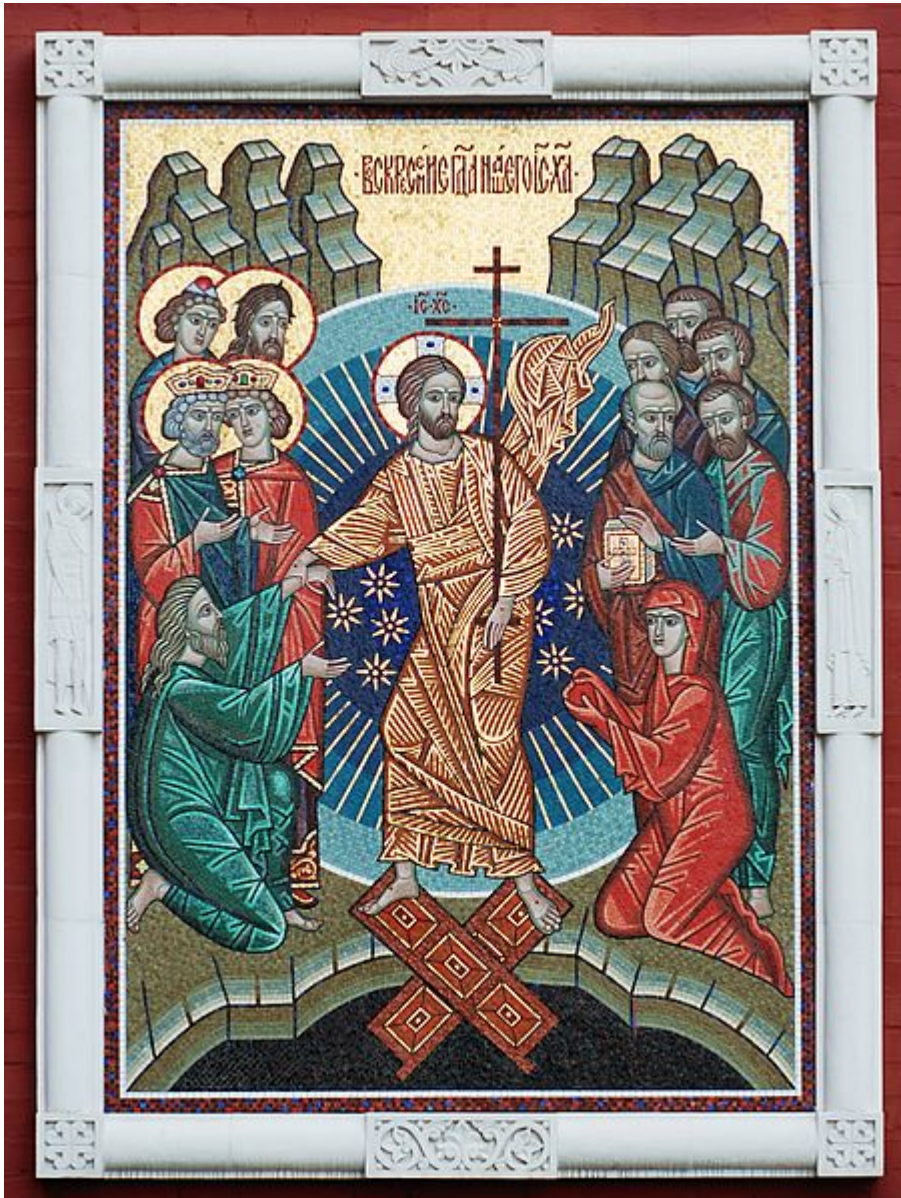


30 Μαΐου 2017

The Crisis (Fr. Andrew Phillips, France)

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Icon of the Resurrection

It has become commonplace to hear or read that ‘the Orthodox Church is in a state of crisis’. Of course this is untrue, indeed it is ontologically impossible, for the gates of Hell shall not prevail. What people mean is rather that the outward, fallen human organization of the Church is in crisis. In one local church a Patriarch resigns and many of its bishops admit to having lied about a bloodthirsty regime. In another

church the Patriarch is seriously ill, married Metropolitans vie for his place. Bishops declare themselves hostile to monasticism, though they themselves are supposed to be monks. Other bishops openly proclaim their sympathies with Freemasonry. A slavish and shameful attitude to the State is widespread. The people are left in ignorance for lack of pastors and pastoral leadership. But not only are we witnesses to this 'semi-Orthodoxy', but also to a 'neo-Orthodoxy'. So-called theologians preach ecumenism, local churches are rent asunder by calendar disputes. Division and pain seem to be all around. —Indeed outwardly, to those who have not seen the Risen Christ behind this Body of Christ Who suffers on the Cross of human infidelity, the picture must seem grim.

Inspired theologians and hierarchs of the free part of the Russian Church, praying and [working](#) at Jordanville and elsewhere have analyzed this situation. They have developed a theological understanding of the period we are living through, an age of apostasy, indeed the beginning of the Apocalypse. The source of this apostasy lies in the definitive separation of the local church of Rome from the Orthodox Church and Her teachings on the Holy Trinity, the Son of God and in particular the Holy Spirit. Since this separation from the Church in 1054, apostasy has begun in the world, slowly developing over the centuries and spreading throughout the world; secularizing itself this apostasy has become known as a 'westernisation'. It is no other than the desecration of life, in other words the growth of the secular at the expense of the sacred to the point where nothing is sacred, nothing is honored or valued or respected any longer, to the point of ultimate blasphemy, the worship of Satan. A new world has been founded, autonomous of the Word of Christ and His Holy Spirit. This process of desecration came to Russia at the end of the seventeenth century and then culminated in the great Russian Apostasy of 1917. With the death of the last Orthodox Empire on earth, the whole Orthodox Church has been attacked from all sides, in an effort to destroy the Church's influence. They have wanted to take away from the Church the hallowing power of the Holy Spirit, the power to «sanctify» all aspects of human life, they have wanted to reduce Her to an empty shell. This attack is the ultimate one to remove from the Church the transfiguring power of holiness, the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from God the Father and comes to those who are worthy through the Body of Christ, the Church. This attack is then none other than an attack on the Church. To counter it, it would seem that what is required is a reaffirmation at every level, social, cultural, political and economic, of the Church, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The reaffirmation that the Church is One would counter this attack socially. Today, through the heresy of ecumenism, the oneness of the Church is attacked. Ecumenism is in fact the ideology of the Antichurch, whose master is Antichrist.

The reaffirmation of the oneness of the Church would transfigure the way of life of all those who entered Her embrace, and so socially transfigure our existence on Earth. The acceptance of this oneness is the acceptance of Christ Who is One, the acceptance of Christ in all His fullness and beauty, which was lost outside the Church in the West when it was desired to replace Him by a human being, His «Vicar».

The reaffirmation that the Church is Holy is essential if mankind is to be saved culturally. Under the effects of apostasy, we see more and more how church culture, the sense of churchliness, «tserkovnost», is being lost. This attack is being carried out under the banners of modernism whose purpose is to annihilate all sense of Tradition, that is to say, the workings in history of the Divine and saving Providence of the God of Love through the Holy Spirit. It was this Holy Spirit Who was rejected by the leaders of the West in favor of human agency. Modernism, with its reforming, renovating spirit, started by attacking the Church calendar and then set its intellectual victims to work on diluting the canonical and liturgical traditions of the Church. Not understanding the divine-human nature of the Church, they saw in Her inspired traditions only the accidental events of human history. Modernism is in fact a new outburst of iconoclasm whose aim is to demolish the iconographic and sacred Tradition of the Church, Her transfiguring power of holiness, the mystery of Her sanctification. Modernism says: we know better than two thousand years of the outpouring of the Spirit of God on man. Only the reaffirmation of the Holiness of the Church will save mankind culturally, will save the best in his culture, and thus bring those of good will to the awareness that one cannot tamper with the dynamism of Church Tradition, with that which is holy, for «our God is a consuming fire».

The reaffirmation that the Church is Catholic will save mankind politically. The catholicity of the Church (Her unity in diversity in all places and at all times) is based on Her very theology of the Holy Trinity, which was lost by the West after the eleventh century. The lack of understanding of the catholicity of the Church (right up to the total deformation of the very word «catholic») has for centuries caused division and strife in the world. First Europe was divided by «Wars of Religion», then by tribal nationalisms resulting in World War. Today Europe and the whole world is threatened by the opposite trend, the movement under the direction of Freemasonry towards world government, the convergence of formerly hostile blocs, the formation of the United States of Europe, the New Babylon. Patriotism is mocked and scourged, slandered by confusion with nationalism as moves are made to prepare the enthronement of Antichrist in Jerusalem. Only the reaffirmation of the Catholicity of the Church, in Her theology of the Holy Trinity can save mankind

politically.

The reaffirmation that the Church is Apostolic can save man economically. For centuries the Western world, and thus the westernized world, has been divided into first Roman Catholic and Protestant, then into collectivism (socialism) and individualism (capitalism), ultimately into communist atheism and materialist 'mammonism'. The Church in Her Apostles (Acts 2: 42-47), and subsequently in pious lay people and especially Her monasteries, settled once and for all the question of property, economic development and also ecological stewardship of the Earth's resources. It is in the present world's rejection of the apostolicity of the Church, so particularly apparent in Her monastic tradition, that its economic problems and divisions have taken root. Only the reaffirmation that the Church is Apostolic can save humanity from economic and thus ecological catastrophe.

In Greek the word «crisis» means judgement. Indeed whenever a crisis occurs, a judgement is made—against us or for us, according to how we react in that crisis. It is therefore ever more urgent for us to understand the Church and to enter into Her mind and life. And without the affirmation, individually and collectively, of the Orthodox Church, of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, we, mankind, are lost.

May the Risen Christ, Who shines forth in the darkness of the present age help us to affirm Her and our life in Her, that we may all come safely into the brightness of His Everlasting Kingdom.

By Rev. Deacon [now Priest] Andrew Phillips, France

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