



The Conqueror of Death

Christ is risen! He has become the conqueror of death. But we ask ourselves now: whom has the risen Lord freed by His victory over sin and death? People of only one nation, or one race? People of one class or social position? Not at all! Such a freeing would, in essence, be the selfish victory of earthly conquerors.

The Lord is not called “Lover of the Jews,” or “Lover of the Greeks,” or “Lover of the poor,” or “Lover of the aristocrats,” but “Lover of mankind.” He intended His victory to be for all men, with no consideration of the differences that men set up among themselves. He won His victory for the good and the help of all created men, and has offered it to them all. To those who accept this victory and make it their own, He has promised eternal life and co-inheritance in the Heavenly Realm. He imposes this victory upon no one, even though it cost so dearly, but leaves men free to make it their own or not. As man in Paradise freely chose the fall, death and sin at the hands of Satan, so he is now free to choose life and salvation at the hands of God the Victor.

Christ’s victory is a balm, a life-giving balm, for all men, all having become leprous from sin and death.

This balm makes the sick well, and the well even healthier.

This balm raises the dead and gives fuller life to the living.

This balm makes a man wise, it ennobles him and makes him divine; it increases his strength a hundredfold, a thousandfold, and it raises his dignity far above all other nature, in its weakened state, even to the resplendence and beauty of God’s angels and archangels...

Come then, all of you, my brethren, who fear death. Come closer to Christ the Risen and the Raiser, and He will free you from death and the fear of death.

Come all of you who live under the shame of your open and secret sins. Draw nearer to the living Fount that washes and cleanses, and that can make the blackest vessel whiter than snow...

Bow down before Him in body and soul. Unite yourself with Him with all mind and thoughts. Embrace Him with all your heart. Do not worship the enslaver, but the Liberator; do not unite yourself to the destroyer, but to the Saviour; do not embrace the stranger, but rather your closest Kinsman and your dearest Friend.

The risen Lord is the wonder of wonders; but He is, while being the wonder of wonders, of the same nature as you are - of real human nature, the original nature that was Adam’s in Paradise. True human nature was not created to be enslaved to the irrational nature that surrounds it, but to govern nature by its power. Neither is man’s true nature manifested in worthlessness, sickness, mortality and sinfulness, but in glory and health, in immortality and sinlessness.

The risen Lord has torn down the curtain that divided true Godhead from true humanity, and has shown us in Himself the greatness and beauty of the one and the other. No man can know the true God except through the risen Lord Jesus; neither can any man know true man except through Him alone.

Christ is risen, my brethren!

Nikolai Velimirovich, Bishop of Ochrid.

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