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Patriarch Daniel: Easter is the feast of forgiveness

At the Easter Vigil celebrated Saturday night, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel stressed that the Resurrection of Christ is a feast of forgiveness, recalling that before Christ breathed his last on the Cross He prayed for His enemies, for those who sentenced Him to death and for those who crucified Him.

‘This humble, crucified love became victorious through the Resurrection. The love of the crucified and risen Christ is stronger than human sin, is stronger than the work of the devil, stronger than the power of hell, and stronger than death.’

‘The love of the crucified and risen Christ is stronger than hatred and envy, because he was crucified out of envy and hatred,’ the Romanian Patriarch said at the Easter midnight office.

How to live in a hostile world

His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel went on to explain why ‘we live in an increasingly hostile world, in a world where individualism and selfishness grow and love

diminishes in the family, among people and among nations.'

He said that we face this world context 'because we are moving away from Christ, the source of the humble and merciful love'.

The Patriarch came with a solution to this problem saying that 'through repentance, prayer, good deeds and especially by partaking with the Holy Mysteries of Christ we receive love from His love, a forgiving love, a love that values our neighbor, a love that sees every man as a paschal candle.'

Meaning of Paschal troparion

The Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church spoke about the Paschal troparion noting that 'the first part – Christ is risen from the dead – is a profession of faith, the second part – trampling down death by death – is an interpretation, and the third part – and to those in the tombs bestowing life – is a prophecy.'

Christ's Resurrection is the beginning of eternal life

In his homily, the Patriarch of Romania quoted the Paschal canon saying, 'Now all things are filled with light: heaven and earth, and the nethermost regions'.

He said ‘it is not physical light’ mentioned there, ‘but the ultimate meaning of all existence.’

‘Now the entire universe is filled with meaning, heaven and earth, and the nethermost regions,’ he said adding that ‘the Resurrection of Christ is not a simple return to the mortal earthly life, a life mixed with death, but rather a transition to a different existence, to heavenly eternal life.’

He noted that ‘the Resurrection of Christ is the beginning of another life: eternal life,’ which is not a simple life after death, ‘but the life lived with Christ, the conqueror of death, from this earthly life beginning with Christian baptism that gives us the provision of resurrection and eternal life.’

Proclaiming Christ’s Resurrection

Patriarch Daniel pointed to the reason why the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is proclaimed outside the church.

‘Because Christ’s Resurrection does not only concern Christians, but all human beings, as Saint Paul tells us, for as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.’

‘The universal resurrection,’ he said, ‘is founded on Christ’s raising from the dead. It is a gift of God for all humans of all generations, of all places and times.’

‘Therefore,’ Patriarch Daniel said concluding his paschal sermon, ‘Christ’s Resurrection gives meaning to human earthly life.’

‘Through His Resurrection we learn that man is not made for the tomb, but for heaven. He was not made to remain in the dust of the earth, but for the resurrection and for eternal life.’

His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel led the Paschal midnight office and the Divine Liturgy at the Patriarchal Cathedral in Bucharest. Concelebrants for the service included the patriarchal auxiliary bishops Varlaam of Ploiesti and Ieronim of Sinaia, as well as the Assistant Bishop to the Bucharest Archdiocese, His Grace Bp Timotei of Prahova.

For more pictures please visit this Photo Gallery

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