



Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!
Христос Вскрсе! Ваустину Вскрсе!
Sunday of the Blind Man;
Equal-to-the-Apostles Cyril and Methodius
May 24, 2009

RESURRECTIONAL TROPARION – TONE FIVE:

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit; born for our salvation from the Virgin. For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead, by His glorious Resurrection.

TROPARION TO SAINTS CYRIL & METHODIUS – TONE FOUR:

O Cyril and Methodius inspired by God, you became equal to the Apostles by your life. Since you were the teachers of the Slavs, intercede with the Master of all that He may strengthen all Orthodox peoples in the true Faith; and that He may grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

KONTAKION TO SAINTS CYRIL & METHODIUS – TONE THREE:

Let us praise the two priests of God who enlightened us and poured upon us the flow of knowledge of God by translating the Holy Scriptures. O Cyril and Methodius, since we still draw abundant learning from this translation, we exalt you who now stand before the Most High, interceding with fervor for the salvation of our souls.

KONTAKION TO THE BLIND MAN – TONE FOUR:

Since my spiritual eyes are blind, I come to You, O Christ, like the man blind from birth, and cry to You in repentance: ‘You are the most radiant Light of those in darkness!’

INSTEAD OF “IT IS TRULY MEET...”:

The angel cried to the Lady Full of Grace: Rejoice, O Pure Virgin! Again I say: Rejoice! Your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb! With Himself He has raised all the dead! Rejoice, all ye people! Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem! The glory of the Lord has shone on you! Exult now and be glad, O Zion! Be radiant, O Pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of your Son!

INSTEAD OF “WE HAVE SEEN THE TRUE LIGHT...”:

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life! (*once*)

EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

The Prokeimenon— Psalm 76: 11 in the Eighth Tone:

Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God.

Acts 16: 16-34

In those days, it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortunetelling. This girl followed Paul and us and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.” Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

The Alleluia Verses – Psalm 119: 132, 133

Look upon me and have mercy on me. Lead my steps according to Thy word..

Epistle Commentary

Saint Paul is greatly annoyed at the evil spirit which torments the slave girl; meanwhile, the acts of hostility against Paul and Silas are committed by Gentiles exploiting prejudices against Jews. Although beaten and imprisoned, the missionaries were praying and singing, offering a powerful testimony to the Christian faith. The jailer’s question, “what must I do to be saved?”, implies he has been moved enough by this testimony to want to know about the salvation they proclaim.

GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

John 9: 1-38

At that time as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When He had said these things, He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. And He said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So he went and washed, and came back seeing. Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?" Some said, "This is he." Others said, "He is like him." He said, "I am he." Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered and said, "A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight." Then they said to him, "Where is He?" He said, "I do not know." They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner." He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see." Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?" Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for this fellow, we do not know where He is from." The man answered and said to them, "Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing." They answered and said to him, "You were completely born in sins and are you teaching us?" And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.” Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him.

Gospel Commentary

This blind man is symbolic of all humanity, needing illumination by Christ the True Light. This passage also reminds us of baptism, which is also called “holy illumination.” In the ancient Church this passage was read on the Saturday night of Pascha when Christian catechumens were baptized. It recalls the themes of washing, illumination, healing, faith, conversion and salvation.

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

Saints Cyril and Methodius, Equals to the Apostles

Saints Cyril and Methodius were brothers from Thessalonica, of distinguished and wealthy parents, Leo and Maria. The elder brother Methodius spent ten years as an officer among the Macedonian Slavs and thus learned the Slavic language. After that, Methodius withdrew to Mount Olympus and dedicated himself to monastic asceticism. It was here that Cyril (Constantine) later joined him. When the king of the Khazars, Kagan, requested preachers of the Christian Faith from Emperor Michael III, these two brothers were found and sent among the Khazars by command of the emperor. Converting King Kagan to the Christian Faith, they baptized him along with a great number of his chief assistants and an even greater number of the people. After some time they returned to Constantinople, where they compiled the Slavonic alphabet consisting of thirty-eight letters. They then proceeded to translate ecclesiastical books from Greek into Slavonic. At the request of Prince Rastislav, they traveled to Moravia, where they spread and confirmed the sacred Faith and made more copies of the books, distributing them to the priests to teach the youth. At the request of the pope, Cyril traveled to Rome. There he became ill and died, on February 14, 867. Then Methodius returned to Moravia and labored to strengthen the Christian Faith among the Slavs until his death. Following his death (he reposed in the Lord on April 6, 885) his disciples, the Five Followers, with St. Clement the bishop at their head, crossed the Danube River and traveled south into Macedonia. There, from Ohrid, they continued their labor among the Slavs, which Cyril and Methodius had begun in the north.

Reflection from *The Prologue* for May 11/24 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

In the Saracen encampment they asked St. Cyril: “How can Christians wage war and at the same time keep Christ’s commandment to pray to God for their enemies?” To this, St. Cyril replied: “If two commandments were written in one law and given to men for fulfilling, which man would be a better follower of the law: the one who fulfilled one commandment or the one who fulfilled both?” The Saracens replied: “Undoubtedly, he who fulfills both commandments.” St. Cyril continued: “Christ our God commands us to pray to God for those who persecute us and even to do good to them, but He also said to us, *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John

15:13). That is why we bear the insults that our enemies cast at us individually and why we pray to God for them. However, as a society, we defend one another and lay down our lives, so that you would not enslave our brethren, would not enslave their souls with their bodies, and would not destroy them in both body and soul.”

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Be a part of the *Western American Diocese 2009 Annual*

Submit an ad or greeting form (included in this bulletin) by June 15th for inclusion in the beautiful, full-color publication from our own Sebastian Press that will be available during the Diocesan Days weekend, September 4-6, 2009, at the St. Sava Mission in Jackson, CA.

Mark your calendars for Diocesan Days, September 4-6, 2009

Follow this link for information on the 13th Annual Diocesan Days:

http://www.westsrbdio.org/Diocesan_Days/Diocesan_Days_2009/xhtml/index.html

Diocesan Summer Camp

Our Diocesan Summer Camp held each year at the St. Sava Mission in Jackson, California will begin on Sunday, July 12, 2009. Camp forms will not be mailed out this year. Instead, they will be made available on the Camp website: www.campstsava.org. Other important camp information can also be found by following the above link.