

Thoughts on despair and the Resurrection

From the Blog of Michael Haldas

“The greatest sin these days lies in the fact that people are plunged into despair and no longer believe in the resurrection’...People are now in deep despair, ontologically and existentially, because it seems we’ve been deprived of the right to transfiguration, to resurrection.” (Saint Sophrony in Essex, Iraklis Filios)

“Despair. That is the end of all things apart from Christ. However, that same despair rightly frames the event of the resurrection itself. The death of Christ mirrors and accompanies the path of all creation, including ourselves. But it leads us to a moment as surprising as our existence itself (which we take for granted in our ingratitude). That moment is the conquering of death by Life itself, just as Life itself gave (and gives) existence to the universe itself.” (Father Stephen Freeman)

“Christ’s Resurrection marks the victory over death and the consolidation of the hope of immortality. This hope can give courage, provide strength and endurance for people to put up with the problems and pains of this life. The resurrection is the culmination of the Passion, the image which directly succeeds the tragedy of the Cross. It is precisely this that is the hope: the fact that behind the Cross that each person, without exception, bears in this life, there is Christ Who suffers with us, Who gives all of us release, redemption, validation, the resurrection of life and of the conscience, the end of pain and of anguish...‘without the Resurrection there’s nothing more absurd in heaven or under the heavens than this world, nor greater despair than this this life, without immortality’.” (Archimandrite Epiphanius Ekonomou, St. Justin Popovich)

“Christ’s resurrection isn’t some miraculous event in his life. It’s not a personal occurrence with no further reverberations for humanity. There were other occasions mentioned in Holy Scripture when the dead were raised. Lazarus was raised after he’d been dead for four days. Others were raised by Christ and his Apostles. But they all died again and were buried. Christ rose and entered eternity, renewing the whole of the human race and leading it into eternity through his hypostasis: ‘Christ effected the renewal of our nature in his hypostasis’ (St. Isaac the Syrian)

“Without the resurrection there’s nothing more absurd than this world, in heaven or below heaven. Nor is there any greater despair than this life, without immortality. In all the worlds, there’s no more unfortunate creature than the human being who doesn’t believe in the resurrection of the dead. This is why, for human beings, the Risen Lord is ‘all in all’ in all worlds. Whatever is Beautiful, Fair, True, Endearing, Joyful, Divine, Sage and Eternal. He is all our Love, all our Truth, all our Joy, all our Good, all our Life, Eternal Life in all eternities and infinitudes.” (St. Justin Popovich)