

Christ is Risen! By St. John Maximovitch

“Arise O God, judge the earth, for Thou shalt have an inheritance among all the nations,” we cried aloud yesterday, addressing the Judge of the universe, Who was condemned by an unjust judgment. “Arise, O God, judge the earth, for Thou dost reign unto the ages,” did we announce, prompting the slain King of Glory to rise from the tomb. And now Christ has already risen—the true Sun of Righteousness—illuminating and shining on all with the rays of His Bright Resurrection. The heavens are jubilant and the earth rejoices, the entire world celebrates, visible and invisible.

And again we sing out victoriously, “Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered.” Can it be that not everyone rejoices when the entire world is celebrating? Can it be that there still remain people fighting against God? But we hear further along, “...and let them that hate Him flee from before His face.” Yes, the light shining out from the tomb is no gladdening to all. “The Light of Christ shineth upon all,” but some it blinds. It gladdens all, but some it embitters. The Blood of Christ softens hearts; however, some it hardens. Why then, when Christ announces joy to everyone, do not all rejoice? When some take pleasure from the light of Christ, and exclaim as did Peter on Mount Tabor, “Lord, it is good for us to be here,” (Matt. 17:4) why do others run from this light as from a burning fire? Can it be that Christ did not suffer for all and by His Resurrection did not open the gates of eternal life and eternal bliss to everyone? No! Even for His enemies, betraying Him unto death, did the One newly-risen from the tomb pray to His Father.

He accepts all into His embrace, opens the gates of paradise to everyone, fills everyone with His blessedness. Who then remains His enemies? He who prefers the corruptible and carnal to the spiritual, who has come to love that which is against the will of God, is so greatly sinful that he cannot bear the very recollection of God and our duty to Him. For such, the Bright Day of the Resurrection is gloomy. But it is up to them themselves to make it bright. Let us now turn with all our hearts to the One Who did suffer for us and has risen. Let us try to realize that His invisible gifts, given by Him from the life-giving tomb, surpass all the best things of the visible world; that here on earth too, only that is truly wonderful which radiates His divine light.

Any cloud of sadness or sorrow will vanish, and our soul will be filled with joy. Our illnesses and the troubles of this life will be filled with joy.

Our illnesses and the troubles of this life will become light, will seem as nothing before the light of eternal joy. We will rejoice for our relatives and dear ones that have fallen asleep, for they, already in the abodes on high, enjoy the eternal light of Christ and, even more than we, feel this life-bearing day of Pascha. And for ourselves, death and the coming justice will not be frightening, for Paschal joy is a foretaste of eternal joy in the approaching kingdom of Christ. “O come all ye faithful, let us worship Christ’s holy Resurrection!” Let sinners vanish from the face of the earth, and transgressors, as if they had never existed: worship ye the Sun of Righteousness and accept from Him a wealth of blessings! “This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad therein.”