from the first Apology: Since the creation of the world, God's attributes are clearly seen by means of images.

IT IS OBVIOUS that when you contemplate God becoming man, you will be able to depict Him clothed in human form. When He Who is bodiless and without form or limit, immeasurable in the boundlessness of His own nature, existing as God, empties Himself and takes on the form of a servant in substance and in stature, and a body of flesh, then you may draw His likeness, and show it to anyone willing to contemplate it. Have no fear or anxiety; discern between the different kinds of worship: adoration is one thing, and that which is offered in order to honor something of great excellence is another.

Since we are speaking of images and worship, let us analyze the exact meaning of each. An image is a likeness of the original with a certain difference, for it is not an exact reproduction of the original. Thus, the Son is the living, substantial, unchangeable *image of the invisible God, (Colossians 1:15)* bearing in Himself the whole Father, being in all things equal to Him, differing only in being begotten by the Father, Who is the Begetter; the Son is begotten. Visible things are images of invisible and intangible things, on which they throw a faint light. If, therefore, the Word of God, in providing for our every need, presents to us what is intangible by clothing It in flesh, does It not accomplish this by making an image using what is common to our nature and so brings within our reach that for which we long but are unable to see? The eloquent Gregory (the Theologian) says that the mind is set upon getting beyond corporeal things but is incapable of doing so. Since the creation of the world, God's invisible attributes are clearly seen (*Romans 1:20*) by means of images. We see images in creation which, although they are only dim lights, still remind us of God. An image foreshadows something in the future, mystically shadowing forth what is to happen. For instance, the Ark represents the image of the Holy Virgin Theotokos, as does the rod of Aaron and the earthen jar of manna.

Things which have taken place are remembered by means of images, whether for the purpose of inspiring wonder, or honor, or shame, or to encourage those who look upon them to practice good and avoid evil. These images are of two kinds: (i) the written image in books, as when God had the Law inscribed on tablets and when He desired the lives of holy men to be recorded; and (ii) material things, such as the jar of manna, or Aaron's staff, (*Hebrews 9:4*) which were to be kept in the Ark as a memorial. So, when we preserve in writing the events and good deeds of the past, we use images. Either, therefore, take away images altogether and be out of harmony with God, Who made these regulations, or receive them in the manner which befits them.

Let us consider the question of worship. Worship is the means by which we show reverence and honor. Let us understand that there are different degrees of worship. There is *adoration*, which we offer to God, Who alone *by nature* is worthy of worship. Then, *for the sake of God*, Who is by nature to be worshiped, we *honor* His Saints and servants. Other worship is given to show respect, as was the case with Abraham and the sons of Nahor. (*Genesis 23:7*) Either do away with worship completely, or else accept it in the manner and with the esteem it deserves.

Answer me this: “Is there only one God?” You will answer, “Yes, there is only one Lawgiver.” What? Does He then command contrary things? Why does God allow cherubim carved by the hand of man to overshadow the mercy-seat? Is it not obvious that since it is impossible to make an image of God, Who is uncircumscribed and unable to be represented, or of one that is like unto God, creation should not be worshipped as God? But He allows the image of the cherubim, who are circumscribed, to be made and shown as prostrate in adoration before the divine throne, overshadowing the mercy-seat, for it was fitting that the image of the heavenly choirs should overshadow the divine mysteries. Would you say that the Ark and staff and mercy-seat were not made by hands? Are they not produced by the hand of man? What was the tabernacle itself? Was it not an image? Was it not a type and a figure? Well then, listen to the holy Apostle’s words concerning the observances of the Law: *They serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, for when Moses was about to erect the tent, he was instructed by God saying, ‘See that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.’* (*Hebrews 8:5; Exodus 25:40*) But the Law was not an image; rather, the shadow of an image. In the words of the Apostle: *The Law contains the shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of those things.* (*Hebrews 10:1*)

In former times, God the incorporeal and uncircumscribed could never be depicted. Now, however, when God is seen clothed in flesh, and conversing with men, I can make an image of the God Whom I see. I do not worship matter; I worship the Creator of matter, Who became matter for my sake, and willed to take His abode in matter, Who worked out my salvation through matter. I will not cease from honoring that matter which works my salvation. I venerate it, though not as God. How could God be born out of lifeless things? God’s body is God because it is joined to His Person by a union which shall never pass away. The Nature of God remains the same as before; the flesh created in time is enlivened by a reason-endowed soul. Because of this, I salute all remaining matter with reverence, because God has filled it with His grace and power. Through it, my salvation has come to me. Was not the thrice-blessed wood of the Cross matter? Is not the most holy book of the Gospels matter? And above all these things, is not the Body and Blood of our Lord matter? Either do away with the veneration and worship due to all these things or submit to the tradition of the Church in the worship of images, honoring God and His friends, and following the grace of the Holy Spirit. If you dishonor and give up images, because they are made of matter, consider what the Scripture says: *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Behold I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Aur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the spirit of God, with wisdom and understanding, and knowledge in all manner of work, to devise whatsoever may be artificially made of gold, and silver, and brass, of marble and precious stones, and variety of wood. And again: Moses said to all the assembly of the children of Israel: ‘This is the word the Lord hath commanded, saying: ‘Take from among you an offering to the Lord; whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the Lord’s offering; gold, silver, and bronze; blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; goats’ hair; tanned ram’s skins and goatskins; acacia wood, oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, and onyx stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastplate. And let every able man among you come and make all that the Lord has commanded, the tabernacle, etc.’*” (*Exodus 35:4-10*) You see here the glorification of matter. How, then, can you make the Law a reason for refusing to do what the Law itself commands? If you invoke it against images, you might just as well insist on keeping the [Saturday] Sabbath and practicing circumcision. *Amen.*

The Iconoclastic Movement of the Eighth Century, begun under the emperor Leo III, sought to abolish the use of iconography in the Church. St. John of Damascus, writing from his monastery of St. Sabbas in Palestine—at that time ruled by the Muslim caliph—was protected from the persecutions raging in the Byzantine Roman Empire against those who defended the images. In his ‘Apologies’, St. John dismantles the arguments of the iconoclasts and defends the Church’s use of iconography with biblical and theological assertions. His teachings formed the enduring doctrine of the use of divine imagery in the Church.

