

Odoiporikon

Orthodox Mission in the East

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"For the Church of Christ there are no worldly forces. Neither the geographical extent, nor the multitudes of its followers, nor the material wealth, can be forces for the Church of Christ. Its greatest power is our Lord Jesus Christ. "And Him crucified."

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

Patriarchal Encyclical for Holy Pascha

† BARTHOLOMEW
BY GOD'S MERCY
ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE-NEW ROME
AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH:
MAY THE GRACE, PEACE AND MERCY
OF CHRIST RISEN IN GLORY BE WITH YOU ALL

Having completed the soul-profiting Lent and venerated the Lord's Passion and Cross, behold today we are rendered participants of His glorious Resurrection, radiant through the feast and crying out with ineffable joy the world-saving announcement: "Christ is Risen!"

All that we believe, all that we love, and all that we hope as Orthodox Christians is associated with Pascha, from which everything derives its vividness, through which everything is interpreted, and in which everything acquires its true meaning. The Resurrection of Christ is the response of the Divine love to the anguish and expectation of man, but also to the "yearning" of creation that groans with us. In the Resurrection the meaning of "let us make man in our image and likeness" [1] and of "God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good" [2] has been revealed.

Christ is "our Pascha,"[3] "the resurrection of all." If the fall comprised the suspension of our journey toward the "divine likeness," in the risen Christ the way toward deification through grace is once again opened for "the beloved of God." The "great miracle" is performed, which heals the "great wound," mankind. In the emblematic icon of the Resurrection at the Chora Monastery, we behold the Lord of glory, who descended "to the depths of Hades" and conquered the power of death, to arise as life-giver from the tomb, raising with Himself the forefathers of



humankind and in them the entire human race from beginning to end, as our liberator from the slavery of the enemy.

In the Resurrection the life in Christ is revealed as liberation and freedom. For "Christ has set us free ... for freedom." [4] The content, the "ethos" of such freedom, which must be experienced here in a manner befitting to Christ, before it is perfected in the heavenly kingdom, is love, the experiential quintessence of the "new creation." "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" [5]. The freedom of a believer, grounded on the Cross and Resurrection of the Savior, is a journey upward and toward our neighbor; it is "faith working through love" [6]. It is an exodus from the "Egypt of slavery" and of the diverse alienations, the

Christ-given transcendence of an introverted and shriveled existence, the hope of eternity that renders man human.

As we celebrate Pascha, we confess in Church that the Kingdom of God “has been already inaugurated, but not yet fulfilled.” [7] In the light of the Resurrection, earthly things assume new significance, because they are already transformed and transfigured. Nothing is simply “given.” Everything lies in motion toward eschatological perfection. This “unrestrained rush” toward the Kingdom, which is especially lived out in the eucharistic assembly, safeguards God’s people, on the one hand from indifference toward history and the presence of evil in it, and on the other hand from forgetfulness of the Lord’s words, that “my kingdom is not of this world,” [8] which marks the difference between the “already” and the “not yet” of the coming of the Kingdom, in accordance with the most theological expression that “The King has come, the Lord Jesus, and His Kingdom is to come.” [9]

The chief characteristic of this God-given freedom of the believer is the unrelenting resurrectional pulse, this freedom’s vigilance and dynamism. Its character as a gift of grace not only does not restrict, but in fact manifests our own consent to this gift, and strengthens our journey and our conduct into this new freedom, which also contains the restoration of our estranged relationship with creation. One who is free in Christ is not trapped in the “earthly absolutes” like “the rest, who do not have hope.” [10] Our hope is Christ, the existence fulfilled in Christ, the brilliance and resplendence of eternity. The biological boundaries of life do not define its truth. Death is not the end of our existence. “Let none fear death, for the Savior’s death has set us free. He was held prisoner by it and has annihilated it. The one who descended into hell, He made hell captive.” [11] Freedom in Christ is the “other creation” [12] of man, a foretaste and model of the fulfillment and fullness of the Divine Economy in the “now and always” of the last day, when the “blessed of the Father” will

live person to person with Christ, “seeing Him and seen by Him, as they enjoy the fruits of the endless delight that comes from Him.” [13]

Holy Pascha is not merely a religious feast, albeit the greatest feast for us Orthodox. Every Divine Liturgy, every prayer and supplication of the faithful, every feast and commemoration of Saints and Martyrs, the honor of sacred icons, the “abundant joy” of Christians (2 Cor. 8.2), every act of sacrificial love and fraternity, the endurance of sorrow, the hope that never disappoints the people of God, is a festival of freedom. All of these radiate the paschal light and exude the fragrance of the Resurrection.

In this spirit, then, as we glorify the Savior of the world, who trampled down death by death, we convey to all of you – our most honorable Brothers throughout the Lord’s Dominion and our dearly beloved children of the Mother Church – a festal greeting, as, with one voice and one heart, we joyously bless with you Christ unto the ages.

At the Phanar, Holy Pascha 2021

† Bartholomew of Constantinople

Fervent supplicant for you all

to the Risen Lord

[1] Gen. 1.26.

[2] Gen. 1.31.

[3] 1 Cor. 5.7.

[4] Gal. 5.1.

[5] Gal. 5.13.

[6] Gal. 5.6.

[7] Georges Florovsky, *Bible, Church, Tradition*, Belmont MA: Nordland Publishing, 1972, 36.

[8] John 18.36.

[9] Florovsky, *op. cit.*, 72.

[10] 1 Thess. 4.13.

[11] From the Catechetical Homily of St. John Chrysostom on the holy and glorious Resurrection.

[12] Gregory the Theologian, *Ethical Poems* 61.

[13] John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, IV. 27.

PASCHA

The late father Alexander Schmemmann notes that Christianity did not bring new things but makes everything new. And that's because its core is the only Person under the sun, the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. Only He, through his love from the Cross to the end (John 13:1) truly defeated death by death, which poisons human existence over time, having as its sting sin and in particular arrogance and self-sufficiency (A' Cor. 15, 55-56). The presence of the Risen Christ in human everyday life transfuses hope, light, life, and reason of existence or rather coexistence to man, primarily through the Eucharist and Baptism, who by birth tragically experiences the present.

The two most important Christian feast days, Christmas and the Resurrection, have their roots in ancient years. Especially the Jewish feast days, such as Pascha (Passover), have a triple foundation: Primarily, they are connected through Creation both with nature (which constitutes a Bible in itself) and with the human quest for God. They are celebrations of memory, the thought and revival of the holy acts of the personal God Who sympathizes with His creature and intervenes liberatingly- redemptively in History. Finally, the memory becomes more and more a hope of the coming perfect holy intervention, which has not yet happened (Ratchinger).

The word Pascha (pasách) is usually etymologically associated with the passage, the passing, but it also has the meaning of to protect (Is. 31: 5). It is an age-old pastoral feast. Every spring the nomadic shepherds slaughtered and sacrificed a yearly old lamb to protect their herd from demonic misfortune and decipher the unknown fu-

ture from its scapula (shoulder blades). The pastoral feast of Pascha was combined with the agricultural spring feast of the unleavened (Passover). The Chanaan growers, at the harvesting of barley, ate bread without sourdough to prevent anything bad happening to the crop.

Pascha was also associated with the leading event of the liberation of Jewish slaves from Egypt, the Superpower of tyranny and abuse, the passage from the Red Sea and their adventurous path to the Land where honey and milk flowed, not from the coastal highway but through the harsh and arid desert. There human existence realizes that it lives not from bread and the spectacle of virtual reality and expendable things, but from the God of freedom from all dependence and love, the only Lord of history and nature.

In particular, Pascha was not connected at first with the passage of the "Sea of Reeds" but with the passage of the exterminator angel from the houses and the death of the firstborn that "great" night before the Exodus. The Israelites had to slaughter and to consume, standing up as a family, a young male lamb without blemish whose blood sealed the doors of their huts in order to rescue their children. This Pascha feast was celebrated and is still celebrated brilliantly by the Israelites on 14 Nisan (March-April) remembering in addition to their freedom, the creation of the world and longing for a new Moses who will free them from foreign tyrants. Isaiah (chapter 24-27), Ezekiel (chapter 37) and Daniel (chapter 12) at a time when political and religious authority, based in Zion, was slandered and terror from guilt, pain and death – Hades who

"overwhelmed" the world, they proclaimed a restoration of this world of decay with a new Pascha, a new crossing.

What is amazing is the fact that for all nations, near and afar (including the Far East) there was a great prophet of the resurrection: it is nature itself that constitutes a Bible. Spring, the season of flowering, revitalization of nature after the winter of wilderness, preaches its own gospel. The seed, which must be buried deep in the earth in order not to be left alone but to sprout and emerge into a tall, fruitful and wide-leaved tree (John 12: 23-25); the sun lost in the depths of the horizon, in order to rise brighter again the next day; the moon which after three days of absolute silence is presented in whole on the starry sky; the light of fire that comes from the friction of two dry stones; the mother earth that becomes desolate and germinates, but also the woman, who gives birth from a sperm to a whole man, with pain accompanied by jubilation after nine months, who thinks and loves, they all spoke and taught all the peoples who stood frightened in the face of the sweeping and indiscriminate voraciousness of death, that the Resurrection is possible. Man becomes worms' stench and dirt. Yet, he will rise more beautiful, younger and brighter.

What the prophets presaged and was blared by nature it happened in history. First John the Baptist saw in the face of Jesus Christ the lamb, Who although immaculate, without the blemish of sin, with His voluntarily and painful slaughter on the Cross, lifts up (He carries on him and at the same time eliminates) the sins and guilts of all mankind. To this day, Pascha is experienced in the Church (as once by those baptized) by those who are not only born but simply become Christians as a personal and communal exit from the slavery of all kinds of "Pharaoh" and the resignation from the con-



stant preoccupation with clay and hay, the care for the flesh and the "indicators" of prosperity. It marks the demolition of the "idols", an exit from the "couch" and a march along with the "mourners" the "hungry and thirsty for justice", through the Dead Sea and the desert of this life and of this world toward the Kingdom. This new world of God (the Kingdom) is not a Utopia, but through participation in the resurrected Body of Christ that entails daily sacrifice for the sake of the other, of His image, rises as a resurrection light through the "graves" of despair, frustration from human ideologies and the crisis of the values of consumption.

For thus came through the Cross, Joy in the whole world! Christ is Risen, my Joy! (according to the greeting of Saint Seraphim of Sarov).

Sotirios Despotis
Professor of the National and Kapodistrian
University of Athens

The Pandemic day by day



Learning how to cultivate the garden

The health situation in Fiji islands is deteriorating day by day and is becoming increasingly dangerous for the inhabitants of the islands. The increase in cases follows an exponential course. The health infrastructure of the islands has many problems and huge shortcomings. Of course, nothing can be said about vaccination.

Our priests, the Sisters of our monastery, the assistants of our orphanage, our faithful, day after day face greater danger, since their ages are such that the coronavirus can infect them and cause deadly problems.

Our prayers and thoughts are constantly for our beloved brothers. Any infestation by the coronavirus has high chances of causing particularly serious problems to the health of our brothers and even threatening their lives.

Most areas are in a general isolation since the Great Lent, with only the necessary movements allowed. Schools remain closed and transportation of teachers to support children's

teaching becomes impossible. Our churches remain closed, since gatherings are not allowed, with the exception of the Parish of Saints Nikolaos and Athanasios in Lampasa on the island of Vanua, Levu, where, fortunately, there are no cases and life continues at its normal pace. It a rhythm, of course, with its own difficulties, since the island was hit by the winter hurricanes a few months ago, leaving behind damaged homes and households, buildings, goods, crops and people poor and desperate. Their needs are constant and inflexible.

Their good priest, Father Barnavas, as a good shepherd and as a good father, tries to support all his children in the parish. He buys them food, cooks and supplies them with the necessities for everyday life.

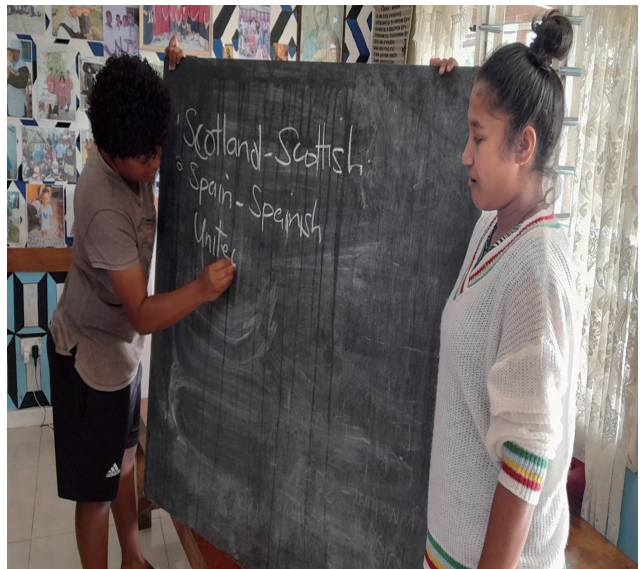
And in addition to these serious threats to people's health, a serious damage has also emerged to the car we use in the orphanage for carrying supplies, and transportation of children to school. In order to be repaired,

spare parts are needed which are not available on the islands; they must be imported from abroad at a cost of around 4000€.

Another important and vital consequence of the pandemic for our Mission is the closed borders, which does not allow missionaries from other countries who have expressed a desire to come and help, to travel to the Pacific islands. Trapped in their countries, they are unable to get close to our children, to offer from the excess of their hearts and to cultivate the new vineyard of our Lord Jesus Christ and to show real examples of true Christian life.

We kindly ask you, our dear brothers, to pray, to pray strongly for our newly enlightened brothers in the Pacific islands.

The difficult situations of the pandemic become catastrophic and murderous in places where the necessary medical infrastructure does not exist. Please intensify your prayer. Please do not forget and do not ignore us. The time has come when we need each other more and more. We need to feel that our brothers are there for us.



We wish to all of you from the bottom of our hearts to have good health, enlightenment, to show solidarity and practice love for our brothers and sisters and to come out of this unprecedented situation spiritually more mature and mentally benefited.

With much love in Christ, and deep gratitude for your prayers and your offerings.

† Myron, Metropolitan of New Zealand



The children of the Orphanage study under the guidance of Sisters Melani and Anyisia

The Publication of the Greek Fathers of the Church in Korea

The Publishing House of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, under the name «Korean Orthodox Editions», has so far, with the grace of God and the financial support of faithful Christians, published several books of Orthodox content.

Nevertheless, despite the great interest of the Korean Orthodox, and not only, in the patristic texts, the great spiritual wealth of the works of the Fathers of the Church has not yet been known to the Koreans.

This is why, just recently, the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea has begun an attempt to publish patristic texts in a series called «Works of Ecclesiastical Fathers». The first published work is the Annotation in the Song of the Songs of St. Gregory of Nyssa.

The purpose of this series is to publish the works of the great Greek Fathers of our Church, in order to make this incomparable treasure accessible to the Korean readers, as an opportunity for spiritual enrichment.

In order to achieve this sacred purpose, financial support is needed to cover the translation and publishing costs. We appeal to all those who are able to support the effort of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea by taking on all or part of the costs for the publication of a patristic works in the above-mentioned series.



The cost of each volume amounts to about ten thousand (10,000) euros. In the hope that many Orthodox believers understand the great importance of translating and publishing in the Korean language our patristic texts, we ask for your prayers and assistance for the success of this project, wishing the Lord, through our holy and godly Fathers, to return His rich mercy to the helpers of this publishing effort.

From the publishing house
“Korean Orthodox Editions”

The Holy Week and Pascha at the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea

By the grace of God, this year's celebration of the Holy Week and the Resurrection of our Lord was celebrated in much better conditions than last year.

In all parishes of the Orthodox Metropolis of Korea, the Holy Services were performed in compliance with the health rules set by the government, in order to protect the participants from COVID-19.

At St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seoul, due to the existence of more priests, double Services were held for Korean and Slavic speaking Orthodox believers. Also, on Holy Saturday evening, from 7 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. (dawn of Easter Sunday), three Divine Resurrection Liturgies were held. On Sunday morning from 9:00 am to 11:30 the Easter Orthros (Matins) and the Divine Liturgy were held again. Finally, at 2:00 p.m. the Service of the Vespers

was held. During each Service, different faithful were able to participate, according to the lists drawn up since the Saturday of Lazarus, thus allowing more believers to participate in the Holy Services, Holy Confession and the Holy Communion.

Those of the faithful who were unable to participate in the Liturgy on the night of the Resurrection were given the opportunity to participate in the Vigil held for the Apodosis of Easter, during which, as we know, the sacred Service of the Resurrection and the Divine Liturgy are repeated.

Our wish and prayer is for next year, with God's help, to celebrate the greatest feast of our Orthodox Church without restrictive measures and may have life returned to normality all over the planet.

Christ is Risen!



BOOK REVIEW

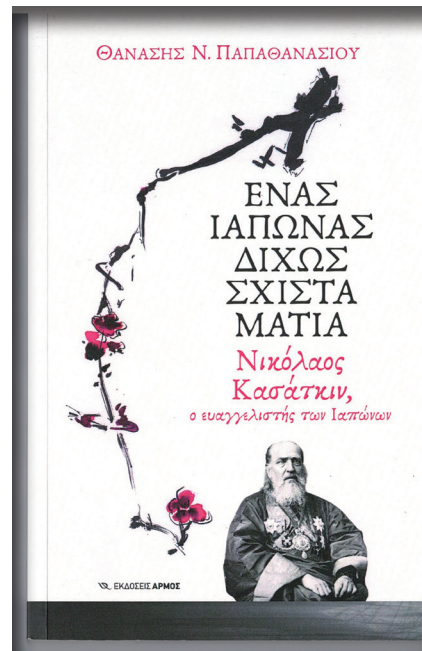
Thanasis N. Papathanassiou,

A Japanese man without split eyes. Nikolaos Kasatkin, the evangelist of Japan (Published by “Armos”, Athens 2018, p. 110)

In his new book, Thanasis Papathanassiou presents to the reading public the work of the evangelist of Japan, St. Nicholas Kasatkin. The author researches key snapshots of his missionary work and highlights the way he worked, the dilemmas and the challenges he faced during the establishment of the Japanese church. On the occasion of these snapshots, he penetrates deeply into the facts and achieves a robust theological confrontation with the place and time of Christian witness.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part includes two studies by Thanasis Papathanassiou. The titles on them are a pun with the special feature of the Japanese, the «split eyes». Thus, the author cleverly refers to the diversity of cultures and reminds of the possibility of man to be a part of the different. At the same time, it refers to the obligation for vigilance and deep understanding of the present. The second part is entitled «Testimonies» and includes excerpts from the personal diary of St. Nicholas. The selection of texts creates conceptual connections corresponding to the research and concerns of the first part.

The central axis of the book is the incarnation of the Gospel in the special conditions of each place and culture. The author develops the criteria of the missionary work,



studying the ministry of St. Nicholas. The choices of the Saint have a special dynamic due to the historical circumstances. In his attempt to codify the Gospel unadulterated, he confronted the ideological and political currents of the time. The question is «to what extent does the process of incarnation submit to the assumed flesh, and, on the contrary, to what extent does the Gospel crack the old world» (p. 70).

The start of the Russo-Japanese War found Nicholas between the two rivals. The dilemma that arose was what should be his attitude as a Russian, but also as a bishop of the Japanese (p. 24). His choices give

the author an opportunity to analyze two basic theological conceptions of participation in war. Nicholas's attitude was characterized by practical Christian love for all, Orthodox of all nationalities, heterodox and hetero-religious. Although he acknowledged the Christian division, he in practice renounced isolationism (pp. 41-43). To get to know his place of service, he studied the local religious traditions and exercised objective criticism. Apart from any comparison, he identified elements of the spermatik word in the moral values of Buddhism, which he understood as a preparation for life in Christ (pp. 44-46). The core of the missionary methodology was founded on his humble presence and the pioneering acceptance of the cultural diversity of the peoples at that time. This undertaking was achieved through translations, musical adaptations and the adoption of various local customs (pp. 53 & 61-63).

In the second study, Thanasis Papathanassiou analyzes the issues that arose after Nicholas's death, and extend or are opposed to his choices. The development of an administratively independent church or Russianization is a central issue. The author theologically deals with the economic dependence of each new church on the metropolitan one, raising broader concerns about the modern way of ecclesiastical administration (p. 64). It then extends to issues of political theology, which are related to the ecclesiastical presence in public space (pp. 68-69). His research, which is distinguished for its scientific documentation, ends with the problems that arose in the following years. These temptations are reminiscent of the variety of criteria and human intentions in the mission field (pp. 71-74).

The second part of the book begins with an earlier note by the author, in which he emphasizes the magnitude of Nikolai's intellectual contribution to Japan (pp. 78-79). Excerpts from the saint's diary record his vision, when he began his work, for the triumph of Orthodoxy in Japan (pp. 81-83). Emotions, thoughts and anxious prayers are also captured to solve problems, but also to find suitable collaborators (pp. 95, 99). What is emphasized is that mission is a painful ministry between travail and afflictions.

Finally, Thanassis Papathanassiou, through the historical activity of Nicholas Kasatkin, aptly illuminates the ecclesiological criteria, the methodology and the temptations of the establishment, (but also of the reestablishment) of local ecclesiastical communities. It creates fruitful reflections on various issues of Christian witness in the world, such as coexistence with other cultures and religions, but also the dialogue with various political-economic ideologies. These issues are not limited to the field of mission but concern the whole Church. The reader has a pervasive feeling that Christian freedom expresses a struggle that transcends national, cultural and all kinds of barriers raised by fundamentalism. As well as that the renovation of the present can be realized through the dynamics of the ecumenical and timeless message of the Gospel of the Resurrection.

NIKOLAOS G. TSIREBELOS

(Article published in the newspaper
"Christianiki", 13/12/2018, page 1

The Camp Project

Camping, literally and etymologically, means staying in tents, in the countryside. The forest, the sun, the sea and nature in general are the setting in which children spend a few care-free days with their friends and at the same time "practice" independence from the family environment, group life and responsibility. In addition, new friendships and bonds are created between the children. Experiences and outdoor play are opportunities to learn and engage in new things that cannot be found in the city environment.

The camper receives many new stimuli, follows the program, expresses his opinion, rejoices in his successes, learns from his mistakes. Furthermore, he/she gains self-esteem, respect from and to others, is trained to follow rules and limits and of course is entertained,

not passively, from the living room of his house with TV and electronic games, but with active participation, thus activating his senses, imagination, movements. Participation even for a few days in a camp contributes to the balanced (physical, mental, social) development of the participants. All this makes camping an unforgettable experience for the rest of their lives.

For the pastoral and catechetical work of the Church, in particular, the camp, apart from the above, is an opportunity for children to be evangelized, because it helps them by living in nature to come closer to the Creation and the Creator of the universe; to reflect on the Wisdom with which all things have been made in the world; to feel the greatness of God in nature (animals, trees, the liquid element, the





air, the sun, the starry sky); and to praise and thank the Lord Jesus Christ for His visible and invisible blessings. Prayer and the worship of God in nature has a special meaning and devoutness and leaves indelible spiritual marks in children's souls.

The great value of camping in the era of COVID-19 is appreciated more than ever! The difficulties that arose in the family and in soci-

ety in general, due to the measures to deal with the pandemic, can be addressed in the camp, which acts as a relief valve for everyone.

Caution and safety measures - as defined by the health and government authorities must be taken for granted – on the part of the organizers - and strictly observed for the good of all.

So, Happy Camps!

Vassilis Mpirtsas



St. Nicholas Cathedral Baptisms



On Saturday April 24th, Lazarus Resurrection day, the following Catechumen: Michaela Shin Jin-ah, Ephremia Moon Jeong-hwa, Slavophone faithful Alexandros, American Michael Blais, and Philip Choi became members of our Korean Orthodox Church

through the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation. May God always be with them so that they can live a life of faith within the Orthodox Church until the last moments of their life on this earth. Warm congratulations!





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The children of the Orphanage on the Sunday of Pentecost outside the Church of the Holy Trinity