



THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE



THE GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE

**Prepared and presented
by
St. George Coptic Orthodox Church
Kensington, Sydney, Australia**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The Christian Meaning of Death
2. The Glory and Majesty of Heaven
3. Faith and Hope in Conquering Grief and Sorrow
4. Understanding Grief and Sorrow
5. Why the Third Day Prayer?
6. Why the Forty Day Memorial Liturgy?
7. Why do we Pray for the Dead?
8. The Resurrection of the Body

CHAPTER 1

THE CHRISTIAN MEANING OF DEATH

The loss of our beloved is painful and hurtful. It is imperative we understand the Biblical meaning of death.

Death is Release – “*Bring my soul out of prison.*” (Psalm 142:7).

Death is Sleep – “*Our friend Lazarus sleeps.*” (Psalm 11:11).

Death is Leaving a Tent – “*For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*” (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Death is Gain – “*To die is gain.*” (Philippians 1:21).

Death is Beneficial – “*The day of death is better than one’s birth.*” (Ecclesiastics 7:1).

One of the most beautiful illustrations of what death is really like for the Christian believer is the following story:

“There was a little boy who had an incurable illness. Month after month the mother tenderly nursed him. But as the time went by, the little fellow gradually began to realize he would not live. One day he asked his mother, ‘What is it like to die? Does it hurt?’ Tears filled the mother’s eyes. ‘Remember when you were a tiny boy and you used to play so hard that when night came you would be so tired even to undress? You would tumble into my bed and fall asleep. That was not your bed. It was not where you belonged. In the morning you would wake up and find yourself in your own bed. Your father had come, with big strong arms and carried you to your own bed. That’s what death is. We fall asleep, then, our heavenly Father picks us up with His mighty hands and carries us to heaven. Later, when we wake up, we find ourselves not in a strange place but in our own room, in a place where we belong.’”

That is what death is for the Christian; moving day. We move from one room in our Father’s house (a temporary room which St. Paul calls a tent) to a permanent room which shall be our very own in heaven. It is, in effect, a true homecoming. As the door closes on this life, God opens a new door to a heavenly life.

We leave the limited and go to the unlimited; we leave the time and go to beyond the time and will be in full fellowship with Christ, the Angels, the Martyrs, the Saints and the spirits of the righteous.

Christ conquered man's last enemy (death) and granted us eternal life, "*O death, where is your sting, O heads where is your victory.*" (*1 Corinthians 15: 54-55*).

The fear and pain of death is defeated by Christ's Resurrection, as we chant in our Doxologies saying, "Chant unto Him who was crucified, defeated death and humiliated it. Praise Him and exceedingly exalt Him." For Christ assured us, "*I am the Resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he dies, shall live and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*" (*John 11:25-26*).



CHAPTER 2

THE GLORY AND MAJESTY OF HEAVEN

Our hearts are comforted when we are reminded where our loved ones are resting.

St. Paul was given an opportunity by Christ to see paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). Totally overwhelmed by the splendor and beauty, St. Paul went on to write, “*Eye has not seen, ear not has not heard, nor has it ever entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him.*” (1 Corinthians 2:9).

At the Transfiguration the disciples were able to see the Divine light of the Person of Christ. St. Paul says that we are like spiritual mirrors that receive and reflect this light and glory of God (2 Corinthians 3:18).

In our journey, “*We see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face.*” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Christ, in His infinite wisdom, has given us a small outline of the glorious majesty of Heaven.

The Heavenly Jerusalem:

1. The Throne of God, “*The Lamb is in their midst.*” (Revelation 7:17).
2. The Four Incorporeal carrying the Throne of God, “Who chant saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.’”
3. The 24 Elders before the Throne (Revelation 4:8), “*Who chant saying, ‘You are worthy O Lord to receive glory, honour and power’*” (Revelation 4:11).
4. The 144, 000 undefiled.
5. The Cherubim and Seraphim.
6. “*There is no night*” (Revelation 22:5), “*no curse*” (Revelation 22:3).
7. “*It is lit up by the glory of God*” (Revelation 21:23).

8. No sadness or pain, *“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”* (Revelation 21:4).
9. A glorious place where God reigns forever (Revelation 22:5).
10. There is no hunger or thirst (Revelation 7:16).
11. There is continued renewal, *“Behold, I make all things new.”* (Revelation 21:5).



St. John Chrysostom says, *“When the eternal Kingdom is opened man shall see the King Himself, not in a mirror dimly but face to face, not by faith any more but by sight (1 Corinthians 13:12). The vision of the most beautiful and most desired face of Christ will nourish eternally and will permanently please the righteous that have entered heaven.”*

St. Symeon the New Theologian says, *“God will be seen by all and He will be looking at every one of us as if He was looking at us personally and we will be enjoying our conversation with God and be embraced by His love. God will be sharing Himself with each of us as if we were the only one.”*

“But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.” (Revelation 22:3-5).

CHAPTER 3

FAITH AND HOPE IN CONQUERING GRIEF AND SORROW

God's Response to Trials

1. God Feels for Us and is Distressed for our Distress

- *“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bore them and carried them all the days of old.” (Isaiah 63:9).*

2. God Accurately Weighs the ‘Dose’ of each Trial and the Exact Treatment Needed

- *“But God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13).*

3. God Shares Our Pains Like Someone Who Passed Through Trials Before – Like We Do

- *“For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted He is able to aid those who are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18).*
- *“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15).*
- *“Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.” (Luke 22:44).*

4. God Helps and Saves

- *“May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.” (Psalm 20:1).*
- *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.” (Psalm 50:15).*

- *“The Lord has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death.” (Psalm 118:18).*
- *“The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.” (Psalm 9:9).*
- *“This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” (Psalm 34:6).*
- *“I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.” (Exodus 19:4).*

5. God Comforts

- *“Who comforts us in all our tribulation that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” (2 Corinthians 1:4).*



6. God Heals...Revives and Conquers

- *“For He bruises, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands make whole.” (Job 5:18).*
- *“You, who have shown me great and severe troubles, shall revive me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth.” (Psalm 71:20).*

7. God Finds the Right Time for the Solution

- *“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.” (Ecclesiastics 3:11).*
- *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman.” (Galatians 4:4).*

8. God Might Give Us an Answer...But it Might Not be Our Healing Answer

- *“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments*

and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?” (Romans 11:33-34).

- *“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this’ (John 13:7).*
- *“If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?” (Jeremiah 12:5).*

Hope

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Life is a journey that sooner or later must end. We are like passengers on a train that stops every now and then to allow people to come off. They leave us and we bid them goodbye.

Have some of our loved ones that we are saddened by their departure and pained by their absence gone off the train? This must have happened...but the most important matter is their safe arrival to their desired destination...the Kingdom of Heaven!!!

As the Lord knows how weak we are, He does not ask us not to grieve, which is beyond our weak nature. However, He forbids one type of grief, that which abandons all hope.

It is therefore natural that we grieve over the departure of our loved ones and shed tears.

- We grieve...but not like others who have no hope



- We grieve...like that father of a bride, handing his daughter to her bridegroom, his heart breaking to see her go, but happy that she will rejoice in her new home. Soon the pain of parting is transformed into the tranquility of seeing her life fruitful. Her children are like new olive branches around her. She is blessed with her husband, who gives her his life.

It is natural to mourn, but it is imperative that our mourning is not similar to that of others in the world that have no hope in Eternal Life.

“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

When Life Is Turned Upside Down

When we experience significant losses, our lives are turned upside down. Some losses in life we anticipate: classmates graduate and friends go their separate ways, a child grows up and leaves home, our youthfulness and health fade as we age. Other losses come unexpectedly, and nothing could have adequately prepared us for their impact: A loved one dies, an illness strikes, a house or business is lost.



Whether the loss is something we anticipate or something that shocks us, large or small, it leaves a hole inside us. When we lose something or someone significant we feel alone. We wonder if God can hear us in our pain. Despite our difficult feelings, God has promised that He will always be with us, even in the darkest, most lonely moments. He has not left us alone and is not silent about our fears. He speaks to us in the Bible and guides us with His Spirit as we face painful losses.

“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.” (Psalm 34:18).

“‘Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,’ says the Lord, who has compassion on you.” (Isaiah 54:10).

CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF AND SORROW?

Grief is the natural response to significant loss. It's the process of saying goodbye to someone or something we love and no longer have. As difficult as it is to grieve our losses, grief is the process that allows us to recover from loss. Grief is often messy and unpredictable, and follows no set timetable. But it is within this grief that God grants us comfort and hope.

When we lose someone or something significant, we are also faced with a set of secondary losses. Life has changed. We may no longer have our daily routines, future plans, income, job titles, or the roles we have become accustomed to.

Secondary Losses

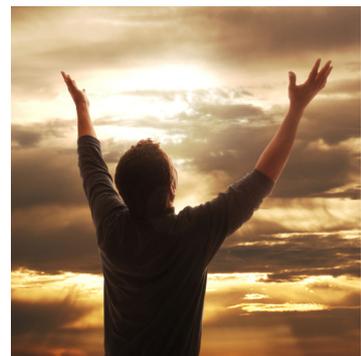
Loss of identity – Who am I now without the person I lost? Who am I without my job?

Loss of security – How am I going to make it on my own? How are the bills going to get paid?

Loss of future plans – How am I going to face a different future than what I expected?

Loss of routines – What am I supposed to do with my self now?

We want a world that makes sense, is predictable and orderly – a life in which we can protect ourselves from pain. Losses in life make us aware of the reality that we are not as in control as we thought we were. As a result of feeling out of control, we may feel afraid and helpless. Searching to get that control back is our natural instinct, but not the solution. Ultimately, the answer lies in finding the courage to turn over our desire for control into the hands of God. Part of the grieving process is facing the questions we did not think we could ask. We can face those questions with confidence knowing that God will see us through each one of them.



Stages of Grief

Grief can be a very confusing time. People often wonder if what they are feeling is normal. Though no two people go through grief exactly the same way, there are several stages that have been identified.

Grief Stage	Description
Denial	Trying to avoid the reality of the loss. A grieving person may say, "This isn't happening; my loss wasn't really that bad; I'm fine."
Anger	Feeling anger at God, at oneself, or misplaced anger at others.
Bargaining	Seeking in vain a way to gain back the loss that cannot be retrieved.
Depression	Realizing that the loss is permanent. This results in extreme sadness, emptiness and loneliness.
Acceptance	Learning to live with the loss. Things do not go back to the way they were before the loss (they never can), but the person finds a way to move forward in his or her life. This is sometimes described as finding a "new normal".

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance." (Ecclesiastes 3:1-4).

Not everyone goes through all the stages above or in this exact order. Many people also experience other stages and feelings such as, shock and emotional numbness, guilt for something they think they did, or regret for something left undone.

While these feelings are normal, getting stuck in one of the stages can put a person's recovery in jeopardy. Anger can turn into bitterness or revenge. Denial can last too long. Grief can go off track easily. That is

why no one should grieve alone. We need the people God has placed in our lives: close friends, family members, pastors and sometimes professional grief counselors and support groups.

Finding Meaning In Loss

Grief is a terrible feeling, but not everything that comes out of grief needs to be terrible. Valuable and even beautiful things can emerge from the heap of our pain. Something good coming out of a bad event, never makes the bad event itself good or justifies it. But seeing what is good can help us to move beyond our suffering. Here are some examples:



1. Greater Empathy – Grief can make us aware of the wounds in others in ways we did not understand before. It can stir in us a desire to help others, and give us a knowledge of how to help them better. We may learn how to hug someone who is grieving, or how a phone call or warm meal can be comforting. We will be able to “*mourn with those who mourn*” (Romans 12:15).

“Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:3-6).

2. Having Healthier Priorities – Loss can bring things into focus. For example, even though losing a job is very difficult, a person might come to understand that his or her identity is not tied up in what he or she does for work – and that we are loved by God for who we are, not how successful we are. Regret for things left undone or unsaid can remind us of what is most important in life and help us value what is good and beautiful in a whole new way. We can emerge from our grief stronger people, finding strength we never knew we had.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of our faith

produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” (James 1:2-4).

3. Deeper Communion with God –

Many people who have gone through grief have testified that they have come out on the other side with a renewed sense of God’s love for them. Grief can start with fracturing your faith, but end with a deeper trust in God, and a greater reliance on Him as your source of comfort.



“This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” (1 Peter 1:3-7).

4. New and Renewed Relationships – Sometimes when we lose someone or something important, we find the support we need in other places: our family members, close friends, Church family and maybe even in people we have never met before. Loss can have a surprising way of strengthening friendships, renewing family ties that have grown distant, or forming new friendships.

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2).

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8).

(Excerpts taken from “Heaven’s Comfort” by Dr. Lillian Alfy and “Finding Hope in Jesus: Comfort for Loss” ROSE Publishing).

Keys to Conquer Anxiety

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7).

Don't become depressed and worried as you are passing through trials and affliction, this will surely not help or lift this affliction. Instead, there are five keys to use during times of distress:

1. The Key of Prayer

With the power of prayer we face all our problems, trials and afflictions. *“Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.” (Psalm 50:15).*



“Lord, we do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

“The Lord is my light and salvation, whom shall I fear.” (Psalm 27:1).

“May the Lord answer you in the day of trouble. May the name of the God of Jacob defend you.” (Psalm 20:1).

“But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord.” (Micah 3:8).

2. The Key of Promises

Remember God's promises in the Bible. Underline them. Ask Him to fulfil them.

- *“For I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you.” (Acts 18:10).*
- *“Do not be afraid...I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.” (Genesis 15:1).*
- *“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28).*

3. The Key of Confidence

Trust that God can reclaim all that is lost; change all situations to the best and all afflictions to the exact opposite.

- *“I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.” (Job 42:2).*
- *“All things are possible to him who believes.” (Mark 9:23).*
- *“With God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26).*

4. The Key of Hope

Remember that God’s door is always open before you even if all other doors were closed:

“See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.” (Revelation 3:8).

Do not focus on closed doors, but look to the key in God’s hand; and even when God delays His solution to your problem, remember His promise:

“Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord!” (Psalm 27:14).

5. The Key of Eternity

Looking forward to eternity lessens the severity of pain and distress, and lifts our hearts to the divine treasures, *“We do not look at the things which are seen, but the things which are unseen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:18).*

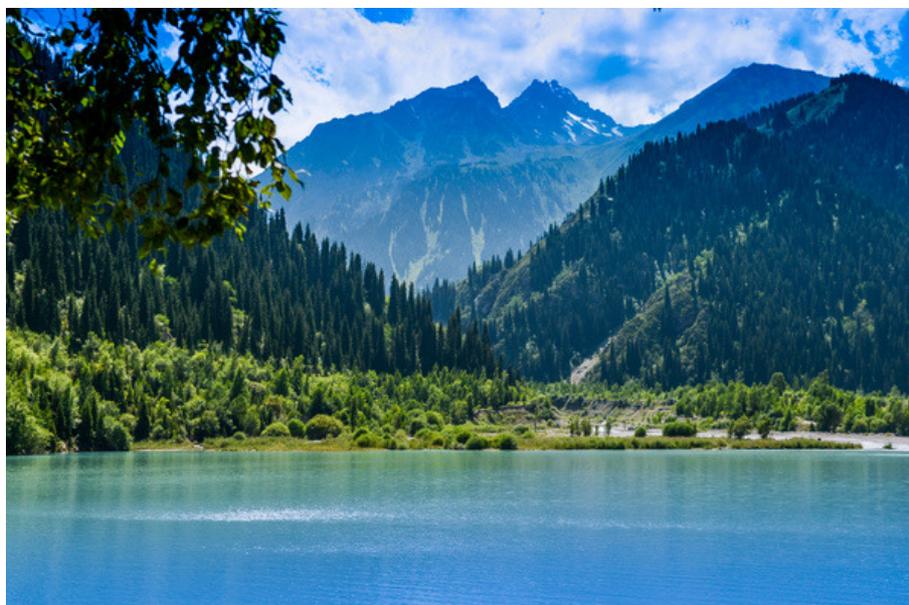


CHAPTER 5

WHY THE THIRD DAY PRAYER?

The Church prays the prayers of the Third Day to remind us of Christ's glorious Resurrection on the Third Day. It is designed to bring comfort and peace to the family. This short prayer prayed in the home of the deceased is always chanted in the joyful or normal tune, never sorrowful tune, as its purpose is to dispel the spirit of sorrow, grief, pain. The Gospel reading confirms Christ's promises, "*I am the Resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he dies, shall live.*" (John 11:25).

At the conclusion of the service, the Priest splashes water, symbolic of the Holy Spirit who comforts us in time of tribulation. Parsley is also used as its colour is green, it is a plant and available all year round, symbolizing the perpetual spirit which lives forever.



CHAPTER 6

WHY THE FORTY DAY MEMORIAL LITURGY?

The purpose of this Liturgy is to remind us of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven, forty days after His Resurrection. It is designed to readjust our focus towards Heaven, our destination and home. The words of Christ comfort us, *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s house there are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.”* (John 14:1-3).

St. Basil the Great teaches that, “Many rooms means variety of offices. As one star differs from another there will be different degrees of honour and glory. Even if the excellence of one from the other is slight, God will take into account the slightest deed.”

St. Isaac the Syrian says, “In Heaven each one will be enlightened by the one spiritual Sun, according to his own degree. Each one enjoys the grace and happiness according to the value and virtues they acquired on earth.”



CHAPTER 7

WHY DO WE PRAY FOR THE DEAD?

Christianity is a religion of love. Praying for the dead is an expression of love. We ask God to remember our departed because we love them. Love relationships survive death and even transcend it. There is an inner need for a relationship with a loved one to continue to be expressed even after a loved one has passed away; often even more so after they have passed away, since the physical communication is no longer possible. The Church encourages us to express our love for our departed brethren through memorial services and prayers.



The anniversary of the death of a loved one is very painful. The Church helps us cope with this pain by encouraging us to have memorial prayers offered in Church for departed loved ones on the anniversaries of their deaths, that is, forty days after the death, six months, a year and so on. This gives us the opportunity to offer something for our loved ones. It helps express and eventually resolve our grief.

Death may take loved ones out of sight but it does not take them, out of mind or out of heart. We continue to love them and think of them as we believe they continue to love us and think of us. How can a mother forget a child who has passed over to the life beyond? The same love which led her to pray for that child when they lived will guide her to pray for them now, for in Christ all are living.

The same love makes her wish to communicate with that child. Yet, all communication must take place in Christ and through Christ. No other communication with the dead is possible or lawful for the Christian. God is God of the living. Our dear ones live in Him. Only through Him is it possible for us to communicate with them. Every liturgy in the Orthodox Church contains prayers for the dead such as the following:

The ancient Eucharistic prayers of both East and West intercede for the dead as well as for the living.

Just as we pray for the deceased, so we believe they continue to love us, remember us, and pray for us now that they are closer to God. We cannot forget the example of the rich man in Hades asking Abraham to send

Lazarus to warn his brothers lest they too go to that place of torment. Though he had left his life he did not cease to be concerned for his brothers still on earth.

The Orthodox Church prays for the dead to express her faith that all who have fallen asleep in the Lord, live in the Lord; their lives are hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3). Whether on earth or in heaven, the Church is a single family, one Body in Christ. Death changes the location but it cannot sever the bond of love. *“God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matthew 22:32)*. He is *“the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3:6)*. He is the God of persons who, though dead physically, are very much alive in His presence.

What can we expect of our prayers for the dead?

Since a person’s eternal destiny is determined immediately after death (though one must wait for the General Judgment to receive the full measure of one’s reward), we must not expect our prayers to snatch an unbeliever from Hades to Paradise. It is our present life that determines our eternal destiny. Now



is the time to repent and accept God’s grace. Death puts an end to that state and commits each person to his special judgment. This is why the Lord said that work must be done “while it is day” because “the night cometh when no man can work”. “Day” means the present life, “when it is still possible to believe”, writes St. Chrysostom, while “night” is the condition after death.

What happens beyond the grave belongs entirely to God. He has told us as much as we need to know; the rest is covered with a veil of mystery which man’s curiosity is incapable of piercing. The faithful have committed themselves to God for the duration of their earthly lives. Now, it is well and good for them to commit their departed loved ones to the mercy of God through prayer, for they have the assurance that God, in the riches of His mercy, has ways to help them beyond our knowing.

CHAPTER 8

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

When trying to describe the resurrection of the dead, St. Paul uses an analogy from nature. He reminds his readers that when they sow grain, the seed must first “die” before it can produce new life. Though the “body” of the seed is different from the “body” of the full-grown wheat, there is still continuity between them.

What is reaped is different than what is sown, and yet it comes from what is sown.

He goes on to explain that the same is true with the resurrection of the dead. It is “sown” a physical body, he says, but it is raised a spiritual body.

*What is sown is perishable, what it raised is imperishable.
It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory.
It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.
It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body.
(1 Corinthians 15:42-44)*

In the resurrection we shall not have our weak earthly bodies but new bodies, fashioned by God. Yet there shall be continuity between them. It will be our present body but transformed and renewed as St. Paul describes, “*But our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power which enables Him even to subject all things to Himself.*” (Philippians 3:20).

In the final analysis, the questions of “How are the dead raised?”, “With what kind of body do they come?” (1 Corinthians 15:35), remain beyond human understanding: “*Lo! I tell you a mystery!*” (1 Corinthians 15:51). The main truth is that God, in His own way, will transform us so that we may continue to live in constant fellowship with Him, glorifying Him through all eternity.

Speaking of the continuity between the earthly and the resurrected body, St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes,
“*It is this selfsame body that is raised, although not in its present state of weakness; for it will ‘put on incorruption’ (1 Corinthians 15:53) and so*

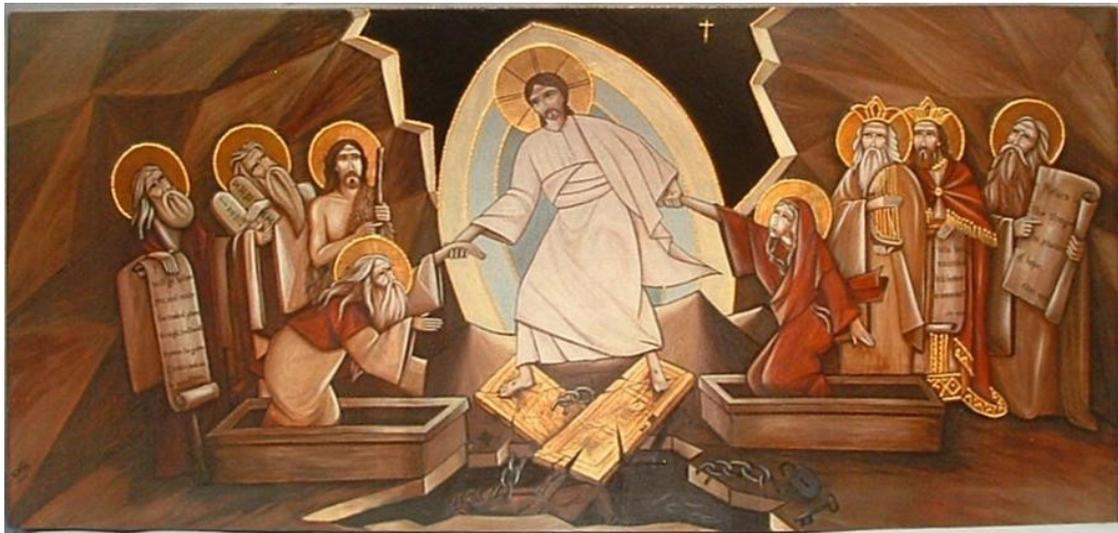
be transformed...it will no longer need the foods which we now eat to keep it alive...for it will be made spiritual and will become something marvelous, such as we cannot properly describe.”

Both the Old and New Testaments agree that the body and soul cannot be separated. We are both *psyche* (soul) and *soma* (body). We are a unity (psychosomatic). We are not just one or the other; we are both.

As a result of Christ’s victory over death, the dead will rise again in Christ to enjoy eternal life in spiritualized and transfigured bodies and in a totally new creation. St. Gregory Palamas said, “When God is said to have made man according to His own image, the word “man” means neither the soul by itself nor the body by itself, but both together”.

St. Athanasius speaks of the resurrection of the body as the great monument of Christ’s victory over death;

“The supreme object of His coming was to bring about the resurrection of the body. This was to be the monument to His victory over death, the assurance to all that He had Himself conquered corruption and that their own bodies also would eventually be incorrupt; and it was in token of that and as a pledge of the future resurrection that He kept His body incorrupt.”





**AND I HEARD A LOUD VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING,
“BEHOLD, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN,
AND HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM, AND THEY SHALL
BE HIS PEOPLE. GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM
AND BE THEIR GOD. AND GOD WILL WIPE AWAY
EVERY TEAR FROM THEIR EYES; THERE SHALL BE NO
MORE DEATH, NOR SORROW, NOR CRYING. THERE
SHALL BE NO MORE PAIN, FOR THE FORMER THINGS
HAVE PASSED AWAY.**

REVELATION 21: 3-4