

# TUESDAY OF THE BLIND MAN

May 26, 2020 • *Thirty-eighth day of Paschaltide*

~ *at Vespers on this day, at the lighting of the lamps, we mark the Leavetaking of Holy Pascha* ~



## CHRIST IS RISEN!

*Canticle*

**C**hrist revealed Himself as a man when He was born from the Virgin's womb; as a mortal, He was called the Lamb. As One not tasting corruption, our Pascha is blameless; and as true God, He is proclaimed perfect.

*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*

**O** Lord, Thou wast called a dead man, Thou that slewest Death; in a tomb wast Thou laid, Who hast emptied the tombs. Above, the soldiers guarded the grave; below, Thou didst raise up them that were dead from ages past. O Almighty and Incomprehensible, Lord, glory be to Thee.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**O**verlook the multitude of mine offences, O Lord, Who wast born of the Virgin. Blot out all mine iniquities and grant me the thought of returning to Thee, since Thou alone art the Friend of man, I pray, and have mercy on me.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**O** all-holy Mother, thou rampart of Christians, as is thy wont, deliver thy people who cry to thee earnestly: Range thyself against our shameful and boastful thoughts, that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, O Full of Grace.

## AT EVENING PRAYER

*from the Pentecostarion, at Vespers*

**A**sacred Pascha hath been shown forth for us today, a new and holy Pascha, a mystic Pascha, an all-venerable Pascha, a Pascha that is Christ the Redeemer, a spotless Pascha, a great Pascha, a Pascha of the faithful, a Pascha that hath opened unto us the gates of Paradise, a Pascha that doth hallow all the faithful.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**L**et us believers praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with Father and the Spirit, born of a Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh, to suffer death, and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

*Glory to Thy holy Resurrection, O Lord.*

**R**ejoice, O uncrossed gate; rejoice, O wall and protection of those who hasten unto thee; rejoice, O quiet haven, who hast not known wedlock, O thou who hast given birth in the flesh to thy Creator and God. Thou shalt continue to intercede for the sake of those who praise and worship thy birth-giving.

## JUSTIN THE PHILOSOPHER

*Martyr*

†165

*~ from his First Apology, addressed to the Emperor of Rome around the year 155, in defense of the Christians ~*

*~ Excerpt 1 - in this excerpt, St. Justin presents the Faith to the Emperor and demands justice ~*

**T**O THE EMPEROR Titus Aelius Adrianus Antoninus Pius Augustus Cæsar and to the sacred Senate, with the whole People of the Romans, I, Justin, the son of Priscus and grandson of Bacchius, natives of Flavia Neapolis in Palestine, present this address and petition in behalf of those of all nations who are unjustly hated and wantonly abused, myself being one of them.

Reason directs those who are truly pious to honor and love only what is true, declining to follow traditional opinions. For, not only does sound reason direct us to refuse the guidance of those who taught wrongly, but it is incumbent on the lover of truth, by all means, even if death be threatened, to choose to do and say what is right. I ask you, then, since you are called pious and philosophers, guardians of justice and lovers of learning, to give good heed and hearken to my address. For we have come, not to flatter you by this writing nor please you by our address, but to beg that you pass judgment, not flattered by prejudice or by a desire of pleasing superstitious men, nor induced by irrational impulse or evil rumors which have long been prevalent. We believe that no evil can be done to us; you can kill us, but not hurt us. If no one can convict us of anything, reason forbids you to wrong blameless men. For if, when you have learned the truth, you do not do what is just, you will stand before God without excuse.

It is in our power, when we are examined, to deny that we are Christians; but we will not live by telling a lie. For, driven by the desire of the eternal and pure life, we seek the abode that is with God, the Father and Creator of all, and hasten to confess our faith, persuaded and convinced as we are that those who have proved to God by their works that they follow Him and love to abide with Him where there is no sin can obtain these things.

God does not need the material offerings which men can give, since He Himself is the provider of all things. And we believe that He accepts only those who imitate the excellences which reside in Him: temperance, justice, philanthropy, and as many virtues as are peculiar to a God Who is called by no proper name. And we have been taught that in the beginning, out of His goodness and for man's sake, He created all things out of unformed matter; and if men by their works show themselves worthy of this His design, they are deemed worthy of reigning with Him, being delivered from corruption and suffering. For as in the beginning He created us when we were not, so do we consider that, in like manner, those who choose what is pleasing to Him are, on account of their choice, deemed worthy of incorruption and of fellowship with Him. For the coming into being at first was not in our own power; and in order that we may follow those things which please Him—choosing them by means of the rational faculties which He has Himself endowed us with—He both persuades us and leads us to faith.

When you hear that we look for a kingdom, you suppose that we speak of a human kingdom; but we speak of that which is with God, as appears also from our confession of the Christian Faith, though we know that death is the punishment for those who so confess. For if we looked for a human kingdom, we would also be denying our Christ, in order that we might not be slain. But since our thoughts are not fixed on the present, we are not concerned when men cut us off; since also death is a debt which must be paid.

More than all other men, we are your allies in promoting peace, seeing that we hold that it is impossible for both the wicked and the virtuous to escape the notice of God, and that each man goes to everlasting punishment or salvation according to the value of his actions. For if all men knew this, no one would choose wickedness even a little, but would restrain himself and adorn himself with virtue, that he might obtain the good gifts of God, and escape the punishments. But you seem to fear that all men will become righteous and you will no longer have any to punish. Such would be the concern of public executioners, but not of good princes. We believe that these things are prompted by evil spirits, who demand sacrifices and service even from those who live unreasonably; but as for you, we presume that you who aim at a reputation for piety and philosophy will do nothing unreasonable. But if you, like the foolish, prefer custom to truth, do what you have the power to do. But rulers who value opinion more than truth have no more power than robbers have in a desert. That you will not succeed is declared by the Word, begotten of God; we know there is no ruler more regal and just. Our Teacher foretold that all these things should come to pass, He Who is both Son of God the Father of all and the Ruler, Jesus Christ; from Whom we receive the name of Christians. We are assured of all the things He taught us, since what He foretold, is seen in fact coming to pass.

What sober-minded man will not acknowledge that we are not atheists, since we worship the Maker of this universe, Whom we praise to the utmost of our power by prayer and thanksgiving for all things wherewith we are supplied; and with gratitude to Him we offer thanks by invocations and hymns for our creation and for our health, and we present before Him petitions for our existing again in incorruption through faith in Him. Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, Who was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judæa, in the times of Tiberius Cæsar. We reasonably worship Him, having learned that He is the Son of the true God Himself.

We forewarn you to be on your guard, lest those demons whom we have been accusing should deceive you and divert you from reading and understanding what we say. For they strive to hold you their slaves and servants; and they subdue all who make no strong opposing effort for their own salvation. We stand aloof from these demons, and follow the only unbegotten God through His Son—we who formerly delighted in fornication, but now embrace chastity; we who formerly used magical arts, but now dedicate ourselves to the good and unbegotten God; we who formerly valued the acquisition of wealth and possessions, but now share what we have and aid those in need; we who hated and destroyed one another and would not live with men of a different tribe, but now, since the coming of Christ, live familiarly with them, and pray for our enemies, and endeavor to persuade those who hate us unjustly to live conformably to the good precepts of Christ, to the end that they may become partakers with us of the same joyful hope of a reward from God the ruler of all. But lest we should seem to be reasoning philosophically, we consider it right to cite a few precepts given by Christ Himself. It is your privilege, as powerful rulers, to decide whether we have been taught and do teach these things truly. Christ was not a philosopher, but His word was the power of God.

Concerning chastity, He said: *Whoever looks upon a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart before God. And, If your right eye offends you, cut it out; for it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of heaven with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into everlasting fire. (cf. Matthew 5:28-29)* Not only he who, in act, commits adultery is rejected by Him, but also he who desires to commit adultery, since not only our works, but also our thoughts, are open before God. And many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples from childhood, remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years. What more shall I say of the countless multitude of those who have reformed their intemperate habits, and learned these things? For Christ called not the just nor the chaste to repentance, but the ungodly, and the licentious, and the unjust, His words being, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (cf. Matthew 9:13)* For the heavenly Father desires the repentance rather than the punishment of the sinner. And of our love to all, He taught thus: *For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? (Matthew 5:46) But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (Matthew 5:44) And, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. (Luke 6:28) And that we should help the needy, and do nothing for glory, He said, Give to everyone who begs from you. (Luke 6:30) And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. (Luke 6:34) And, Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:19-20) For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life? (Matthew 16:26) Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:36)*

Concerning our being patient in injuries, and ready to serve all, and free from anger, this is what He said: *To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. (Luke 6:29) And whosoever shall be angry, is in danger of the hell of fire. (Matthew 5:22) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father Who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)* For we ought not to strive; neither has He desired us to be imitators of wicked men, but He has exhorted us to lead all men, by patience and gentleness, from shame and the love of evil. And this indeed is proved in the case of many who once were of your way of thinking, but have changed their violent and tyrannical disposition.

That we ought to worship God alone, He has taught us: *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. (Mark 12:29-30)* Let those who are not found to be living as He taught, be understood to be no Christians, even though they profess with the lip the precepts of Christ; for not those who make profession, but those who do His works, shall be saved, according to His word: *Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21) Many shall come in My Name, (Matthew 24:5) clothed outwardly in sheep's clothing, but inwardly being ravening wolves. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits. (Matthew 7:19-20)*

To God alone we render worship, but in other things we gladly serve you, acknowledging you as ruler of men, and praying that with your kingly power you be found to possess also sound judgment. But if you pay no regard to our prayers and explanations, we shall suffer no loss, since we believe that every man will suffer punishment according to the merit of his deed, and will render account according to the power he has received from God, as Christ intimated when He said, *Everyone to whom much has been given, much shall be required.* (Luke 12:48) *Amen.*



## JOHN OF DAMASCUS

*Presbyter & Monk*

†749

[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 third Apology: Regarding the proper types of worship*

**W**orship is a sign of submission. Submission implies abasement and humiliation. There are many different kinds of worship.

The first kind of *absolute* worship is adoration (*λατρεία*), which we give to God alone. Only He by nature deserves to be worshipped. This worship is shown in several ways. The first is the worship given by servants. All created things worship Him, as servants worship their master, *for all things are Thy servants.* (Ps. 118:91) The worship of some is voluntary; of others it is involuntary. The righteous worship willingly and with knowledge, whereas others, such as the demons, also worship with knowledge, but not willingly or voluntarily. Still others do not know who God is, but even in their ignorance give Him involuntary worship.

The second kind of *absolute* worship is the awe and yearning we have for God because of the glory which is His by nature. He alone is worthy to be glorified, but no one can of himself glorify Him, because He Himself is the source of all glory, all goodness, unapproachable light, incomparable sweetness, boundless perfection, an abyss of goodness, inscrutable wisdom, infinite power, Who alone is worthy in Himself to be admired, worshipped, glorified, and desired.

The third kind of *absolute* worship is that of thanksgiving for the good things He has created for us. We must thank God for all created things, and show Him perpetual worship, because all things have their existence from Him, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16–17) He gives lavishly of His gifts to all, and without being asked. He wishes all to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) and to partake of His goodness. He is long-suffering with us sinners. He allows His sun to shine upon the just and unjust, and His rain to fall upon the wicked and the good alike. (Matthew 5:45) He is the Son of God, yet He became one of us for our sakes, and made us partakers of His divine nature, so that *we shall be like unto Him* (1 John 3:2), as St. John the Theologian says in his catholic epistle.

The fourth kind of *absolute* worship is inspired by our needs and hopes for His blessing. Recognizing that without Him we can neither do nor possess anything good, we worship Him, asking Him to satisfy our needs and desires, that we may be preserved from evil and arrive at good.

The fifth kind of *absolute* worship is repentance and confession. As sinners we worship God, and prostrate ourselves before Him, begging Him to forgive our sins, as is fitting for servants to do. This happens in three ways. A person may be sorry out of love for God, or because he has failed to obtain God's blessings, or out of fear of chastisement. The first is inspired by gratitude and desire for God, and is the disposition of a son; the second is the disposition of a tenant farmer; and the third is the disposition of a slave.

And, how many things in Scripture can we find that were worshipped in a *relative* sense? What are the different ways we offer this *relative* worship to created things?

First of all, those places in which God, Who alone is holy, has rested. He rests in holy places: that is, the Theotokos and all the Saints—those who have become likenesses of God as far as possible, of their own free will and by God's indwelling and by His abiding grace. He says: *You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy.* (Leviticus 19:2) And the

Apostle Paul says, *You are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in you. (I Corinthians 3:16)*, and we are *heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. (Romans 8:17)* Therefore, since they are truly gods, not by nature, but because they are partakers of God's nature, they are to be venerated, not because they deserve it on their own account, but because they bear in themselves Him Who is, by nature, worshipful. They are to be venerated because God has glorified them, and through Him they have become fearful to the enemy and are benefactors for the faithful. When someone prays with faith, offering petition in the name of such a favored friend, the King receives it, through the intercessions of the faithful servant, because He accepts the honor and faith which the petitioner has shown His servant.

The second kind of *relative* worship we give to created things concerns those places and things by which God has accomplished our salvation: Mt. Sinai, Nazareth, the cave, Golgotha, the wood of the Cross, the Tomb, the pool of Bethesda, Gethsemane. I honor and venerate all of God's holy temples, and everywhere God's Name is found, not for their own sake, but because they are vessels of divine power. Through them and in them God was pleased to accomplish our salvation. David says, *O Lord, I love the beauty of Thy house and the place where Thy glory dwells (Psalm 25:8)*, and *Let us enter into His tabernacles; let us worship at the place where His feet stood (Psalm 131:7)*.

The third kind of *relative* worship we give to objects dedicated to God, as, for instance, the holy Gospels and other sacred books. They were written for our instruction, who live in these latter days. Sacred vessels—chalices, censors, and altars—should all receive respect.

The fourth kind of *relative* worship is that of images seen by the prophets. They saw God in images of future things—Aaron's rod, which prefigured the mystery of the Virgin; the jar of manna; and the altar. Images of past events recall their remembrance. The tabernacle was an image of the whole world. *And see, God said to Moses, that you make everything according to the pattern which was shown to you on the mountain. (Exodus 25:40)* This included the golden cherubim of hammered work and the cherubim woven on the veil of the Holy of Holies.

The fifth kind of *relative* worship is our veneration of each other, since we are God's inheritance and were made according to His Image, and so we are subject to each other (*Ephesians 5:21*), thus fulfilling the law of love. No one should be worshipped as God except the one true God. Whatever is due to all the rest is given for God's sake.

Brethren, let us stand on the rock of faith and on the tradition of the Church, not removing the ancient landmarks which our holy fathers have set, nor allowing any room for those who would decree innovations and destroy the structure of the holy catholic and apostolic Church. The Christian is a person of faith. He who walks by faith gains everything. But he who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind and will not receive anything from the Lord. (*James 1:6-8*) All the Saints were pleasing to God because of their faith. Let us not allow ourselves to learn a new faith, in opposition to the tradition of the fathers. The divine Apostle says, *if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be anathema. (Galatians 1:9)* We venerate images; it is not veneration offered to matter, but to those who are portrayed through matter in the images. Any honor given to an image is transferred to its prototype, as St. Basil rightly says. *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.*



