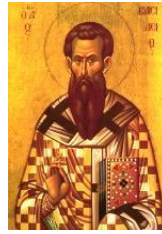


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EXPERIENCING CHRIST

WOULD WE BE AFFECTED if someone rose from the dead? We would probably say “Yes,” but the Lord says “No.” What does He know that we do not?

Throughout the centuries, and even today, many people have what might be called mystical experiences. They see visions and dream dreams, to quote the Prophet Joel. Thus, St Paul experienced the risen Christ on the road to Damascus and it changed his life. Similarly, St Peter and the other disciples encountered Christ risen from the dead and proclaimed it throughout the world. These experiences energized their ministries and jump-started the spread of the Gospel throughout the ancient world.

Such experiences continued throughout Christian history, right up to our own day. One well-known Christian thinker in the modern world, the Russian Orthodox bishop in London, Metropolitan Anthony Bloom (1914-2003) described his encounter with the Lord in these words: “I met Christ as a Person at a moment when I needed Him in order to live, and at a moment when I was not in search of Him. I was found; I did not find Him. “I was a teenager then ... I could not accept aimless happiness. Hardships and suffering had to be overcome; there was something beyond them. Happiness seemed to be stale if it had no further meaning ... I decided that I would give myself a year to see whether life had a meaning, and if I discovered it had none, I would not live beyond the year. I had no use for Church. I did not believe in God.”

Under duress, young Anthony attended a religious lecture at the Russian youth organization. He was greatly disturbed by the lecture and asked his mother for a copy of the New Testament to check the truth of what the speaker had been saying. He describes what happened: “I expected nothing good from my reading, so I counted the chapters of the four Gospels to be sure that I read the shortest, not to waste time unnecessarily. And thus, it was the Gospel according to St Mark which I began to read. “I do not know how to tell you of what happened. I will put it quite simply and those of you who have gone through a similar experience will know what came to pass. While I was reading the beginning of St Mark’s Gospel, before I reached the third chapter, I became aware of a Presence. I saw nothing. I heard nothing. It was no hallucination. It was a simple certainty that the Lord was standing there and that I was in the presence of Him whose life I had begun to read with such revulsion and such ill-will... This was my basic and essential meeting with the Lord. From then I knew that Christ did exist.”

PBS commentator Frederica Mathews-Green tells of a similar experience. She was a vocal agnostic who had dabbled in Hinduism. In *Facing East – A Pilgrim’s Journey into the Mysteries of Orthodoxy* (San Francisco, 1997), she describes her husband Gary as “a political animal who just didn’t think much about God.” She then tells how that changed: “Gary’s shell began to crack when a professor required his philosophy class to read a Gospel. As he read the words of Jesus, he became convinced that here was one who ‘speaks with authority.’ Since Jesus said there was a God, Gary began to doubt his doubting.”

Federica’s turn came on their honeymoon trip to Europe where the following took place: “One day in Dublin I looked at a statue of Jesus and was struck to my knees, hearing an interior voice say, ‘I am your life.’ I knew it was the One I had rejected and ridiculed, come at last to seize me forever.”

What was different about these people, compared to the brothers of the rich man in Christ’s parable?

Why “Few Are Chosen”: The Apostles were religious people; they observed the precepts of Judaism as practiced in their day. Others were contemptuous of religion and had ridiculed it. Yet somewhere deep inside them was a search for meaning, a hidden disposition to faith, even if they were not practicing any religion now. Thus, when these momentous experiences took place, they received them wholeheartedly and changed their entire way of life.

People who have no interest in God or in any kind of an interior life, who are content pursuing a materialist way of life might easily shrug off a spiritual experience as delusion. They might blame it on a touch of the flu or having too much to drink.

(NoviLeaflets2020)

SUNDAY 6th AFTER THE HOLY CROSS
Saturday, October 31 & Sunday, November 1, 2020

WEEKLY SERVICES

Daily Liturgy: Monday-Friday 8:30AM
Holy Liturgy: Saturday 4:30PM, Sunday 11:00AM
Matins/Orthos: Every Sunday 9:00AM
Holy Confession: Every Monday 4-6PM
Vespers: Every Saturday 3:00PM
Holy Rosary: Every Sunday 10:30AM

SPEEDY RECOVERY

Please continue to pray for our convalescing friends, including Archdeacon George Yany, Maggy Atallah, Jean Benoit, Nadia Casab, Jeanette Farewege, Nancy Gazzal, Daniel Klockowski, Rose Pawlinga, Brian Sagrestano, and Karen Zalatan. Please notify Fr. Shofany in case of illness.

WEEKLY OFFERINGS: THANK YOU!

Weekly Collection Oct 17/18: \$ 470.00 Weekly Collection Oct 24/25: \$ 441.00

Memorial Masses: \$ 50.00

† MEMORIAL MASSES †

THIS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family
† **Carmella Lalli, 13th Memorial Anniversary**, By Robert Lalli
† **Mary Murad**, By David & Janet George

THIS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family
† **Edgar Hallak, 2nd Memorial Anniversary**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family
† **Mary Murad**, By Alex Murad

NEXT SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family

NEXT SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

† **Eugene Hutchinson**, By Olga Hutchinson Byrne & Family
† **Julia Nassimos**, By Doris Hutchinson & Family