26/04/2022

Anastasios Archbishop of Tirana, Durres and all Albania – Pascha 2022 Resurrection – love ultimately overcomes hatred



Christ is Risen!

Soothing pain and wounds, love will ultimately be victorious. This comforting message resounds diachronically through the luminous feast of the Resurrection of Christ.

The culmination of love in world history is manifested in the advent of the Son and Word of God in the world, the assumption of human nature, and its lifting up through the Passion and His Resurrection. The Christian faith is based upon a foundational truth: “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16). Resurrection and love are intertwined. The victory over death

through the Resurrection of Christ is fulfilled through love. “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the bretheren” (1 John 3:14). The transition from death to life transpires through love.

The breadth and depth of Christian love is defined in the biblical texts and is revealed in its plentitude in the form of the incarnate Son and Logos of God, Jesus Christ. He is the incarnation of love. “He went about doing good and healing,” He confronted injustice, deceptions, lies, and hatred, He faced animosity and slander. He revealed the magnitude of love, forgiving His crucifiers. Through His Resurrection, He asserted the triumph of love.

The infinite love of God was intertwined with immeasurable humility, pain, and kenosis. Jesus Christ the Son of God “emptied Himself, taking on the form of a servant… And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow… and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:7-11).

For the Christian conscience, the Cross and Resurrection constitute an organic unity. As we have often noted, the Resurrection does not come after the Cross. The Resurrection is found in the Cross, when we accept it, as Christ did because of His love for God and our fellow human beings. Those who follow Him and became members of His mystical body know that the Cross and Resurrection determine the course of life in Christ. Saint Cosmas of Aetolia eloquently summarizes that “the all-good and all-merciful God has many and various names. He is called Light, and Life, and Resurrection. However, the principle name of our God is Love and He is called Love.”

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In the course of these days, when pain, grief, and confusion, brought about by the fratricidal war of Russia against Ukraine, are overwhelming our thoughts and souls, referring to love may be seen as strange. Obviously, aggressive war consists of the most tragic and atrocious insult and denouncement of love. However, under the present crucial conditions, our considerations seeking an egress from these difficulties understandably looks towards the foundational values of our faith. Simultaneously with the condemnation of crimes it is urgent for the power of love to be strengthened within ourselves and around us. Ultimately, only love can be victorious over the arrogant strength of power, therein affirming our bond with the God of peace and reconciliation.

“The one who has acquired love, has acquired God Himself, because God is love” (Maximos the Confessor, Chapters on Love, 4, 100).

Often the wish is made that we are on the right side of history. The resurrectional greeting prompts us to always remain on the side of love, as Christ revealed through His teachings, life, sacrifice, and Resurrection. Love is the antidote to every egocentrism, be it national, racial, religious, that poisons the peaceful coexistence of humans and peoples.

Love is expressed as a mystical movement of God towards humans and of humans towards God and their fellow humans. It maintains in cohesion all logical being, it is the indissoluble energy of God.

May the crucified-resurrectional hope that love ultimately will be victorious console us and calm our souls. Truly the Lord is Risen!