



*Dear Friends,*

Easter is the time to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and ours because He wanted to form with Him only one body: the Church.

We proclaim in the Creed:

"He descended into hell" we intend to say that Christ "tried out" death, truly experiencing it.

It isn't easy today to understand this article of faith. The truth of faith has been formulated to us in concepts from an imagery that is foreign to us. Hence, wouldn't it be better to give it up?

I would say, "No," because the Church, since the earliest times, has kept this confession firm. Instead, this sentence should be for us a stimulus to make an effort to understand, precisely when the question seems difficult and obscure.

In death, Jesus puts himself in solidarity with the dead, he goes as triumphant to the underworld, to call out all those whom death still has imprisoned.

“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Eph. 5,15

Unlike the Western Church that emphasize the Resurrection as a “glorious ascent to Heaven,” the Eastern Church has kept the common ancient tradition of the “Resurrection” (in Greek “Anastasis”) as ‘a descent to Hades’ or hell, the abode of the dead to rescue of old Adam but of all humanity: "for as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15.22).

Neither the Gospels nor our iconography tell a narrative story of Christ emerging from His grave, and the icon/painting of the Resurrection is not a mere illustration of any Bible text. Instead, it is an assembly of images, constructed to present in one definitive image the totality of the truth of Resurrection, a truth for all time, a truth for us.

When we see Adam and Eve saved from the pit, we see ourselves. Christ sustains Adam, gives him His strength, with His right hand, while Eve prays and implores Christ in a well-known image and gesture of supplication.

Not only Adam and Eve, but all of us are in Hell, all of us implore with Eve; all of us are sustained by Christ and saved by His Resurrection. Our “hells” are personal and well-crafted; it took a whole life to create them.

We suffer in them, but we are comfortable, and we don’t want to come out of them, we have with them an ambiguous relationship of love and hate. The drunkard hates the bottle in the morning while experiencing a splitting headache, comes to terms with it early afternoon and loves it in the night!

Christ had to set out and search for the lost sheep, when He finds it, He grabs it and pulls it out of the precipice. He doesn’t trust the holding hand of Adam, that could let it go and fall back into the pit. No, He grabs Adam’s wrist firmly and strongly pulling him to Himself.

The trampled doors of hell have been re-arranged to form the Cross-Hell's doors have opened up to become "the doors of paradise."

From here the joyful Easter greetings of Christians: “Christos aneste”, “Alithos Anesti ” \ “Christ is risen!” to which the answer “Indeed, he is risen” and we with Him.

In this way we can wish each other “Happy Easter,” which is understood as: “happy descent into the lower and darkest level of your heart” there Christ is waiting for us.

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