

Christ Is Born!

"...And the Whole of Creation Rejoices."

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever." (Isaiah 9:6-7)



Dear Parishioner,

Christ is Born! Glorify Him! There is a story told by an unknown author. There once was a King who offered a prize to the artist who would paint the best picture of peace. Many artists tried. The King looked at all the pictures, but there were only two he really liked and he had to choose between them. The picture that won over the other, which had a beautiful and peaceful lake with mountains in the background was a picture that had mountains too. But these were rugged and bare. Above was an angry sky from which rain fell, in which lightning played.

Down the side of the mountain tumbled a foaming waterfall. This did not look peaceful at all. But when the King looked, he saw behind the waterfall a tiny bush growing in a crack in the rock. In the bush a mother bird had built her nest. There, in the midst of the rush of angry water, sat the mother bird on her nest ... perfect peace. Which picture do you think won the prize? The King chose the second picture. Do you know why? "Because," explained the King, "peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. Peace means to be in the midst of all those things and still be calm in your heart. That is the real meaning of peace."

Peace is the first blessing bestowed by Jesus after His resurrection. Jesus, in preparing the disciples for the day that they would receive the Holy Spirit says to them, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." (John 14:27) In the beatitudes preached by the Lord, Christ says the following, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matthew 5:9). The first prayer of the Divine Liturgy after the proclamation of the presence of the kingdom of heaven is "In peace let us pray to the Lord."

The word in Greek for peace is "εἰρήνη", which has its roots in the ancient Greek word εἶρω (συνδέω) meaning to bind together, to unite. This peace of God is not dependent on laws, a show of force or any type of position. The peace of Christ has its source in the death of Christ on the cross and His three day resurrection from the dead. The peace of God is the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life. It is this peace that unites us to the eternal and everlasting peace of God's Kingdom. When the disciples were on their boat with Christ who was sleeping, they were met with a terrifying storm. Trying to do everything to save themselves from the boat sinking and them being cast into the sea, they wake Jesus to ask Him, "[may you at least help us?]" The Lord admonishes them for their little faith and calms the seas. Peace is not dependent on exterior forces or a position in life. Peace is dependent on the disposition of a person. St. John Chrysostom states the following, "Yet it is in our power, if we will, to no longer be in the flesh, no nor upon the earth, but in heaven and spirit, for our being here nor there is not dependent upon position, but upon disposition." The disciples were in the storm and it caused them to panic. Storms in life will occur. The question is where does a person want to position themselves when they are in the storm? In the outer winds or at the center where there is peace.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

A blessed, joyful and the eternal presence of God's peace to you and your family as we celebrate, He who bent the heavens to take on flesh from the most blessed and ever-virgin Mary and was born in the humble cave in Bethlehem.

Merry Christmas!

Fr. John K. Lardas