

Patriarch Daniel at Agape Vespers: Peace and joy are two gifts that bring gladness to human soul



During his homily at the Agape Vespers on Pascha Sunday, His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel reflected on the gifts offered by the Saviour Jesus Christ after his resurrection, saying that ‘peace and joy are two gifts that bring gladness to the human soul.’

‘People who lack peace, who are always troubled and concerned, always feel unsafe, are unhappy,’ the Romanian Patriarch said reminding the believers that the risen Lord grants joy and peace.

On the other hand, the Patriarch noted, ‘people who have peace in their soul feel that Christ is with them and are open in their relationships with others’.

Joy and gratitude

The Patriarch highlighted that joy and gratitude are strongly connected, because 'those who feel the joy of the risen Christ in their soul are always thankful,' while joy is 'the first trait of Christian life'.

Pointing to other meanings of joy, the Patriarch of Romania said that 'it is the feeling of God's presence in the human soul; it isn't linked to temporal worldly pleasures, but to Christ's presence through the Holy Spirit in the human soul'.

However, there are many people who are joyful and happy, the patriarch noted. 'Although without much wealth, or high ranks, without any treasures gathered, they are joyful because they have peace in their soul and a priceless richness, namely the presence of God inside themselves.'

Christ's presence strengthens human nature

During his sermon delivered at the Patriarchal Cathedral on Pascha Sunday, April 28, 2019, His Beatitude spoke about 'Christ's presence in the midst of his disciples after the Resurrection'.

This presence aimed at convincing them regarding the truth of Christ's resurrection, and at sending them to the world to preach the Gospel.

They were sent to preach 'the truth of His Resurrection and the Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven,' not only through words.

'He knew that human nature was weak, shaky, often very timid, fearful, hesitant.'

'That is why He strengthens His disciples,' breathing on them and saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (John 20:22-23)

Quoting Saint John Chrysostom, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church explained that the disciples needed to be strengthened, because the Gospel preaching ministry 'is a martyr's work' and often 'those who preach the Gospel of Christ will suffer,' some of them even becoming martyrs.

Receive the Holy Spirit

'The Holy Spirit that the disciples received points to a great gift offered not only to them, but to the entire Church. The power to forgive sins is a gift, an exclusive power of God given to His disciples,' His Beatitude said.

This power is necessary for the life of the Church, because 'sinners cannot enter

the Kingdom of Heaven, but they can be cleansed of sins through repentance and by receiving remission of sins.'

According to Saint John Chrysostom, people do not enter the Kingdom of Heaven not because they are sinners, but because they didn't repent for their sins.

At the conclusion of his speech, Patriarch Daniel prayed 'for a strong faith and to feel that Jesus Christ loves us, that He gives us the peace and joy of His resurrection so that, in turn, we may show peace from Christ's peace and joy from Christ's joy.'

Concelebrants

Concelebrants for the Agape Vespers during which the gospel passage was read in twelve different languages included Bishop Qais of Erzurum (Antioch Patriarchate), the patriarchal auxiliary bishops Varlaam of Ploiesti and Ieronim of Sinaia, as well as the Assistant Bishop to the Bucharest Archdiocese, Timotei of Prahova.







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