



September 27, 2009

16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS & LIFE-GIVING CROSS

FIRST ANTIPHON:

God, my God, attend to me! Why have You forsaken me?

CHOIR/PEOPLE: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!

Why are You so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

CHOIR/PEOPLE: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHOIR/PEOPLE: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!

SECOND ANTIPHON:

O God, why do You cast us off forever?

CHOIR/PEOPLE: O Son of God, crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth.

CHOIR/PEOPLE: O Son of God, crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHOIR/PEOPLE: Only Begotten Son...

THIRD ANTIPHON:

The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble!

CHOIR/PEOPLE: **EXALTATION OF THE CROSS TROPARION - TONE ONE:**
O Lord, save Your people and bless Your inheritance.
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their
adversaries; and by virtue of Your Cross, preserve Your
habitation!

The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the Cherubim; let the earth quake!

CHOIR/PEOPLE: **EXALTATION OF THE CROSS TROPARION - TONE ONE:**
O Lord, save Your people...

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

CHOIR/PEOPLE: EXALTATION OF THE CROSS TROPARION - TONE ONE:

O Lord, save Your people

INTROIT OF THE LITTLE ENTRANCE:

Extol the Lord our God; worship at His footstool for it is holy!

EXALTATION OF THE CROSS TROPARION - TONE ONE:

O Lord, save Your people...

Glory...now and ever...(TONE FOUR)

EXALTATION OF THE CROSS KONTAKION - TONE FOUR:

As You were voluntarily lifted up on the Cross for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God. Gladden all Orthodox Christians by Your Power, granting them victories over their adversaries; and may they have as Your help the weapon of peace, the invincible trophy.

INSTEAD OF THE TRISAGION:

Before Your Cross, we fall down in worship, O Master, and Your Holy Resurrection, we glorify!

HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS (Canon Mode, TONE EIGHT):

Magnify, O my soul, the most precious Cross of the Lord.

You are the mystical Paradise, O Theotokos, in which Christ blossomed; through Him the life-bearing Wood of the Cross was planted on earth. Now, at its Exaltation, as we bow in worship before it, we magnify You!

COMMUNION HYMN (PSALM 4):

The light of Your Countenance has shone on us, O Lord.



THE PROKIMENON (PSALM 99:5) IN THE 7TH TONE:

Extol the Lord our God; worship at His footstool for it is holy!

1 Corinthians, 1: 18-24

Brethren, for the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

THE ALLELUIA VERSES: PSALM 74: 2, 12

Remember Your congregation, which You have gotten from old. God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the midst of the earth.

Epistle Commentary

The Power of God is revealed in the sign of the Cross because it is so absolutely contradictory. For the Jews, one has only to look at Deuteronomy to understand why anyone hanged to death, such as on a cross, is cursed:

Now if a man committed a crime under the sentence of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day; for he who is hanged on a tree is accursed of God; that you not defile the land the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).

For the Gentiles, as for many of us, weakness is a thing to be despised. Anyone convicted of capital punishment was considered weak, because they could not persuade his/her way out of disfavor. Thus, Christ is a stumbling block for the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. But for Orthodox Christians, He is the Wisdom, Word, and Power of God! By venerating His Cross, we praise His Resurrection. God has revealed His Ultimate Power to us in humility and His Strength in weakness. Blessed be God!

John 19: 6-11; 13-20; 25-28; 30-35

At that time, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!" Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

Gospel Commentary

Passover, the central rite of Judaism, is based on the experience of the liberation of God's people from bondage in Egypt. Passover celebrates God's steadfast love and devotion to His people and their freedom in Him. Through His saving work, Jesus Christ becomes our Passover (*Pascha* in Greek). Through Him we are liberated from sin and death. In many typological details, the Passover of the Jews clearly points

towards Christ as our Passover: 1) the Passover lamb, whose blood the Hebrews used to sign a cross on their doorposts, was a male without blemish; Jesus was a male without blemish who died on the Cross. 2) The Passover lamb's blood saved the Hebrew first-born from death; Christ's blood saves all who believe in Him from eternal death. 3) The Passover lamb had none of its bones broken; Jesus had none of His bones broken. Of Christ's crucifixion on the Cross, Saint John Chrysostom wrote: "This blood is the salvation of our souls; by it the soul is washed, and made beautiful and...more gleaming than gold."



SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

Reflection from *The Prologue* for Sept. 14/Sept. 27 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

Just as a candle is lighted from another candle, so also a good work is born from a good work. A patrician wanted to donate a gold cross to a church. He summoned a young but experienced goldsmith, gave him a great deal of gold that he weighed out, and told him to fashion whatever sort of cross he desired. The poor goldsmith, seeing what a large donation this patrician was making for the sake of his soul, became inflamed with love for God in his own heart, and decided that he would add his own ten pieces of gold to the amount of the patrician's gold. When the cross was completed, the patrician weighed it, and discovered that it was heavier than the gold that he had given to the young man. He immediately began to scold the young man as a thief, suspecting that he had taken some of the gold and replaced it with some other heavy metal. When the young man saw the patrician so angry, he confessed his deed. He said: "I added from my gold, as the widow gave two mites, in order to receive Christ's reward with you." Hearing this, the patrician's heart was touched, and he said to the honorable young man: "From this day, I take you as my son, and the heir of all my goods."

The Exaltation of the Honorable Cross

Two events in connection with the Honorable Cross of Christ are commemorated on this day: first, the finding of the Honorable Cross on Golgotha and second, the return of the Honorable Cross from Persia to Jerusalem. Visiting the Holy Land, the holy Empress Helena decided to find the Honorable Cross of Christ. An old Jewish man named Judah was the only one who knew where the Cross was located, and, constrained by the empress, he revealed that the Cross was buried under the temple of Venus that Emperor Hadrian had built on Golgotha. The empress ordered that this idolatrous temple be razed and, having dug deep below it, found three crosses. While the empress pondered on how to recognize which of these was the Cross of Christ, a funeral procession passed by. Patriarch Macarius told them to place the crosses, one by one, on the dead man. When they placed the first and second cross on the dead man, the dead man lay unchanged. When they placed the third cross on him, the dead man came back to life. By this they knew that this was the Precious and Life-giving Cross of Christ. They then placed the Cross on a sick woman, and she became well. The patriarch elevated the Cross for all the people to see, and the people sang with tears: "Lord, have mercy!" Empress Helena had a silver case made and set the Honorable Cross in it. Later, the Persian Emperor Chozroes conquered Jerusalem, enslaved many people, and took the Lord's Cross to Persia. The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years. In the year 628 the Greek Emperor Heraclius defeated Chozroes and, with much ceremony, returned the Cross to Jerusalem. As he entered the city Emperor Heraclius carried the Cross on his back, but suddenly was unable to take another step. Patriarch Zacharias saw an angel preventing the emperor from bearing the Cross on the same path that the Lord had walked barefoot and humiliated. The patriarch communicated this vision to the emperor. The emperor removed his raiment and, in ragged attire and barefoot, took up the Cross, carried it to Golgotha, and placed it in the Church of the Resurrection, to the joy and consolation of the whole Christian world.

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Honorable Cross, by St. Nikolai Velimirovic

Save, O God, Thy people!

Save, O Lord—

By Thine Honorable Cross, Thou dost shine upon us,

By the Cross, Thou dost lead us!

The Cross is power and a sign;

The Cross is salvation.

Save, O God, the Patriarch

And the Assembly of Serbian Bishops;

Grant them strength to serve

Thine Honorable Cross!

The Cross is power and a sign;

The Cross is salvation.

Save, O God, all those

Who are in authority;

May the Most-holy Cross protect them

From dark destruction!

The Cross is power and a sign;

The Cross is salvation.

Save, O God, all people

Who pray to Thee.

By Thy Cross, may they quickly overcome

Every difficulty.

The Cross is power and a sign;

The Cross is salvation!

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

For **Continual Education in Liturgy and Theology**, we recommend the following article:

<http://www.westsrbdio.org/Theology/SymbolismandRealisminOrthodoxWorship.pdf>

We will offer the same article here in sections on a weekly basis; today is Part III.

Symbolism and Realism in Orthodox Worship

III. Symbolism in Orthodox worship

The worship of the Church begins in its fullness from the Lord's Resurrection.¹ With the Resurrection, the bridge between created and uncreated begun at the Incarnation is

¹ Before the Resurrection of Christ, Christian worship was not "in Spirit and truth" (John 4:23) since "as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). The Spirit who is given by the Risen

brought to completion. The veneration of the risen Christ by his disciples and the worship offered to him as “Lord,” seated at the right hand of the Father after his Ascension, form the axis of Christian worship. The meals which the disciples eat with the risen Lord give meaning to the Mystical Supper,² and become the first form of the Divine Eucharist. All these things happen because the Resurrection is an *eschatological* and not simply an historical event. It marks God’s final act in history, the victory over the “last enemy” which is death, and the dawning of the “last day.” This “last day,” which became a reality for the last Adam, will at the Second Coming become a reality for all creation. What does all this mean for symbolism? *It means that since the Resurrection, the symbolism of worship no longer moves between the natural and intelligible worlds or simply between events of the Old and New Testaments, but principally between the Resurrection and the Second Coming.* Let us explain what this means.

If we rule out, as we must, the notion of symbolism as a correspondence between the natural and intelligible worlds, and for reasons already given base our symbolism on the correspondence between *historical* events, then we have before us two categories of symbol. One is that which connects the symbolism used in worship with historical events *of the past*. The other is that which connects worship with “events” *of the future*, in other words with the last times. All the symbolism in the Church’s worship has these two poles, and it is these that give it its theological meaning.

The first pole (connection with historical events of the past) could be called *typological*.³ Danielou, in his well known work *The Bible and the Liturgy*, gives an excellent exposition of this subject. The worship of the Church was from the beginning full of typological characteristics: Baptism had its Old Testament types in circumcision, the Red Sea Crossing, the Flood, etc. The same applied to the other mysteries and rites. Two theological conclusions may be drawn from this. First, that no symbolism in worship referred to nature and its properties. For instance, the water of Baptism did not refer to water’s natural property of cleansing (even though it easily lends itself to such symbolism, this symbolism is nonetheless avoided). It refers instead to historical events. And this is significant. Also characteristic is what St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes about the exorcisms preceding Baptism: the words of the priest expel the demons for no other reason than that they are drawn from Scripture.⁴ The power of the symbolism does not lie in any natural property (e.g., the holiness of the cleric who breathes upon the candidate, etc.).⁵

Christ initially to his disciples (John 20:22), and through them to the whole Church, renders Christian worship “spiritual,” bringing the “last times” into history (Acts 2:18).

² Luke 24:30ff.

³ See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catechesis*, 1.3: “Pass aCross then, please, from the old to the new, from the type to the truth.”

⁴ *Procatechesis*, 9.

⁵ References to natural properties are not wholly absent—such as the connection of the west with darkness when the baptizand turns from the west to the east during the exorcisms (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catechesis*, 1.4). But the weight of the symbolism clearly falls on the historical events: “Pass aCross then, please, from the old to the new, from the type to the truth. There Moses was sent by God into Egypt; here Christ is sent forth by the Father into the world. There, it was to lead the oppressed people out of Egypt; here, Christ comes to deliver those in the world who are worn out by sin. There the blood of a lamb turned away the destroyer; here the blood of the spotless Lamb Jesus Christ has been made a healing of the blood offered to demons. . . .” *Mystagogical Catechesis*, 1.3.

The second theological conclusion is that typological symbolism never refers to the past, but always to the future. Thus Baptism is not a type of the Flood, but the Flood is a type of Baptism, etc. In worship, nothing leads us to the past, except to refer us through the past to the future.

The second pole of symbolism is precisely that which moves between the Resurrection, and the future in its eschatological form. This symbolism (the presence of which Danielou failed to discern—perhaps because it requires antennae which only Orthodox worship affords) might be called *iconological*.

We shall need to give this particular attention, because it has a particularly close connection with Orthodox worship.

In contrast to “type,” the term “image” or “icon” is used by the Fathers principally to denote states and events of the New Testament and not the Old. The exception is the writers of the Alexandrian School, Clement, Origen and Eusebius of Caesarea, who also refer to things in the Old Testament as “images.”⁶ The author of the Areopagitic writings, in keeping with his general approach, uses “image” for the correspondence of earthly worship with heavenly.⁷ But St. Maximus the Confessor, in an extremely interesting corrective, without appearing to disagree with Dionysius, transfers the whole subject of imagery in the Divine Liturgy from the historical plane to the eschatological. So while Dionysius regards the Divine Liturgy as an image of the heavenly Liturgy, Maximus alters his position by interpreting it as imaging the Kingdom *which is to come*.⁸ This is why he very characteristically gives this epigrammatic summary: “the things of the Old Testament are the shadow; those of the New Testament are the image. The truth is the state of things to come.” And John of Damascus echoes Maximus; although he sometimes uses the term “image” in reference to things in the Old Testament, he hastens to explain, following the Apostle Paul (Heb. 8:5), that “the Law was not even an image, but the foreshadowing of an image.”⁹

All this means that symbolism as “typology” and symbolism as “iconology” are two different things. The notion of an icon requires particular attention. The subject of icons is a very broad one and cannot concern us in detail here.¹⁰ We shall confine ourselves to just a few remarks.

⁶ E.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, 4.22; Origen, *On John*, 10.16; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Eccles. Hist.*, 1.3.4.

⁷ Dionysius the Areopagite, *Celestial Hierarchy*, 1.3; *Divine Names*, 4.4.

⁸ *Scholia on Dionysius the Areopagite, On the Church Hierarchy*, 3.2: “From the effects. That is, from what is accomplished visibly to the things that are unseen and secret, which are the causes and archetypes of things perceptible. For those things are called causes which in no way owe the cause of their being to anything else. Or from the effects to the causes, that is, from the perceptible symbols to what is noetic and spiritual. Or from the imperfect to the more perfect, from the type to the image; and from the image to the truth. *For the things of the Old Testament are the shadow; those of the New Testament are the image. The truth is the state of things to come.* “The fact that these *Scholia*, which the manuscript tradition transmits with those of John of Scythoupolis (between 535 and 560 AD), faithfully reflect St. Maximus’ theology, is clear from the latter’s *Mystagogy*, in which all the rites performed in the Divine Liturgy form an image of the Kingdom which is to come. For more on this, see our articles “The Eucharist and the Kingdom of God,” in *Sourozh*, Nos. 58, 59, 60 (especially No. 58, pp. 5ff. and 10ff.)

⁹ *In Defense of the Holy Icons*, 1.15. 15.

¹⁰ See Leonid Ouspensky, *The Theology of the Icon*, trans. Anthony Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1992).

(a) In contrast with a shadow or a type, an icon is grounded in the truth of the New Testament, in other words in realized rather than expected Christology. As the supporters of the icons maintained during the iconoclast controversy, the fact that Christ has become human mandates the making of icons, for no other reason than that it has made the Son of God himself an historical reality.¹¹ It is significant that in iconographic depiction, the emphasis falls on historicity and not on conceptual symbolism or typology. The fact that the Quinisext Council prohibits the representation of Christ as a lamb, on the grounds that this does not correspond to historical reality,¹² shows that when symbolism in the Church is iconic, it cannot but be historical.

(b) In contrast with the state of things to come, the icon is distinct from the truth, not because it is a falsehood or a delusion or a fantasy, but because it borrows its means of expression from nature which is still corruptible. Thus the whole notion of an icon depends quite literally on the notion of person and the distinction between person and nature. If the icon is not a lie or a fantasy, despite not being the truth, this is possible because of the fact that the person does not depend on the nature. Thus we can have a *personal* presence without having a *natural* presence. St. Theodore the Studite expresses the distinction between nature and person in respect of the icon in these words: “When anyone is depicted in an image, it is not the nature but the hypostasis that is depicted. . . . So Christ is circumscribed according to his hypostasis, even though he is uncircumscribed in his Godhead.”¹³ “And we call Christ’s image ‘Christ’. . . . The icon of Christ is nothing other than Christ, *apart, of course, from the difference in essence.*”¹⁴

Thus with the help of the distinction between nature and person, we can understand the relationship between symbol and truth (between symbolism and realism) in this way: an

¹¹ See John of Damascus, *In Defense of the Holy Icons*, 1.8-16: “It is clear that when you see the bodiless one become man for your sake, then you will make an image of his human form, When the invisible becomes visible in the flesh, then you will make an image of the likeness of him who is seen. When he who is without body and without shape . . . takes the form of a servant and limits himself so as to take on size and quality and clothes himself in bodily form, then draw a picture of him who has deigned to be seen, and display it to be looked at. Draw his ineffable condescension, his birth from the Virgin, his baptism in Jordan, his transfiguration on Tabor, his sufferings which have freed us from passion, his death, his miracles, the symbols of his divine nature. . . . Of old, God who is without body and without shape could in no way be represented in an image. But now that God has been seen in the flesh and walked among men, make an image of the visibility of God.”

¹² This prohibition appears in the well known 82nd Canon of the Quinisext Council (692 AD), which is of crucial importance for the notion of the icon: “In certain reproductions of the venerable images, the Forerunner is pictured pointing to the Lamb with his finger. This representation was adopted as a symbol of grace. It was a hidden figure of that true Lamb who is Christ our God, shown to us according to the Law. Having thus welcomed these ancient figures [types] and shadows as symbols of the truth transmitted to the Church, today we prefer grace and truth themselves, as a fulfillment of the Law. Therefore, in order to expose to the sight of all, at least with the help of painting, that which is perfect, we decree that henceforth Christ our God be represented in his human form and not in the ancient form of a lamb. We understand this to be the elevation of the humility of God the Word, and we are led to remembering his life in the flesh, his passion, his saving death and, thus, the deliverance which took place for the world.” Leonid Ouspensky, *Theology of the Icon*, Vol. I, trans. Anthony Gythiel (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1992), pp. 92-93.

¹³ *Antirrheticus*, 3.1(34) (PG 99.405). The distinction between nature and person and the connection of the notion of the icon with that of the *person* is so important that, for St. Theodore the Studite at least, the whole argument against the iconoclasts depends on the notion of the person. This should be an answer to those who belittle the central place of this notion in Orthodox theology.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, 3.3 (14) (PG 99.425).

image is personal presence *without* the nature; the truth is personal presence *with* its nature. Thanks to the Incarnation and especially the Resurrection, the state between the New Testament and the last times allows personal presence, in other words the preservation of the person, but only in view of the resurrection of the body, i.e., of its natural presence. Until that time, the person in a certain sense borrows nature which is still corruptible, and in this way it is able to be present. Without this borrowing, the communion of the historical Church in the eschatological is impossible. Those who reject the use of images as a personal presence reject the very possibility of prayer and worship in an Orthodox manner. Worship without images is an exercise in psychology, the most flagrant self-deception and illusion.¹⁵

To be continued...

¹⁵ The tendency to regard the liturgical life of the Church (which by definition involves imagery) as a form of inferior spirituality “for the simple faithful” in comparison with mental prayer, makes the whole of the Church’s theological struggle for the holy icons meaningless. “So if Christ does not manifest Himself in the icon, in this respect he is inactive and ineffectual; and to think that is absurd” (Theodore the Studite, *Antirrheticus*, 3.4, PG 99.432).