



The Nativity Fast

Fr. Luke Sidarous - Dec 10, 2016

This season of the Church, in these holy days, we read:

“God bowed the heavens and came down” Ps. 18: 9

And united with our nature, He renewed our nature; He created us again, through His incarnation.

He changed our nature, and restored us to our original image, that He created; and prepared for us heaven and the heavenly inheritance.

So, when we say “He bowed down the heavens and came down” we say that He came down for the sake of the sinners.

He searched for the sinners, He said He did not come for the righteous, but for the sinners. He searched for the lost sheep, those who are drowning in sin.

This concerns us, when one realises they are a sinner. Then he will find that Christ is his portion. So, when we search the heart, and repent, and we truly realise that we are sinners, then we deserve Christ.

And anyone who justifies himself, believing they are good, and in need of nothing, is the one who boasts in himself, glories in himself, will be deprived of the grace.

Because this grace is for the sinners.

So, these days, when we sing praise, awaiting the birth of Christ, everyone must be vigilant, and confesses their need for Christ.

As Christ changed our nature, but because of sin, we harm ourselves, but He is able to renew us again, and change us again, and can create us anew.

The holy fathers of the Church said that repentance is like the Baptism.

In the beginning, when Christ created man, He created man in His image, but man disfigured this image, this creation.

Christ created us again, we are born again, according to His image, again.

Then, we are created in Christ Jesus, according to the image of God.

This is not the outward appearance; eyes, nose, black or white; no. this image is imprinted in man, not visible, not on the outside.

This new creation is an inner creation.

I desire that we gain a spiritual discipline, that each of us could see each one as truly the image of God.

Then, I can ask Christ to truly purify my eyes, so, I can see clearly each one as the image of Christ, the image of God.

And according to our physical senses, when one sees an icon of Christ, they give it honour, and show respect. But now, we see according to the eyes of the world, we see with an eye for criticism, an eye for judgement, an eye that lacks love, an eye that lacks purity.

Our eyes have become confused, where is that eye that sees the icon and the image of Christ in my brother.

If my eye has become truly pure, then, I will see the truth, and what is the truth?

That my brother is the image of Christ.

Why do we have contentions? Because the eye has become blind, the sight is lost. Then I will see my brother as a bad person, I will see the sinner as truly evil..

And see all the faults in all the people.

Then I would say the eye has become blind.

But if we return to our own root, if we repent, if God opens our eyes, we will be able to see each person as the image of Christ, the icon of Christ, created in Christ.

We all say "Our Father who art in Heaven" then my brother is also a son of our Father, then why do I see my brother as a bad person? Only because my eye is bad.

So, if God blesses us these days, then our eyes are purified, we repent, God will cleanse our eyes, our sight, will purify our thoughts, and return to our root. Then, when I will look at anyone, I will see Christ in them.

So, if one looks at the outside of anyone, then he will judge, and sins, and will speak evil of others, will gossip, because he is blind.

But when ones eyes are clean, will see the beauty of each person.

Anyone who puts on dark glasses, will see everything dark, but the one who sees through the eyes of Christ; how did Christ see the sinners? He loved them, He was known as the lover of sinners and tax collectors. And when He loved them, He changed them, He redeemed them, He created them anew. Who were they? Us, when Christ took the old lump of clay and restored it to its original glory.

Don't you say that you are baptised, and a new creation, according to the image of God; also, your brother is like you. All of us in the Church, we are born again, from the same womb, in the baptism, and watered by the same Holy Spirit.

Then this is a serious matter, that one has to repent, and to start seeing all people with Christ's eyes, everyone is good.

The eye that is created in us is able to give an excuse to all the people, except myself.

Why this person does these things? Maybe he has a reason.

But why I do these things? I am without an excuse.

But we do the opposite. We criticise all conduct, but my behaviour is always for a good reason.

When I repent, the opposite is true, I judge myself in everything. Because I am a sinner. And give reason to my brother, because they are the image of God. This practice is good.

It is good for these days, but requires many prayers, requires a serious person who asks God.

"Lord open my eyes, and restore my sight. I am blind, why all the people are evil and sinners in my eyes? one is evil, and another is a sinner, and another is an adulterer, another is a thief?"

I can see all evil.

I long to have eyes that sees the image of Christ in everyone.”

The image of Christ is pleasant, beautiful, revered and respected.

See how judgement has blinded us, pride, each one of us thinks he is better; look carefully.

There is none of us that is without sin; do not excuse yourself, but excuse your brother.

Have mercy on everyone, this is the eye of Christ; have compassion on everyone, be patient and encourage the weak, support them; this is good.

That is why I say, we come to Church, but we have not changed yet, because this matter needs repentance. And repentance needs many prayers and much humility, and many tears, and persistent pleas, for Christ to change my eye to see all the people through.

I desire that my eye would change, to live in the light, I desire to see goodness.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” Mt. 5: 8

That is the eye.

Glory be to God Amen.

