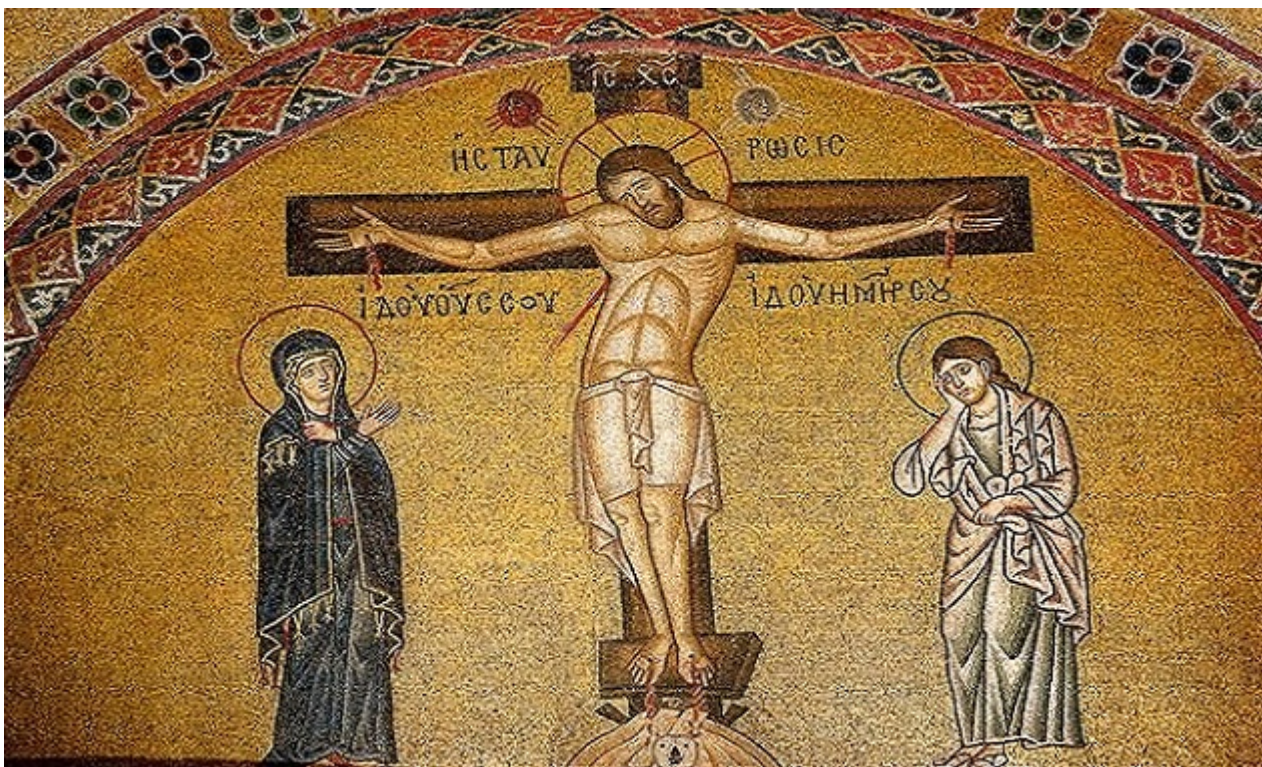


The Cross and the Resurrection (Protopresbyter Vasileios Kalliakmanis)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



a) The Cross leads to the Resurrection, Great Friday bears fruit on the bright Sunday of Easter. Sorrow, listlessness and despair make way for the joy and peace of the Resurrection. Without the Cross, the Resurrection is inconceivable and without the Resurrection the Cross has no point. It might be better to say that the Resurrection is concealed within the Cross. This is why orthodox Easter is both the Cross and the Resurrection. And we all take part, body and soul, in the great feast of faith and the encounter with the Risen Lord. Proceeding beside Him and being crucified with Him makes us participants in the divine light and brings us into real communion with our brothers and sisters in Christ.



b) Saint John the Evangelist, in the Gospel for the Resurrection liturgy (1, 1-7) tells us that the Word of God became a human person. He took on human flesh and dwelt among other people, in this way manifesting His divine glory. It's the

true light, which lightens every person who comes into the world. But for us to recognize the divine presence, however, we first have to have become familiar with the divine light through baptism in the name of the Triune God. So it's entry into the body of Christ, the Church, and partaking of the holy sacraments that makes us receptors of divine enlightenment.

c) At the same time, continuous human collaboration and effort through an ascetic struggle is required. "Let us cleanse our senses and we shall see Christ in the unapproachable light of the resurrection" writes John the Damascan in the first ode of the canon for Easter Matins. Fasting, repentance, self-control, internal affliction and the practical display of love all play their part in this. Some people see Christ only as God; others see Him only as a person. The former set Him so far above us that they can never reach him; the latter strip Him of divinity, thus depriving us all of the chance to become gods ourselves by grace and to overcome death and decay.

d) As both God and a person, however, Christ opens the way to victory over death and becomes the "first of those born from the dead". Any Christian can follow this path, too. We crucify our passions in order to rise again with Christ. We die through repentance and tears over a life of sin, and taste the good things of the resurrection even in this life. It's our pride to keep the divine commandments and make our own the virtues, which liberate us from death and decay. "Death has no dominion over him" (*Rom. 6, 9*).

e) The light of the resurrection is shed abundantly over all the world. But we need clear sense organs and clear eyes to recognize the energy of the light of the resurrection. Spiritual blindness often impedes this communion. But on the day of the Resurrection, Easter Sunday, everyone feels, however faintly, a ray of the divine light illumining their heart and mind. In the Eastern, Orthodox tradition, despite the alienation, some folk customs have been preserved which demonstrate that people haven't entirely forgotten the light of their baptism. The candle, the Easter greeting, the common table, the embrace of love in Christ, and the visit to graves are some of these.

f) The Easter candle, which, according to custom is a gift from a godparent, shines and illumines, reminding us of the Cross and Resurrection in the Christian life. Also, the greeting “Christ has risen”/“He has risen indeed”, which in some parts replaces all other greetings for forty days, is expressive of the experience of the resurrection. And also the visit to the graves of the departed on these holy days shows the faith of people that the Resurrection of Christ revivifies their souls and is a precursor of the resurrection of the whole human race.

g) But the pinnacle of people’s efforts to become sharers in the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord is the internal need to partake of the sacrament of the Divine Eucharist. As long as this comes with a “clear conscience”, “illumined heart” and love for other people. Then, according to Saint John Chrysostom, “All partake of the cup of faith. All enjoy the riches of His goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that they have fallen; for forgiveness has risen from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Death of our Saviour has set us free... Christ has risen and the angels rejoice. Christ has risen, and life is liberated”. The law is overcome and joy overwhelms our hearts.