

space and time (and outside space and time) that reveal the truth of all things, of all people, and of the heart and nature of the God who created all things and sustains them. I believe this is true whether I or anyone else believes it. The death and resurrection of Christ are the most fundamental and foundational facts of reality.

I believe that Christians make a serious mistake when we begin to speak first about God rather than first about Christ and His death on the Cross and resurrection from the dead. It is a mistake because it presumes we know something about God that is somehow “prior” to those events. We do not, or, if we think we do, we are mistaken. The death and resurrection of Christ are the alpha and the omega of God’s self-revelation to the world. Nothing in all of creation is extraneous or irrelevant to those events. This is to say that unbelief and faith are equally a part of the death and resurrection of Christ. The death and resurrection of Christ contain the utter and complete emptiness of hell, the threat of non-being and meaninglessness, the absurdity of suffering and of injured innocence. They also contain the fullness of paradise, the complete joy of existence and the ecstasy of transcendent love. Everything is there.

When we stand before the Cross of Christ, or kneel before it and honor it, we honor as well everything that is contained within it. We honor the unbelief of atheists, the anger and bitterness of the wounded, the shame of those who dare not look at themselves. For Christ has not distanced Himself from such things. The Cross is God’s single point of ingathering, where “all things are gathered together into one in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:10). Unbelief is a wound of the human heart, a disease of perception, a noetic blindness. The Cross is not a stranger to cruelty or every form of mockery and perverted delight. All such things were and are present in that single moment.

As we live in this life, we are constantly tempted towards the divisions that threaten us. We see the world as “them and us.” These believe; these don’t. These care; these don’t. These behave; these don’t, and so on. The divisions are frequently quite insignificant. These divisions are primarily the symptoms of our failure to love. The people surrounding Christ were consistently scandalized by His persistent comfort and ease with those identified as “sinners.” No doubt, many of them were “unbelievers.” Somehow, Christ embraced all and announced this as central to His life and purpose.

The appearance of the Cross is also the first appearance among us of the Judgement Seat of Christ. As such, those around it indeed begin to separate themselves. Of the two thieves, one clings to Christ and the other reviles Him. But Christ offers no condemnation from the Tree. The Centurion, responsible for His crucifixion and the lance thrusting into His side, later becomes a saint (Longinus). Our task, however, is not to assume the position of Christ. The judgment that occurs as those around Him react, is also the revelation of their own wounds and brokenness of soul. Christ said:

And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the

light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God. (Jn. 3:19-21)

It is for us to stand in the light, where our own deeds, of whatever character, can be revealed. I think that if we actually do “what is true,” it will not be in our heart to condemn, but to weep and to long for the healing of all.

Unbelief is a soul-wound whose location likely lies much deeper than the fiction of choice. It is often hidden deep within the hell that has formed in the pit of a soul’s shame. That wound will require Christ-in-Hades probing and questing, and perhaps fierce battles that are hidden from our knowledge. When the Church proclaims, “Christ is risen, trampling down death by death and upon those in the tombs bestowing life,” it is deeply important to remember that we have the souls of those so wounded in mind.

It is ours to celebrate, to sing and to dance, even if some, for now, refuse to join together with us. The true Christ revealed by the Cross, is a saving God, a seeking God, a knocking God, a trampling God, a healing God, a raising-from-the-dead God who refuses to be ignored. This is the good God who loves mankind.

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

This week:

Sunday Evening –Bridegroom Matins – 6pm

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Holy Tuesday- PreSanctified Liturgy –9:30am

-- Bridegroom Matins –6pm

Holy Wednesday –PreSanctified Liturgy 9:30am

Holy Thursday – Vespertal Liturgy of St Basil –9:30am

Vespers Passion Gospels- 7:00pm

Holy Friday—Royal Hours 9:00am

Vespers with procession 4pm

Matins of Hoyl Saturday 6pm

Holy Saturday Vespertal Divine Liturgy with readings - 9:30am

Midnight office --11:30pm

Great and Holy Pascha Lord’s Day

Matins /Divine Liturgy of Pascha 12am

--blessing of baskets the feast following

Vespers of Pascha -- 4:00pm

Bright Monday Divine Liturgy – 9:30am

MISSIONS TEAM

Coffee Hour today!

“Rejoice” scripture verse for the week:

Rejoice in the Lord always. **Phil. 4:4**

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel

Mathewson – *Rector* **Lord’s Day – April 1st, 2018** Parish phone: 814-

734-3801 Find us on the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on

Face book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

ENTRY OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM. Palm Sunday . Ven. Mary of Egypt (522). Ven. Euthymius of Suzdal’ (1404). Martyr Abraham of Bulgaria (1229). Ven. Gerontius, Canonarch, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—14th c.). Ven. Macarius, Abbot of Pelecete (ca. 830). Martyrs Gerontius and Basilides (3rd c.). Righteous Achaza.

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Melissa, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Eugene, Ann, Thomas, Catherine, Timothy, Jeremiah, Mary, Renee, Delani, Emily, The Homebound..., Tanya, Richard, Helen, , Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers.. ...Catechumens – Rick, Samuel and Christian ...Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – John Bicko, John Sekel, Ann, Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy special requests... Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, Penni, James, Sean, Liam, Susan, James, Joel, Jen, Roger, Jasmine, Cassandra, Raquel, Zera

Today’s Hymns Antiphon 1 (Ps 114/115)

I love the Lord because He has heard the voice of my supplication.
Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!
Because He inclined His ear to me; therefore I will call on Him as long as I live. (*Refrain is sung after each of the following verses*)

The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of hell laid hold on me. *R*
I suffered distress and anguish, so I called upon the Name of the Lord. *R*
I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. *R*
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,
and unto ages of ages. Amen. *R*

Antiphon 2 (Ps 115/116)

I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted."

Refrain: O Son of God, seated on the colt of an ass, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

What shall I render to the Lord for all the things He has given me?

(Refrain is sung after each of the following verses)

I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. *R*

I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people. *R*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. *No refrain.*

("Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God ...")

Antiphon 3 (Ps 117/118)

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever!

Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,

we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death:

"Hosanna in the highest!//

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."

Let the house of Israel say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

Troparion: "By raising Lazarus from the dead ...")

Let the house of Aaron say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

Troparion: "By raising Lazarus from the dead ...")

Let those who fear the Lord say that He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

Troparion: "By raising Lazarus from the dead ...")

(After the Entrance)

Tone 1 Troparion

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion,

Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God.

Like the children with the palms of victory,

we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death:

"Hosanna in the highest!//

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord."

Tone 4 Troparion

When we were buried with Thee in baptism, O Christ God,

we were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection.

Now we praise Thee and sing:

"Hosanna in the highest!//

Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!"

Tone 6 Kontakion

Sitting on Thy throne in Heaven,

carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God,

accept the praise of angels and the songs of children, who sing://

"Blessed is He Who comes to recall Adam!"

Tone 4 Prokeimenon

Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord and

has revealed Himself to us!

v: O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures

forever!

Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things!

v: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Today's Scripture Readings:

Philippians 4:4-9 (Epistle)

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

John 12:1-18 (Gospel)

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial. For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!" Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him. Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

UNBELIEF AND GOOD FRIDAY By Fr. Stephen Freeman

Christmas and Easter are often difficult days for those who do not believe in God. Christians are more public about their faith than at other times of the year and this brings with it an annoyance. Christmas bespeaks the birth of God as a human being. Easter bespeaks a resurrection from the dead. For those who do not believe, such miracles, spoken of so glowingly and with such assurance by Christians, only increases the rub of the whole thing. Thoughts of "how can people be so gullible?" or any number of failings of Christians easily come to mind. The more the celebration, the more prominently the fact of unbelief grows in the inner thoughts.

I do not think of unbelief as a result of reason or philosophical principle. I have spent too many years observing my own heart and listening to the thoughts of others to accept such a simplistic notion of how we behave as human beings. One person professes faith on the ground of "reasonable" arguments, while another, on similar grounds, professes unbelief. The fault is not in the reasoning. Reasoning is, in fact, something we largely do "after the fact." Indeed, this psychological reality has itself been the subject of study and has been shown to be largely true. Reason is one of the sounds we make after the fact of the heart. It is a symptom of something else and we do one another a deep injustice when we reduce faith and unbelief to something they are not. I believe that the death and resurrection of Christ are utterly universal in their reality. They are not isolated events, significant only within the Christian belief system. I believe they are the singular moments within