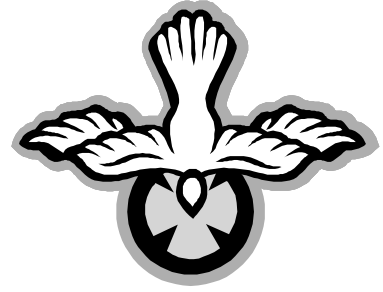


The Voice



*"Their voice has gone out into all the world;
and their proclamation to the ends of the universe."*

St. Thomas Sunday – April 30, 2006

Volume III Issue One

Christ is Risen! / Христос Воскресе!

Truly He is Risen! / Воистину Воскресе!

Paschal Troparion

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

+++

Христос воскрес из мертвых, смертию смерть поправ, и сущим во гробех живот даровав!

Slavonic Transliteration:

Hristoss voskrese iz myertvih, smyerteeyou smyert po prav, ee suscheem vo grobyeh zhiivot darovav!

+++

Χριστός ανέστη εκ νεκρών, θανάτω θανάτον πατήσας, και τοις εν τοις μνημασι ζων χαρισάμενος!

Greek Transliteration:

Christos anesti ek nekron, thanato thanaton patisas, ke tis en tis mnimasin, zoin charisa-menos!

XB

Dear beloved brothers and sisters in the Risen Christ:

Christ is Risen! What great joy fills our hearts at the sound of these holy words. For having completed the purifying spiritual labors of the Great Lent, our Holy Orthodox Church praises Christ the life-Giver, Who is risen from the dead. He *has achieved the victory over death...and has raised us with Himself, abolishing the bonds of death and granting a blessing to replace the curse, joy to replace sadness, and Paschal triumph to replace despair* (St. Athanasius the Great).

The light of Christ's Resurrection illumines our hearts, expelling from them the darkness of ignorance and imperfection. Within this light we experience the mercy and love of the All-bountiful Lord. And having experienced the light of Christ, may God help us to live our faith more fully each and every day of our lives.

The Savior has risen and nothing can shake our faith in God's goodness, our hope for salvation or our love for each other. Evil and sin are defeated. The Heavens are open wide. The all-powerful grace of God is given to us as enlightenment and inspiration to live more and more a Christ-centered life.

Let us no longer be overpowered by the sea of worldly cares, sorrows, fears and vanities. Let us put aside forever any anger, resentment, jealousies, lust and selfishness. The world has changed. Death is defeated. Enmity has been abolished. Christ has brought light to darkness, joy to suffering and life to the tomb.

Indeed, *let us embrace each other joyously... for today as from a bridal chamber Christ has shown forth from the tomb* (Paschal verses) and grants life to all the faithful. My dear ones, I sincerely pray that our Lord will fill you with the joy of this great and holy feast. May the jubilation of the Christ's Resurrection strengthen your faith, bring you hope and abundantly nourish your souls.

With love in the Risen Christ,
Fr. John Vass, Rector

Paschal Message of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia to Hierarchs, Pastors, Monastics and All the Faithful of the Russian Orthodox Church

Through Thy Cross, O Christ, Thou didst free us from the curse of old.

By Thy resurrection Thou hast filled all things with joy.

We thereby sing unto Thee: Thou who hast risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Stanza for the Praises on Wednesday of Bright Week

Beloved in the Lord your graces the archpastors, honorable presbyters and deacons, God-loving monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters - faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church!

From the depths of my heart, filled with joy in Christ who has risen from the dead and has raised up with Him the human race, I turn to you with the words of the good news which have resounded throughout the millennia and manifest the triumph of Christian faith: Christ is risen!

Today once more before our mental gaze stands the burial tomb with the rock cast aside, and once more we hear the words of the Angel, spoken to the myrrh-bearing women: 'Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen' (Lk 24: 5-6).

The Resurrection of Christ is the central event in world history, for thanks to the Savior's redemptive act on the cross there has been overcome the abyss separating people from God, and the human person, once having fallen away from the heavenly Father, becomes a communicant of the Divine life.

Pascha 'so transcends all human and earthly conquests', says St. Gregory the Theologian, 'as the sun surpasses the stars'. Therefore for the Christian there is no more triumphant and great day as the day of the Resurrection of Christ, bringing salvation and Life Eternal.

We experience Holy Pascha not as an event of remote history, but as the triumph of the genuine encounter with Christ the Giver of Life who has risen from the tomb, and for this reason our hearts are filled with radiant spiritual joy. Let us cry aloud together with St. Andrew of Crete: 'Christ has risen today: People, rejoice and be radiantly triumphant! The Light has come, Christ has come, Grace has come, Truth has come! Life and Resurrection for all things has come!'

The vanquishing of death and the Savior's victory over the powers of Hades grants to each the chance to transform his life, to become, as

Scripture puts it, a 'partaker of the divine nature' (2 Pet 1:4), 'being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Rom 3:24).

No one remains beyond the confines of this Divine action; all aspects of human nature are transfigured, healed and ascend to their dignity in the likeness of God. The spirit of division is alien to the Orthodox perception and view of the world. Therefore the Church calls upon her children to preserve chastity and inward integrity of the soul created according to the image and likeness of God, acquiring true life in the dedication of all its powers to its Creator and Provider.

May unity in faith in Christ and hope in His All-Beneficent Providence become the foundation for the labors of the faithful children of the Russian Orthodox Church in order to communicate to our neighbors and those far removed from us spiritual joy in the Risen Lord - the joy which is the beginning of the transfiguration of the whole life of the human person.

My beloved! Like the myrrh-bearing women and the apostles of Christ, let us bring the joyous news of the Risen Christ to all those around us. We are called to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God with a sincere word, the accomplishing of good deeds and a Christian way of life. Let us bring the light of Christ's Resurrection to those places where people abide in the darkness of unbelief. Let us bring love to those places where hatred reigns. Let us bring charity to those who have been hardened, concern for those who suffer and peace to those at war. May our words and our deeds soften evil hearts, save people from destructive vices and help them in life's times of hardship.

'Let us be enlightened by the feast and embrace each other. Let us say: Brethren! And to those who hate us, let us forgive all things in the Resurrection' (Paschal stanza). My dear ones, let us follow the holy myrrh-bearing women so that we may ignite faith, love and hope in peoples' hearts with the news of the Risen Christ the Savior. May worldly cares and everyday disorder, hardness of heart and indifference, misery and despondency, lack of faith and hostility never bring us to a halt on this wise and saving path.

According to St. Ignatius (Bryanchaninov), 'faith in God, accompanied by the abandonment of hope in oneself, overcomes all anguish and temptations, vanquishes all obstacles'. Yes, the life of our country and peoples remains difficult; there is much evil and falsehood in it. Yet we Christians are called upon to vanquish the misery of this age through the promise granted to us.

On the radiant feast of Christ's Passover I call upon each of you to increase your labors so that our society be freed from sin and unbelief, so that malice, injustice, all misfortune and trials be softened by the goodness of our hearts. I testify that in her ministry for the good of the people our Church intends to co-operate further with the secular authorities and all people whose will is directed towards good.

Dear brothers and sisters, I remind you of the apostle's commandment: 'Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another' (Col 3:12-13). Let us accept the apostle's exhortation and be guided by it in our lives in glorifying the Risen Lord and our Savior.

Again and again I cordially congratulate you on the feast of the Holy Passover of Christ. I sent congratulations to Orthodox Christians of all the world and to all those who confess the Risen Christ.

Christ is risen!

Alexy II

Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

Pascha 2006 AD, Moscow

Second Sunday of Pascha

St. Thomas Sunday

(John 20:19-31)

When the disciples had gathered on the new Passover (Pascha), the Lord's Day or Resurrection Day, Jesus entered the room where they were – "the doors being shut...for fear of the Jews" – stood in the midst of them and showed them His hands and side. Christ then greeted them with that salutation, retained by the Church through the ages, with which the priest greets the faithful at each of the important parts of the Divine Liturgy and other services: "Peace be unto you." Twice our Lord delivers this message of peace to His disciples that "first day of the week." We are reminded in this of the Savior's words before the Crucifixion: "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" and "these things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." (John 14:27; 16:33) The Resurrection, of which the beloved disciples were witnesses, was the confirmation of Christ's entire life of prophecy and sacrifice. It was a reassurance that the peace He had come to give the world was not vain or imagined. Nor was it peace on strictly a human level, for example the absence of war or strife among men. Rather this peace was the presence of the Prince of Peace in the midst of human existence. It was the long awaited reconciliation between God and man, and in God a profound "union of all men" as children of the Most High, a peace that the world is unable to provide or understand.

Continuing the Gospel reading for Thomas Sunday, we are told that the apostles "were glad when they saw the Lord." Once more Christ's words prior to His Passion are brought to mind: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (John 16:22) This joy that our Lord promised His disciples

Faith is the door to mysteries. What the bodily eyes are to sensory objects, the same is faith to the eyes of the intellect that gaze at hidden treasures.

St. Isaac the Syrian

is, like peace, that which is experienced in the Divine Presence. It is the same joy felt by Christians after all these centuries when they participate, through the divine worship of the Church, in the blessings of the Kingdom to come. Particularly in the Eucharist an almost inexplicable joy is experienced in an encounter with the risen Lord, in communion with His Holy Body and Blood. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20) "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." (John 6:56) In the Eucharistic gathering Christ's glory is revealed to His disciples and they are thus strengthened and confirmed in their faith in the promises of Christ, ready to return to the world from which they were called out. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1Peter 2:9) (The Greek, ecclesia, from which we get the word Church means, called out.)

Then He said to them again, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20: 21-23) The Church is simultaneously called out, "consecrated," and then sent to accomplish the same work as her Founder. Christ preached repentance and the advent of a heavenly Kingdom. His mystical Body, the Church, has the same

mission in this world of extending God's Kingdom, central to which is the pronouncement of repentance and forgiveness. The Church, in God's name, pronounces forgiveness to all in light of a heavenly Kingdom revealed in Christ. The Church carries out her mission through the guidance and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came," and when the others told Him, "we have seen the Lord." He, therefore, said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20: 24-25) Thomas is like so many of us in that he would require tangible, visible proof that Christ is really active in the lives of His people, caring for creation, and that He was what He claimed to be: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) Some today desire generally that kind of evidence even for God's existence, "irrefutable" evidence making it impossible for man not to believe. That type of unquestionable, undeniable proof, we can say, will be put forth only at the end of this age, when "the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him..." (Matthew 25:31) At that time it will indeed be quite impossible for anyone (although some may try in vain) to deny "the King of kings and the Lord of lords." (Deuteronomy 10:17; Rev. 19:16)

God's most important gift to man, that which identifies him as a creature made in the image of God, is free will. The Lord honors this gift. He loves man and would have man love Him freely in return. God, therefore, will not force man to accept Him, but would have him approach his Creator in faith and trust. We would do well to remember the example of St. John the Baptist. He bore witness to his Lord saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) Yet after being arrested, in a moment of hesitation or doubt, the Forerunner sent his disciples to Christ asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3) At first glance this question seems strange, indeed contradictory, for "the greatest born of women" to be asking. It is thus important to note that Jesus does not seek to answer it in some "definitive" way, irrefutable in John's mind.

The lives of men are subject to drastic changes. These changes are gradual at times; at others, lightning quick. But even those of us who enjoy long years of opulence and fame can find no consolation, no gladness, unless our heart is illumined by the steady light of peace. It is this peace that we must seek, it is for this peace that we should pray. The peace that our Lord gave to His disciples and to all those who really have faith in him. (John 20:21)

St. Macarius of Optina, Russian Letters of Direction

Rather He responds in terms of an invitation, still beckoning His servant to place his trust freely in Him: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." (Matthew 11:4-6)

Near the end of the Gospel passage, after Thomas exclaims, "My Lord and my God," Jesus says to him, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Faith: this is the way that God would have us come to Him. "Faith," says St. Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) People sometimes lament the fact that they did not live in Apostolic times when it would have been possible to see for themselves and talk face to face with the Incarnate Lord. In the minds of many, this would constitute tangible proof of God's existence and alleviate any doubts concerning Christ. But would it? Israel was prepared for almost two thousand years for the Messiah's advent. Miracles were performed by Him in the peoples' midst. Yet, in the end, those who heard and saw Jesus for themselves wound up shouting, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." Only a few individuals stood with Him at the foot of the Cross. One really has to wonder seriously if we would have been any different given the chance. For regardless of how and when the Lord chooses to reveal Himself it is always possible, in freedom and because of sin, to explain away that revelation.

A primary emphasis here is that the historical period in which one exists makes no difference as far as one's relationship to Christ is concerned and his or her ability to know the Truth and live by faith. We have the mystical Body of Christ, the Church's sacramental, liturgical life, and the Lord's promise to be with us always. We have "received the Heavenly Spirit," and are blessed with the examples, testimonies and presence of countless saints who have gone on before us. We are literally living, right now if you will, in Apostolic times. So it seems as though we are missing the mark if we begin to demand, from

God or from ourselves, objective, factual knowledge in terms of "proof," before we can come to faith. At some point a "leap of faith," will be required, for as mentioned above, so-called concrete evidence can always be discarded if that is what is desired. On the other side of that "leap," though, is the knowledge that we all seek. Once there, there is no lack of proof. But without this faith no amount of knowledge or evidence will suffice. There will always be room for doubt, and opportunities for man in his "wisdom" to deny what is so plain and simple to all who have truly found the narrow path that leads to life.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

From The Dawn

Publication of the Diocese of the South
Orthodox Church in America
April 1999

Divine compassion brought it about in a wonderful way that when the doubting disciple touched the wounds in his Master's body, he cured the wounds of our unbelief. Thomas' unbelief was of more advantage to our faith than the faith of the believing disciples because when he was led back to faith by touching Jesus, our minds were relieved of all doubt and made firm in faith. And so after His resurrection Jesus allowed His disciples to doubt. But He did not desert him in his doubt. It is much the same as when before His birth He desired that Mary have a husband, who had not yet married her. The disciple who doubted and touched became a witness to the truth of the resurrection in just the same way as the husband of His mother had been the guardian of her perfect virginity.

St. Gregory the Great

The Artos

In the Holy Orthodox Church, there is the custom for a single loaf of blessed bread (*Artos* in Greek), to lie before the Iconostasis throughout Bright Week in memory of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, before it is shared among the whole

congregation. Depicted on the top of the Artos are either the symbol of Christ's victory over death – the Cross, surmounted by a crown of thorns, or the icon of the Resurrection of Christ. On the first day of Pascha, during the Holy and Divine Liturgy, after the Prayer Before the Ambo, the Artos is blessed by a special prayer and sprinkling with the Holy Water. Throughout Bright Week, at the end of the Holy and Divine Liturgy, the Artos is carried around the church in solemn procession. On the Saturday of Bright Week it is distributed as a blessing of the Arch-Pastor (that is to say Christ) to the congregation (sometimes after Sunday Holy and Divine Liturgy, on Saint Thomas Sunday).

The significance of the Artos is that it serves to remind all Christians of the events connected with the Resurrection of Our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ. While still living on earth, the Lord called Himself the Bread of Life, saying: I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst (John 6:35). After His Resurrection, more than once Jesus appeared to His disciples, ate before them, and blessed their own food. For example, as evening fell on the first day of His resurrection, He was recognized in Emmaus by two of His disciples as He blessed and broke bread (Luke 24:13-35).

On the 40th day after His Resurrection, the Lord ascended into heaven, and His disciples and followers found comfort in their memories of the Lord: they recalled His every word, His every step and His every action. When they met for common prayer, they would partake of the Most Holy Body and Most Precious Blood of Christ, remembering the Last Supper. When they say down to an ordinary meal, they would leave a place at the head of the table empty, for the invisibly present Lord and would lay bread on that place.

Remembering this custom of the Apostles', the Fathers of the Church made it their custom to put out the Artos at the Paschal Feast in memory of the appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples, and also in memory of the fact that the Lord Who suffered and was resurrected for our justification has made Himself the true Bread of Life and is invisible present in His Church always, to the close of the ages (Matthew 28:20).

Whereas special Paschal breads, called kulichi (or kolachi) are broken and eaten on the first day of Pascha, the Artos is kept whole throughout the whole of Bright Week as a reminder of the presence of the Risen Saviour in the midst of those who believe in Him and is only divided and distributed on the end of the Bright Week. In this way, the Bright Week begins and ends with the eating of especially baked and blessed bread.

The Artos may also be compared to the unleavened bread of the Old Testament, of which ancient Israel, delivered from their captivity in the land of Egypt, ate during the week of the Passover (Exodus 12:15-20). As Cyril, the Bishop of Turov, who lived during the 12th century in Russia, said in a sermon for the Sunday after Pascha: "Even as the Jews bore the unleavened bread upon their heads out of Egypt through the desert (Exodus 12:34), until they had crossed the Red Sea, after which they dedicated the bread to God, divided it amongst all their host, and having all eaten thereof, became ... terrible to their enemies, even so do we, saved by our Resurrected Lord from the captivity of that Pharaoh of the mind, the Devil, bear the blessed bread – the Artos – from the day of the Resurrection of Christ and, finally, having dedicated this bread to God, we eat of it and preserve it to the health of body and soul."

It is a custom among our people to this very day, to keep the Artos throughout the year and with due reverence and faith to eat of it in time of illness or distress. This is eaten, often together with a drink of Holy Water, which had been blessed at the Feast of the Theophany of Our Lord.

What is Radonitsa?

"On this day, the Tuesday of St. Thomas week, according to the order instituted by our Holy Fathers, we call to remembrance, in Paschal joy, all those who have died from the beginning of the ages in faith and in the hope of resurrection and life eternal.

"Having previously celebrated the radiant feast of Christ's glorious Resurrection, the faithful commemorate the dead today with the pious intent to share the great joy of this Pascha feast with those who have departed this life in the hope of

their own resurrection. This is the same blessed joy with which the dead heard our Lord announce His victory over death when He descended into Hades, thus leading forth by the hand the righteous souls of the Old Covenant into Paradise. This is the same un hoped-for joy the Holy Myrrhbearing Women experienced when discovering the empty tomb and the undisturbed grave clothes. In addition, this is the same bright joy the Holy Apostles encountered in the Upper Room where Christ appeared though the doors were closed. In short, this feast is a kindred joy, to celebrate the luminous Resurrection with our Orthodox forefathers who have fallen asleep.

"There is evidence of the commemoration of the dead today in the writings of the Church Fathers. St. John Chrysostom mentions the commemoration of the dead performed on Tuesday of St. Thomas week in his "Homily on the Cemetery and the Cross."

"Today, the faithful departed are remembered in Divine Liturgies, 'koliva' is prepared and blessed in the churches in memory of those who have fallen asleep, and the Orthodox graves in cemeteries are blessed by the priests and visited by the faithful. On this day alms are given to the poor. Furthermore, it should be noted that due to the great spiritual joy this jubilant commemoration bears, it is called in the Slavonic tongue, 'Radonitsa,' or Day of Rejoicing."

From the "Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Penecostarion" (published in 1999 by HDM Press, Rives Junction, Michigan) on "Radonitsa"

Lack of Faith

VS.

God's Providence

Saint John (Maximovich) of Tobolsk

None of our own attempts and efforts can save us without the help of God, but neither can God's help be beneficial to us without our own wish for it.

No other subject was brought up by the Lord to His disciples so frequently as lack of faith. He warned everyone against lack of faith not only by His words, but also by the multitude of events which amazingly proved the power of faith and

...though remission of sins is given equally to all, the communion of the Holy Spirit is bestowed in proportion to each man's faith. If you have labored little, you receive little; but if you have wrought much, the reward is great. You are running for yourself, see to your own interest.

**St. Cyril of Jerusalem
(Catechetical Lectures: Lecture 1)**

the powerlessness of mistrust or doubt in God's protection and salvation from danger.

Lack of faith comes in different forms: some people have little faith in God because He does not punish His enemies; others doubt they would be able to entreat God to grant them their desires, especially when their conscience bothers them with the thought that God will not forgive them their sins; still others fear that God will deprive them of all earthly goods and subsistence. This triple manifestation of lack of faith estranges many people from God and immerses them in various forms of perdition.

The source of our lack of faith is our excessive conceit, i.e. when we think more of ourselves than of God, rely more on our own powers than on God's help.

What is the reason for God allowing the destruction of such a great number of people, who are injured or killed through sorcery? It is not surprising: lack of faith has become so widespread among the people that it merits punishment. Many do not look for other doctors except sorcerers (extrasensorists and similar kind), nor other pharmaceuticals except deviltry. God justly punishes us by the same means that we use to sin against Him.

As our faith and hope in God increase, so increase His mercy and benevolence to us. But woe unto us, that there are so few of us who believe in God with all their heart! If we analyze human customs and habits, we will see that in all places and at all times lack of faith becomes prominent and widespread, which gives rise to empty and false fears.

People often fear a shortage of food supplies; sometimes they fear that they will lack necessary items during an illness; at times they fall into despair over ever-growing rumors of war. All

Belief is a matter of dying for Christ and His commandments. It is believing that such a death is life-giving. It is to count poverty as riches, and to consider the lowest humiliation as true honor and nobility. Faith is believing that when one has nothing, one has everything. More than this, it is to possess the incomprehensible riches of the knowledge of Christ and to look upon all visible things as but clay and smoke.

**St. Symeon the New Theologian
The Practical and Theological Chapters**

of this occurs because they have an erroneous and doubtful understanding of God's benevolence and His omnipotent strength: this is also the cause of our mind's poor and sad concern over temporal things, as opposed to a concern for achieving a blessed eternal life.

God's Providence manifests itself with the greatest wisdom: not every transgression is normally punished straightaway; however, neither is it left totally unpunished. If God never punished villainess, many people would think that there is no Providence. On the other hand, if every transgression were immediately followed by punishment, it would then be thought that there is no reward or punishment after death.

Therefore God, by punishing only some people, reveals His Providence; by not punishing others directly after their transgressions, He threatens them with punishment directly after death, in the next life, if they do not repent in this life. Everything is done by God with great wisdom and forethought.

In a like manner, all the contradictory manifestations that we come across in our lives, are all wisely directed by God's Providence; all earthly misfortunes are transformed by God into a benefit and advantage for us; even sinful transgressions are tolerated in order to bring us to our senses, and to achieve our salvation through

repentance. For to do good deeds and to tolerate heinous ones is characteristic exclusively of divine Providence, since God would never allow the existence of evil were He not as mighty and good as to produce good consequences from all evil deeds.

God's Providence is concealed from us, unfathomable to us, but it comprises an all-encompassing order for ruling the world rationally and justly. We are usually quite observant of the external order of universal and particular events; however, the wondrous and wise Providence of God, which activates the cosmic mechanism and preserves and directs its activity, is hidden from us, and we cannot see it. It is for this reason that many people, seeing a contradiction from a human point of view in the well-being of bad persons and the tribulations of good ones, assert that God's Providence does not exist, but that everything occurs through man's will and reason, or through blind luck or misfortune.

However, all these things are seen and understood quite differently by those who believe in the great wisdom of God and in His Providence, which directs everything to the good. If, seeing how God-fearing people are often humiliated and insulted, while heinous scoundrels prosper, we think that Providence is sleeping, this is because we are looking upon only one side of God's Providence, while the other side is hidden from us because of our narrow viewpoint, which is unable to extend itself to fully encompass God's destinies. Only in the second coming of Christ will we learn of God's just judgment of everyone and everything.

Something to ponder...

...while the Lord's victory is certainly an accomplished fact, my personal participation in that victory is as yet far from complete...My trust is, therefore in Christ, not in myself, and I am confident that Christ is faithful and stands firm. **Bishop Kallistos Ware, *How are We Saved?* pg. 4**

The Voice is a parish newsletter-journal of Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church (1723 East Fairmount Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21231). *The Voice* is prepared and distributed by the pastor and parishioners of Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church. Please forward any questions to 410-276-6171.