



Приходскій листокъ

Свято-Вознесенской церкви

въ городѣ Сакраменто

Западно-Американская епархія

Русская Православная Церковь Заграницей

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Пасхальное Посланіе Высокопреосвященнѣйшаго Митрополита ЛАВРА, Первоіерарха Русской Зарубежной Церкви. Христось Воскресе!

Радуюсь о Христѣ Воскресшемъ, Начальникѣ и Совершителѣ вѣры и спасенія нашего, сердечно привѣтствую Преосвященныхъ архипастырей, всечестныхъ отцовъ-сослужителей и боголюбивыхъ чадъ Русской Зарубежной Церкви съ міроспасительнымъ торжествомъ Святой Пасхи!

Пасхальная радость есть прежде всего радость церковная. Мы сопереживаемъ Воскресеніе Христово и знаемъ, что праздновать Пасху нужно въ обновленномъ состояніи души, чтобы чувствовать свое совозстаніе Человѣколюбцу, ибо только въ этомъ выражается наше участіе въ торжествѣ, какъ пишетъ апостоль Павелъ: *«Пасха наша – Христось, закланъ за насъ. Посему станемъ праздновать не со старою закваскою, не съ закваскою порока и лукавства, но съ опресноками чистоты и истины»* (1 Кор. 5, 7-8). Такоговаго участія въ празднованіи Пасхи хочу пожелать всѣмъ словами святителя Григорія Богослова: *«да обновится у тебя вся жизнь, да обновятся всѣ пути твоей дѣятельности: такъ обновляется духомъ человѣкъ, такъ чествуется день духовнаго обновленія»*.

Господь создаетъ всякаго человѣка другомъ Себѣ; и эта дружба становится еще болѣе тѣсной въ нашемъ крещеніи, когда мы вступаемъ въ Его Церковь. Каждый человѣкъ является другомъ Божиимъ, какъ въ церковныхъ пѣснопѣніяхъ именуется святой Лазарь Четверодневный; и въ каждомъ изъ насъ когда-то жилъ этотъ другъ Христовъ: жилъ любовью, постояннымъ

молитвеннымъ общеніемъ и дружбой съ Нимъ. Иногда это у людей бывало въ отрочествѣ, иногда и позже, но въ сердцѣ каждаго изъ насъ когда-то жилъ этотъ другъ Творца. Съ теченіемъ времени этотъ другъ въ насъ умеръ. Тѣмъ не менѣе, мы не падаемъ духомъ и, покланяясь нынѣ Воскресенію Христову, мы покланяемся надеждѣ, ибо когда наступила крестная смерть Спасителя, когда, казалось, все было кончено и гробъ былъ запечатанъ, тогда именно воскресъ Господь. Наша надежда въ томъ, что нѣтъ конченнаго человѣка, что каждый изъ насъ не только въ жизни будущей воскреснетъ, но и здѣсь, на землѣ, можетъ воскреснуть изъ пропасти грѣховной къ жизни обновленной, доброй и христіанской, ибо Господь крѣпче смерти, Онъ ее побѣдилъ въ Своемъ Воскресеніи и въ чудесномъ воскрешеніи Лазаря, Онъ при нашемъ желаніи и активномъ стремленіи къ Нему можетъ совершить это чудо и въ нашемъ сердцѣ, въ нашей жизни.

Христосуясь нынѣ съ вами, дорогіе о Господѣ отцы, братіе, сестры и чада Русской Зарубежной Церкви, молитвенно желаю, чтобы этотъ другъ Христовъ воскресъ въ сердцахъ каждаго изъ насъ, чтобы мы обновились, стали лучше и приблизились къ Воскресшему Спасителю нашему!

Мысленно даю троекратное цѣлованіе и всѣму богохранимому русскому народу, радуюсь о томъ, что хотя и *«царствуетъ адъ, но не вѣнчуетъ надъ родомъ человѣческимъ»*, какъ читаемъ въ канонѣ Великой Субботы. Что означаютъ сіи

слова? То, что адъ продолжаетъ существовать, но, слава Богу, «не вѣчнуетъ» надъ людьми, и всякій, кто дѣятельно стремится къ Богу, благоговѣнно приобщается Ему въ церковныхъ таинствахъ и борется по мѣрѣ силъ со своими слабостями, благодаря тридневному Христову Возстанію избавленъ отъ власти нечистыхъ силъ. Такъ и народъ нашъ нынѣ постепенно избавляется отъ власти ада, преодолеваетъ послѣдствія совѣтскаго времени, тянется ко Христу, возвращается къ своимъ историческимъ корнямъ, возрождается и обновляется.

О сей пасхальной благодати обновления да будутъ всѣмъ намъ ходатаи передъ Богомъ святые Новомученики и Исповѣдники Россійскіе, окропившіе кровью своею, ставшую сѣменемъ настоящаго возрожденія, всѣ концы Земли Русской. Включиться въ процессъ ея постепеннаго возрожденія, послужить ей – нашъ долгъ передъ Богомъ, Церковью и исторіей. Къ этому великому дѣлу зовутъ всѣхъ насъ своимъ личнымъ примѣромъ святые, въ Землѣ нашей Россійской просіявшіе, и наши благочестивые предки, жившіе святорусскими идеалами. Къ этому дѣлу зоветъ всѣхъ насъ нашъ многострадальный русскій народъ. Къ этому дѣлу призвалъ насъ Воскресшій Господь! Да укрѣпитъ Онъ всѣхъ насъ передъ предстоящими событіями, которыя послужатъ нашему совозстанію съ Нимъ, и водворенію мира и единства въ Помѣстной Русской Православной Церкви!

Молитвенно желаю всѣмъ провести эти всерадостные дни во здравіи и благополучіи, въ радости духовной и въ ощущеніи побѣдной силы Совершеннаго Добра и Божественной Красоты, въ озареніи Свѣта Христова Воскресенія, Котораго тьма вѣка сего не въ силахъ объять!
Воистину Воскресе Христосъ!

Съ пасхальной радостью о Христѣ Воскресшемъ и просьбой о молитвахъ,

+ Митрополитъ Лавръ,
Первоіерархъ Русской Зарубежной Церкви.
Пасха Христова 2007 г.

Пасхальное посланіе
Высокопреосвященнѣйшаго Кирилла,
архіепископа Санъ-Францискаго и
Западно-Американскаго.

Христосъ Воскресе!

...Простимъ вся Воскресеніемъ!

устами святыхъ отцовъ нашихъ проповѣдуетъ Святая Церковь, ликуя въ Пасхальную ночь о Воскресшемъ, Всепобеждающемъ Женихѣ – Сынѣ Божіемъ. Простимъ вся Воскресеніемъ! настойчиво повторяетъ Церковь въ каждомъ богослуженіи всѣхъ сорока сутокъ пасхальныхъ седмиць. Умилительно благодатно въ нашемъ православномъ свято-отеческомъ уставѣ подчеркивается неотъемлемость божественной милости всепрощенія отъ таинства покаянія. Семь седмиць сокрушенія о грѣхахъ, семь недѣль Поста Великаго и Страстной Седмицы начались для насъ Покаяннымъ Чиномъ Прощенаго Воскресенія. Уповавая на милость Божію, на божественное снисхождение къ собственнымъ немощамъ, мы надѣялись достигъ сегодняшней радости, дожить до этой Пасхи. Ради этой милости, мы стремились и свои души очистить отъ пагубы ожесточенія, негодованія, осужденія ближняго, исполнить слова Молитвы Господней: и остави намъ долги наша, якоже и мы оставяемъ должникомъ нашимъ...

Въ этомъ году съ особымъ смысломъ звучатъ для насъ слова Спасителя о взаимномъ прощеніи, наставленія святыхъ Апостоловъ и настойчивый призывъ великихъ святыхъ отцовъ Церкви, ради чьихъ подвиговъ и молитвъ всѣ мы православные еще разъ сподобились въ этомъ 2007-омъ году отъ Рождества по плоти Христа Царя и Бога нашего приобщиться къ великой тайнѣ Пасхальной ночи, ночи чудодѣйственной, врачующей, ночи ликованія и всеобъемлющей любви. Простимъ вся Воскресеніемъ! Вопреки всѣмъ немощамъ человѣческимъ и ухищреніямъ нечистой силы, Господь Богъ даруетъ всѣмъ православнымъ великое, изумительное чудо, радость несказанную – восстановление Евхаристическаго Единства Русской Православной Церкви, уврачеваніе страшныхъ

рань, нанесенных революционным бунтом охватившим наше русское Отечество ровно 90 лѣтъ тому назадъ. Раны эти, во-первыхъ, духовные, но они имѣли и физическое выраженіе, отторгая отъ возможности естественнаго, простаго и теплаго общенія единокровныхъ и единовѣрныхъ братьевъ и сестеръ – потомства крестившихся въ Кіевѣ въ 988-омъ году предковъ нашихъ. Грѣшно и неуютно Богу когда въ одной семьѣ столько лѣтъ держатся такіе раздоры. А вѣдь всѣ мы – потомство крестившихся во времена Владиміра Святого – одна семья.

Благодаримъ Господа, освободившаго русскій народъ отъ ига безбожія! Нѣтъ уже причинъ, препятствующихъ достойному соблюденію Церковныхъ канонѣвъ и правилъ, заповѣди Христовой о единствѣ Церкви. Вспомнимъ дивное наставленіе Святаго Первоверховнаго Апостола Павла в 13-ой главѣ перваго посланія къ Коринфянамъ о любви: тотъ христіанинъ, который даже чудеса творить, но не проявляетъ любви, заповѣданной всѣмъ своимъ чадамъ Христомъ, ничто – прахъ, пустое мѣсто – въ глазахъ Божіихъ. Безъ любви нѣтъ и не можетъ быть Церкви.

Первымъ же и главнѣйшимъ проявленіемъ любви является способность простить, о чемъ намъ постоянно возвѣщаетъ наше Святое Евангеліе. Простимъ вся Воскресеніемъ! какъ и Господь насъ простилъ. Ровно черезъ 40 дней, въ праздникъ Вознесенія Господня, окончательнымъ проявленіемъ нашего повиненія божественной волѣ Господней будетъ первое совмѣстное богослуженіе воссоединившейся Русской Православной Церкви въ Храмѣ Христа Спасителя – храмѣ поруганномъ и взорванномъ большевиками, теперь уже возстановленномъ, благодаря особымъ усиліямъ и подвигамъ, которые невозможно умолчать, Патриарха Московскаго.

Поистинѣ у насъ особая Пасха въ этомъ году, когда весь христіанскій міръ одновременно отмѣчаетъ Свѣтлое Христово Воскресеніе! Пожелаемъ же каждому изъ вѣрныхъ чадъ Христовыхъ, и въ особенности нашимъ роднымъ православнымъ во всей необъятной, недѣлимой Руси, особенно радостно провести эти святые, светлые, незабываемые дни.

Христось Воскресе! Воистину Воскресе!

+ Кирилль, архіепископъ Санъ-Францисскій
и Западно-Американскій.

Обращеніе Архіерейскаго Синода

къ боголюбивой паствѣ

Возлюбленные о Господѣ отцы, братіе, сестры,
вѣрныя чада Русской Зарубежной Церкви,
Христось Воскресе!

«Какъ солнце превосходитъ звѣзды, – говоритъ святитель Григорій Нисскій, – такъ и Святая Пасха превышаетъ собой всѣ другія церковныя торжества». Она названа Церковью *«Пасхой красной»*, *«праздникомъ праздниковъ и торжествомъ изъ торжествъ».* Блаженнѣйшій Митрополитъ Антоній проникновенно объяснял, что если каждый праздникъ есть таинство, то праздникъ праздниковъ – Пасха, есть таинство таинствъ. Первые христіане именовали Пасху *«Днемъ Господнимъ»*, ибо она обнимаетъ своимъ свѣтомъ всю Вселенную, *«видимый міръ и невидимый»*, землю живыхъ и мертвыхъ. Въ день Пасхи всѣ стремятся придти въ храмъ, чтобы встрѣтить таинственную, священную радость. Лучшее выраженіе пасхальной радости христіанъ – торжествующія слова: *«Христось Воскресе!»* – *«Воистину Воскресе!»*

Пасха Господня есть краеугольный камень новой, совершенной жизни міра. Пасха навсегда утвердила вѣру въ безсмертіе жизни. *«Если Христось не воскресъ, то тщетна вѣра ваша»*, – говоритъ апостоль Павелъ. Не отъ того ли трепещетъ наше сердце, пылаетъ огнемъ жизни, видя это *«веселіе вѣчное»*, чувствуя подлинное торжество церковнаго дня, *«егоже сотвори Господь»?*

Какъ же стать достойными великой святости Пасхи, какъ жить ею во всей полнотѣ, какъ очистить себя отъ грѣховъ и страстей, чтобы чистымъ сердцемъ вмѣстѣ съ ангелами прославить Воскресеніе Христа, поклониться Ему, какъ Единому Святому и Безгрѣшному, побѣдившему смерть и даровавшему *«сущимъ во гробехъ»* вѣчную жизнь? Какъ провести эти свѣтлые дни,

ведущіе насъ къ возстановленію мира и единства въ Помѣстной Русской Православной Церкви, которое совершится въ праздникъ Вознесенія Господня? Какъ подготовиться къ этимъ событіямъ?

«*Приблизьтесь къ Богу, – говоритъ апостоль Іаковъ, – и Онъ приблизится къ вамъ*». Святитель Тихонъ Задонскій наставляетъ: «*Когда со всей крѣпостью и усердіемъ помолишься, сердце исполнится Божественной любовью*». Нужна постоянная сердечная молитва, участіе въ таинствахъ церковныхъ, необходимъ подвигъ жизни, исполненіе правилъ вѣры, активное добродѣланіе. Обратимъ наше сердце ко Христу и испросимъ у него прощенія всѣхъ нашихъ согрѣшеній, препятствующихъ намъ *«насладиться пиромъ вѣры и воспринять богатство благодати»*. Будемъ бороться противъ своихъ слабостей, трудиться въ заповѣдяхъ Христовыхъ, *«подвизаться за вѣру, однажды преданную святымъ»* (Іуд. 1, 3), чтобы обрѣсти въ сердцахъ Христа Жизнодавца.

Въ такомъ свѣтломъ состояніи призываемъ боголюбивые клирики и паству молиться о томъ, чтобы предстоящій визитъ въ Россію делегаціи Русской Зарубежной Церкви прошелъ благополучно, съ пользой для всей Русской Православной Церкви. Молитвенное подготовленіе къ приближающимся торжествамъ въ Москвѣ необходимо совершать не только въ частныхъ молитвословіяхъ, но и всѣмъ вмѣстѣ въ храмѣ за Божественной литургіей. Посему, Архіерейскій Синодъ принялъ слѣдующее прошеніе для возглашенія отъ сегодняшняго дня до Недѣли 6-ой по Пасхѣ на сугубой ектеньи: *«Благое намѣреніе, Спасе, рабовъ твоихъ господина нашего Высокопреосвященнѣйшаго Митрополита Лавра, Первоіерарха Русскія Зарубежныя Церкви, со спутники его благослови, и молитву ихъ прими, даждь имъ духа премудрости и разума, вложи въ сердца ихъ духъ страха Твоего, духъ благочестія и ревности о славіи имене Твоего святаго, во еже благоугодно совершити имъ дѣло устроенія единства святыя Церкви Россійскія, яко единого Тѣла Христова, скорое и безбѣдное по воздуху превознесеніе устроая и благополучное во свояси возвращеніе милостивно даруя, всещедрый Господи, услыши и помилуй»*.

При этомъ мы вновь и вновь подтверждаемъ, что наша Церковь не намѣрена отступать отъ заповѣданнаго нашими отцами пути, измѣняя

что-либо въ своемъ полномъ непротивіи какихъ-либо ложныхъ ученій, наподобіе «экуменизма», искажающихъ чистоту Исповѣданія Православной Вѣры. Напротивъ, возлюбленные о Господѣ, – волею Божіей мы получаемъ теперь возможность съ кротостью, но и безо всякаго уклоненія отъ Святоотеческой Истины, оказать посильную помощь нашему православному народу – и предостеречь его отъ всякаго рода «либеральныхъ» и «синкретическихъ» истолкованій Слова Христова и догмата о Единой, Святой и Апостольской Церкви.

Стихъ: «Тѣло Христово пріимите, источника безсмертнаго вкусите», который обычно сопровождаетъ причащениковъ къ чашѣ, въ пасхальное время поется еще до ея явленія, какъ бы всѣмъ повелѣвая приступить. Поэтому, будемъ прибѣгать къ частому пріобщенію Святыхъ Христовыхъ Таинъ въ эти свѣтлые дни. Тогда Пасха наша на землѣ будетъ для насъ предзнаменованіемъ будущей Пасхи, *«двери райскія намъ отверзающей»*. Такое празднованіе Пасхи поможетъ намъ совозстать Человѣколюбцу Богу и надлежащимъ образомъ подготовиться къ предстоящему возстановленію въ Помѣстной Русской Православной Церкви полноты братскаго общенія. Аминь.

Воистину Воскресе Христосъ!

Съ пасхальной радостью о Христвѣ Воскресшемъ,

+ ЛАВРЪ, Митрополитъ Восточно-Американскій
и Нью-Йоркскій,
Первоіерархъ Русской Зарубежной Церкви.
+ МАРКЪ, архіепископъ Берлинскій и Германскій.
+ ИЛАРИОНЪ, архіепископъ Сиднейскій и
Австралійско-Новозеландскій.
+ КИРИЛЛЪ, архіепископъ Санъ-Францисскій и
Западно-Американскій.
+ МИХАИЛЪ, епископъ Женевскій и Западно-
Европейскій.
+ ГАВРИИЛЪ, епископъ Манхеттенскій.
6/19 апрѣля 2007 г.

Почему надо вѣнчаться

Бракъ есть таинство, въ которомъ при свободномъ, передъ священникомъ и Церковью, обѣщаніи женихомъ и невѣстой взаимной супружеской вѣрности, благословляется ихъ супружескій союзъ, во образъ духовнаго союза Христа съ Церковью, и испрашивается имъ благодать чистаго единодушія къ благословенному рожденію и христіанскому воспитанію дѣтей.

Православный катехизисъ.

НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ ЦЕРКОВНАГО БРАКА

Нынѣ, несмотря на повсемѣстное и массовое возвращеніе людей къ Православію, къ сожаленію, часто приходится сталкиваться съ довольно безразличнымъ отношеніемъ современныхъ христіанъ къ церковному браку, нерѣдко съ полнымъ непониманіемъ его смысла и необходимости.

Согласно ученію Церкви, бракъ есть установленное Богомъ таинство, которое освящаетъ супружескія отношенія, дѣлаетъ супружескій союзъ

неразрывнымъ, возлагаетъ на бракосочетающихся обязанность заботиться другъ о другѣ, какъ о самомъ себѣ, и воспитывать своихъ дѣтей въ духѣ вѣры и христіанской нравственности.

19 вѣковъ христіанскій міръ вѣрилъ въ бракъ какъ въ таинство, признавалъ его обязательную силу, — и какъ мало было случаевъ къ разводу между супругами, а о бракѣ такъ называемомъ гражданскомъ и помину не было. Сожительство безъ церковнаго благословенія считалось величайшимъ преступленіемъ, и лица, его допускаяшія, подвергались укорамъ и презрѣнію общества.

И вотъ въ ходѣ гоненій на Церковь въ совѣтское время церковный бракъ повсюду былъ вытесненъ гражданскимъ. Безбожное общество сформировало и соответствующее отношеніе къ браку. Каковъ результатъ? На нашихъ глазахъ то мужъ оставляетъ свою жену, то жена бѣжитъ отъ мужа, — и эти картины ни у кого не вызываютъ удивленія. А «свободный» (отъ всякой морали)

Божія, долженъ любить свою жену, какъ Христосъ любит Церковь, т.е. любить неизмѣнно до конца жизни, любить до готовности страдать и умерѣть за нее, любить и въ томъ случаѣ, если бы жена и не любила его, любить, чтобы своею любовью расположить ее къ себѣ. Такая любовь способна перенести всѣ невзгоды въ жизни, въ состояніи загладить и несходство характеровъ, и разность наружныхъ качествъ, и различные недостатки и пр.

Съ другой стороны, женѣ вмѣстѣ съ



любовью къ мужу должно быть присуще повиновеніе. Хотя, по ученію слова Божія, мужу и дана власть, но на эту власть онъ долженъ смотрѣть не какъ на преимущество, а какъ на долгъ. Первенство вручено Богомъ мужу не для униженія жены, не для господства и владычества надъ нею, а для разумнаго, кроткаго управленія домомъ. Да и какой представляется у Апостола эта власть? Самой нежной, бескорыстной, благородной властью. И въ самомъ дѣлѣ, какая власть можетъ быть чище и выше владычества Христа надъ Церковью? Какое отношеніе можетъ быть возвышеннѣе того, въ какомъ находится Христосъ и Церковь? Здѣсь теснѣйшее родство, полнѣйшее духовное единеніе, самое справедливое уравненіе правъ, какое только можно представить себѣ, не унижая власти и подчиненія.

А въ бракѣ гражданскомъ могутъ ли существовать подобныя отношенія между супругами неизмѣнно, до конца жизни? Безъ

Итакъ, мужъ долженъ быть главою своей жены, — но не безразсудною, не скудоумною, не ветреною, а главою разумною, мыслящею. Мужъ долженъ быть главою жены, — но не для того, чтобы мучить жену жестокосердіемъ, холодною, непомерными требованіями (жена есть тѣло мужа: если же голова станетъ пренебрегать тѣломъ, то пропадетъ и сама), — а для того, чтобы, по слову Божию, благоразумно обращаться съ женой, какъ съ немощнѣйшимъ сосудомъ, оказывая ей честь какъ сонаслѣдницѣ благодатной жизни (1 Пет. 3, 7), чтобы быть всегда и вездѣ образцомъ для жены своей и съ христіанскою кротостью замѣчать и исправлять недостатки ее. Мужъ долженъ быть истиннымъ другомъ и попечителемъ неразлучной спутницѣ своей, долженъ искать отрады себѣ и утѣшенія не на сторонѣ, не въ чужихъ домахъ и собраніяхъ, а у себя дома, вблизи своей жены, которая оставила домъ родителей своихъ ради мужа и всего ожидаетъ отъ него одного...

Западъ какъ бы говорить: это еще не предѣлъ, разводъ слѣдуетъ считать дѣломъ не только допустимымъ, но и полезнымъ. «Неплохо бы разъ въ 7 лѣтъ мѣнять прическу и мужа, — совѣтуютъ своимъ клиенткамъ американскіе психологи, — это внесетъ новые ощущенія въ вашу жизнь».

Въ связи съ этимъ возникаетъ вопросъ: содержать ли вообще въ себѣ гражданскій бракъ необходимыя условія устойчиваго счастливаго брака?

Чтобы бракъ, понимаемый въ его истинномъ значеніи, могъ быть дѣйствительно счастливымъ, для этого необходимо, чтобы вступившіе въ бракъ постоянно сохраняли сознаніе его высокаго достоинства и не упустили изъ виду правъ и обязанностей, освященныхъ бракомъ. Это — взаимная любовь супруговъ и уваженіе, это — не страстная любовь, скоро преходящая, а любовь, основанная на страхѣ Божию, любовь во образъ Христа къ Церкви, потому Апостоль и призываетъ: «Мужіе, любите своя жены, яко же и Христосъ возлюбилъ Церковь и Себе предаде за ню» (Еф. 5, '25).

Такимъ образомъ, мужъ, по ученію слова

сомнѣнія, нѣтъ, — объ этомъ можно судить по его хрупкости и легкости къ расторженію.

Людемъ вѣка сего извѣстна лишь страсть, понятно лишь увлеченіе, приятно одна чувственная любовь. Но минуты такой любви слишкомъ коротки и мимолетны. И вотъ союзъ, лишенный

главной скрепляющей его силы, распадается.

«Отъ супружества — счастье временное и даже спасеніе вѣчное, — училъ святитель Теофанъ Затворникъ. — Потому къ нему приступать должно не съ легкомысліемъ, но со страхомъ и осторожностью. Добрымъ супружествомъ благословляетъ Богъ. Потому: а) будь благочестивъ, преданъ Богу, на Коего уповая, молись, чтобы Самъ Онъ послалъ другую половину, угодную Ему и спасительную тебѣ, б) Ища супружескаго союза, не предполагай дурныхъ цѣлей,



или страстное блажничество, или корысть, или тщеславіе; но — ту одну, какую Бог опредѣлил, — взаимную помощь во временной жизни ради вѣчной, во славу Божию и благо другихъ, в) Когда нашель, прими какъ даръ Божій, съ благодарностью къ Богу, сколько съ любовью, столько же и съ почтеніемъ къ сему дару.

Какъ Церковь повинуется Христу, такъ и жены — своимъ мужьямъ во всемъ, какъ Самому Господу (Еф. 5; 22, 24), повелѣваетъ слово Божіе; но отнюдь жена не должна «властвовать надъ мужемъ... ибо прежде созданъ Адамъ, а потомъ Ева, и не Адамъ прельщенъ, но жена, прельстившись впала въ преступленіе» (1 Тим. 2, 12-14). Церковь Христова свято и богобоязненно исполняетъ волю Господа, — такъ должна поступать и жена въ отношеніи къ мужу своему. Жена должна стараться блюсти честь и имя того, кому сочеталъ ее Всеблагій Промыслитель, привлечь къ себѣ расположеніе мужа не плетениемъ волосъ, ни золотомъ, ни жемчугомъ, ни многоцѣнною одеждою (1 Тим. 2, 9), а своею разумною покорностью, ненарушимою вѣрностью, кроткими внушеніями, добрыми распоряженіями въ домѣ и всѣми способами, которые даруетъ великое имя помощницы мужа.

Когда выборъ конченъ, должно произойти сочетанію, таинственному отъ Бога слянію духовно-тѣлесному.

Естественный союзъ, по любви, есть союзъ дикій, мрачный. Здѣсь онъ очищается, освящается, отрезвляется по молитвѣ Церкви Божественною благодатью. Трудносамому одному устоять въ союзѣ крѣпкомъ и спасительномъ. Нити естества рвутся — благодать же непреодолима. Самонадѣянность опасна вѣзде, тѣмъ болѣе здѣсь... Потому смиренно, съ постомъ и молитвою, приступи къ таинству» («Начертаніе христіанскаго нравовученія»).

СОВѢТЫ ВѢНЧАЮЩИМСЯ

Чтобы вѣнчаніе стало подлиннымъ праздникомъ, запоминающимся на всю жизнь, необходимо заранѣе позаботиться о его организаціи. Въ первую очередь, согласовать мѣсто и время совершенія таинства.

Въ церквахъ, гдѣ предварительная запись отсутствуетъ, молодожены договариваются о совершеніи таинства непосредственно въ день свадьбы. При этомъ устанавливается приблизительное время вѣнчанія, такъ какъ вѣнчанія, возможно, начнутся только послѣ другихъ требъ. Также можно договориться и съ конкретнымъ священникомъ.

Въ церкви понадобится свидѣтельство о бракѣ, поэтому регистрація брака въ ЗАГСѣ должна быть раньше вѣнчанія.

Въ первые вѣка христіанства вѣнчаніе совершалось непосредственно за Божественной литургіей. Сейчасъ этого не бываетъ, но совмѣстное причастіе передъ началомъ супружеской жизни исключительно важно. Поэтому молодоженамъ необходимо исполнить все необходимое для причащенія: постъ, молитву, взаимное прощеніе.

Желающій достойно причаститься Святыхъ Христовыхъ Тайнъ долженъ по крайней мѣрѣ за 2-3 дня молитвенно подготовить себя къ этому: больше и усерднѣе молиться дома утромъ и вечеромъ, посѣщать церковныя богослуженія. Передъ днемъ причащенія надо обязательно быть на вечерней службѣ. Къ домашнимъ вечернимъ молитвамъ добавляется правило ко Св. Причащенію (оно включаетъ въ себя каноны: покаянный Господу Иисусу Христу, молебный ко Пресвятой Богородицѣ, Ангелу Хранителю, а также Послѣдованіе ко Свято-му Причащенію). Съ молитвой соединяется

постъ — воздержаніе отъ скоромной пищи — мяса, яицъ, молока и молочныхъ продуктовъ, — а если супружеская жизнь уже имѣетъ мѣсто — воздержаніе отъ брачныхъ отношеній.

Молодоженамъ надо приходиться въ храмъ въ день свадьбы къ началу службы, ничего не есть, не пить и не курить наканунѣ, съ 12 часовъ ночи. Въ храмѣ женихъ и невѣста исповѣдуются, молятся за литургіей и причащаются Святыхъ Тайнъ. Послѣ этого обычно около часа идутъ молебны, панихиды и отпѣванія. За это время можно переодеться въ вѣнчальныя одежды (если въ храмѣ есть помѣщеніе для этого).

Присутствіе друзей и родственниковъ молодоженовъ за литургіей желательно, но, въ крайнемъ случаѣ, они могутъ прийти къ началу вѣнчанія.

Дѣлать фотографіи и снимать бракосочетаніе видеокамерой разрѣшается не во всѣхъ храмахъ: лучше обойтись безъ этого, сдѣлавъ памятную фотографію на фонѣ храма послѣ совершенія таинства.

Обручальныя кольца надо заранѣе отдать вѣнчающему священнику, чтобы онъ освятилъ ихъ возложеніемъ на престоль.

Возьмите съ собой кусокъ бѣлого полотна или полотенце. На немъ молодые будутъ стоять. У невѣсты непременно долженъ быть головной уборъ — фата или платокъ; косметика и украшения — или отсутствовать, или въ минимальномъ количествѣ. Обязательны натѣльные крестики для обоихъ супруговъ.

По русской традиціи, всякая супружеская пара имѣетъ свидѣтелей, организующихъ брачный пирь. Пригодятся они и въ храмѣ — держать вѣнцы надъ головами новобрачныхъ. Свидѣтели должны быть крещеными.

Нельзя вѣнчать бракъ, если одинъ изъ новобрачныхъ фактически состоитъ въ бракѣ съ другимъ лицомъ.

Запрещается бракъ между кровными родственниками вплоть до четвертой степени родства (то есть съ троюроднымъ братомъ или сестрой).

Древняя благочестивая традиція запрещаетъ браки между крестными родителями и крестниками, а также между двумя восприемниками одного ребенка. Строго говоря, каноническихъ препятствій къ этому нѣтъ, однако въ настоящее

время разрѣшеніе на такой бракъ можетъ быть получено только у правящего архіерея.

Нельзя вѣнчаться тѣмъ, кто далъ ранѣе монашескіе обѣты или принялъ рукоположеніе въ священный санъ.

Въ наши дни Церковь не производитъ дознанія о совершеннolѣтїи, психическомъ и физическомъ здоровѣ жениха и невѣсты, добровольности ихъ вступленія въ бракъ, такъ какъ эти условія обязательны для регистраціи гражданскаго союза. Разумѣется, скрыть отъ представителей государственныхъ органовъ тѣ или иныя препятствія къ браку можно. Но невозможно обмануть Бога, поэтому главнымъ препятствіемъ для совершения незаконнаго брака должна стать совѣсть брачующихся.

Отсутствіе родительскаго благословенія на вѣнчаніе является весьма прискорбнымъ фактомъ, однако въ случаѣ совершеннolѣтїя жениха и невѣсты оно не можетъ воспрепятствовать вѣнчанію. Кромѣ того, часто родители-атеисты противятся именно церковному браку, и въ такомъ случаѣ родительское благословеніе можетъ быть замѣнено священническимъ, лучше всего — благословеніемъ духовника хотя бы одного изъ супруговъ.

ВѢНЧАНІЕ НЕ СОВЕРШАЕТСЯ:

- въ теченіе всѣхъ четырехъ многодневныхъ постовъ;
- во время Сырной седмицы (масленицы);
- на Свѣтлой (Пасхальной) Седмицѣ;
- отъ Рождества Христова (7 января) до Крещенія (19 января);
- наканунѣ двенадцатыхъ праздникоу; — по вторникамъ, четвергамъ и субботамъ въ теченіе всего года;
- 10, 11, 26 и 27 сентября (въ связи со стро-гимъ постомъ ради Усѣкновенія главы Іоанна Крестителя и Воздвиженія Креста Господня);
- наканунѣ престольныхъ храмовыхъ дней (въ каждомъ храмѣ — свои).

При чрезвычайныхъ обстоятельствахъ исключеніе изъ этихъ правилъ можетъ быть сдѣлано по благословенію правящего архіерея.

СУЕВѢРІЯ, СВЯЗАННЫЯ СЪ ВѢНЧАНІЕМЪ

Пережитки язычества даютъ о себѣ знать всевозможными суевѣрїями, которыя хранятся въ народѣ. Такъ, существуетъ повѣрье, что случайно упавшее кольцо или погасшая вѣнчальная свѣча предвѣщаютъ всевозможныя несчастья, трудную жизнь въ бракѣ или раннюю смерть одного изъ супруговъ. Распространены и суевѣрїя, что тотъ изъ брачующихся, кто первымъ вступить на расстеленное полотенце, будетъ всю жизнь главенствовать въ семьѣ, а чья свѣча послѣ таинства окажется короче, тотъ и раньше умретъ. Нѣкоторые думаютъ, что нельзя вѣнчаться въ маѣ, «будешь потомъ всю жизнь маяться».

Всѣ эти вымыслы не должны волновать сердца, ибо ихъ творецъ — сатана, названный въ Евангелїи «отцомъ лжи». А къ случайностямъ (напримѣръ паденіе кольца) нужно относиться спокойно — всякое бываетъ.

ПОСЛѢДОВАНІЕ О ВТОРОБРАЧНЫХЪ

Церковь смотритъ на второй бракъ неодобрительно и допускаетъ его только по снисхожденію къ человѣческимъ немощамъ. Въ послѣдованіе о второбрачныхъ добавляются двѣ покаянныя молитвы, нѣтъ вопрошеній о свободѣ волеизъявленія. Такой чинъ совершается въ случаѣ, если и женихъ, и невѣста вступаютъ въ бракъ во второй разъ. Если одинъ изъ нихъ вѣнчается впервые, совершается обычное чинопослѣдованіе.

ВѢНЧАТЬСЯ НИКОГДА НЕ ПОЗДНО

Въ безбожное время множество супружескихъ паръ образовалось безъ благословенія Церкви. Но бываетъ, что невѣнчанные супруги всю жизнь хранятъ вѣрность другъ другу, воспитываютъ дѣтей и внуковъ въ мирѣ и согласїи.

Церковь никогда не отказываетъ въ благодати таинства, даже если супруги находятся на склонѣ лѣтъ. Какъ свидѣлствуютъ многіе священники, тѣ пары, которыя вѣнчаются въ зрѣломъ возрастѣ, порой относятся къ таинству брака серьезнѣе, чѣмъ молодые люди. Пышность и торжественность свадьбы у нихъ замѣняется благоговѣніемъ и трепетомъ передъ величіемъ брака.

«Почему надо вѣнчаться», Православное издательство БЛАГО, Москва, 2000 г.

Paschal Epistle Of His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad Christ is Risen!

Rejoicing in the Risen Christ, the Source and Fulfillment of our faith and salvation, I sincerely greet the Right Reverend Hierarchs, the all-honorable priests-concelebrants, and the God-loving children of the Russian Church Abroad, with the world-saving feast of Holy Pascha!

Paschal joy is first of all the joy of the Church. We each experience the Resurrection of Christ and we know that we must celebrate Pascha in a renewed state of soul in order to feel our own resurrection with the Lover of man, for only in this way is our participation in the feast expressed, as the Apostle Paul writes: For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (I Cor. 5:7-8). I wish everyone such participation in the celebration of Pascha, with the words of St. Gregory the Theologian: "Let your whole life be renewed, let all of your actions be renewed: thus a person is renewed in spirit, thus the day of spiritual renewal is honored."

The Lord creates each person as His friend; and this friendship becomes more close at the time of our baptism, when we enter His Church. Every person is a friend of God, as St. Lazarus is called in the Church hymns; and this friend of Christ has lived (been present) in each one of us, at one time or another: he has lived (been present?) through love, through constant prayerful communion and friendship with Him. Sometimes this has happened with people in their childhood, and sometimes later, but at sometime this friend of the Creator has lived in the heart of each of us. Over the course of time this friend in us dies.

Nevertheless, we do not become despondent, and in worshipping now the Resurrection of Christ, we worship hope, for when the Savior died on the cross, when it seemed that everything was finished and the tomb was sealed, it was then that the Lord resurrected.

Our hope is that there is no end for man, that each of us will resurrect not only in the future life, but also here on earth; that each of us can resurrect from the abyss of sin to a renewed, good, Christian life, for the Lord is stronger than death. He conquered it by His Resurrection and in the miraculous resurrection of Lazarus, and with our desire and active yearning for Him, He can perform this miracle in our heart, in our life.

While exchanging the Paschal kiss with you now,

dear fathers, brothers, sisters, and children of the Russian Church Abroad, I prayerfully desire that this friend of Christ might resurrect in the heart of each of us, that we might be renewed and become better and draw near to our Risen Savior!

I greet all the God-preserved Russian people with a triple kiss, rejoicing that, although "Hell is king over mortal man, it is not for ever," as we read in the Canon on Holy Saturday. What do these words mean? This means that hell continues to exist, but, glory be to God, it will not reign forever over man, and everyone who actively strives for God, piously communes with Him in the Mysteries of the Church, and struggles with his weaknesses according to his strength, will be delivered from the power of hell thanks to the three-day Resurrection of Christ, will overcome the effects of the Soviet period, will be drawn towards Christ, will return to his historic roots, will be reborn and renewed. May the holy New-Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, who shed their blood which became the seed for the genuine rebirth of all the ends of the Russian Land, be our intercessors before God for this Paschal grace of renewal. To be included in the process of Her gradual rebirth, and to help in it—is our duty before God, the Church, and history. The saints who shone forth in our Russian Land and our pious forefathers, who lived according to the ideals of Holy Russia, summon all of us to this great work by their personal example. The much-suffering Russian people call all of us to this great work. The Risen Lord has called us to this work! May He strengthen all of us before the approaching events, which will serve for our resurrection with Him, and the establishing of peace and unity in the Local Russian Orthodox Church.

I prayerfully desire that all of you may spend these joyful days in health and prosperity, in spiritual joy, experiencing the mighty power of the Perfect Good and Divine Beauty, illumined by the Light of the Resurrection of Christ, Whom the darkness of this world cannot overcome!

Truly Christ is Risen!

With Paschal joy in the Risen Christ and asking your prayers,

+ Metropolitan Laurus
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad
Pascha, 2007

Paschal Epistle of His Eminence Kyrill, Archbishop of San Francisco and Western America

Christ is Risen! In Truth He is Risen!

... Let us forgive all by the Resurrection! professes our Holy Church, rejoicing in every Paschal night about her Resurrected, All-Victorious Bridegroom, the Son of God. Let us forgive all by the Resurrection! repeats the Church with insistence, at every divine service for the entire 40 days & nights of the Paschal weeks. With astonishing, tender-loving grace our Orthodox rites, left to us by our ancient Holy Fathers, emphasize that the divinely bestowed merciful blessing of complete forgiveness is indivisible from the Sacrament of Penance.

The seven weeks that we have suffered agonies of remorse, weeping over our own sins – the seven weeks of Great Lent & Passion Week – began for us all with the Forgiveness Rite of Forgiveness Sunday. Hoping against all reason that God might forgive us yet again, that the Divine Creator might look with divine compassion upon our human frailties and offences, we prayed to be able to attain once more the joy of this night, to live to see this Pascha. So that we might be found worthy by God of that inexpressible mercy, we strove to purge our souls, from the stain of heartlessness, cruelty, wrath, from prideful condemnation of other members of our fallen human race, our kith and our kin, that we might be able to fulfil in truth the words of our Lord's Prayer: and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us...

Our Saviour's teaching about mutual forgiveness and the healing of resentments through the balm of contrition and overriding love ring forth with particular meaning this year, together with the messages left to us by the holy Apostles, no less than the insistent reminders and appeals of the great Fathers of the Church, through whose feats of spiritual devotion do we all Orthodox here and elsewhere yet again attain in this 2007th year of Christ's reign the privilege of partaking of the great sacramental mystery of the Paschal night, miraculous, healing,

joyous and all-encompassing in its transformative love. Let us forgive all by the Resurrection! In spite of every human flaw and weakness, in defiance of all the intricate snares of the unclean spirits operating in our world, our Lord God grants to all His faithful this enormous, extraordinary miracle, this joy words barely can describe -- the restoration of Eucharistic Unity in the Russian Orthodox Church, the healing of the terrible wounds inflicted by the revolutionary rebellion that engulfed our ancestral Russian Fatherland precisely 90 years ago. These wounds are first and foremost spiritual, mystical wounds, but they also had a physical manifestation, precluding even the possibility of natural, straightforward and cordial Christian fellowship between brothers and sisters of common blood and creed – the living and present descendants of our ancestors, Christened into Orthodoxy in Kiev in 988 AD. It is most certainly a sin, and offensive to God, that for so long within a single family there should exist such ungodly quarrels and divisions. Because, when all is said and done, we who are all the heirs to those St. Vladimir the Great brought with him to the holy waters consecrated by his Greek Orthodox godparents in the faith are all, in the most literal spiritual and physical sense, one family before God.

Give thanks, then, with joy, to our Lord, for Christ Victorious has freed the people of Russia from atheist tyranny! Gone are the reasons that impeded the proper observance of Church canons, of Christ's own commandment that the Church be one and whole. Let us recall the wondrous instruction of St. Paul, in the justly celebrated 13th chapter of the 1st epistle to the Corinthians, about Christian love, where St. Paul proclaims that any Christian who fails to demonstrate the nurturing love which Christ commanded us all to have for others is nothing in the eyes of God, an emptiness, even if he were to perform outright miracles. There are no exceptions to this rule, for

without such love among its faithful, there is no Church, nor can there ever be.

The first, most basic expression of love is the capacity to forgive, exactly as our Holy Gospel constantly reminds us. Let us forgive all by the Resurrection! we sing, knowing the Lord includes us in that number. In just 40 days, on the feast of the Ascension, in a culminating act of our obedience to our Lord's Divine and Sovereign Will, the first Divine Liturgy to be celebrated by the restored wholeness of the Russian Orthodox Church shall take place in the magnificent Cathedral of Christ our Saviour – a church the Bolsheviks defiled and reduced to rubble, that has now been rebuilt and sanctified as an exact replica of the original, resurrected, as it were, by the Patriarch of Moscow, whose considerable exertions in the service of Christ's Church can no longer be overlooked, or dismissed, by anyone.

In truth, we have an exceptional Pascha this year, with all Christians everywhere celebrating the glorious Resurrection in concert, at the same time! In the spirit of this extraordinary, joyful moment, let us wish Paschal joy to each and every faithful child of Christ, and in particular our Orthodox kin in all the vastness of a single Rus that chose unity in Christ and finally, through repentance, returned to God, and like the prodigal was made again an heir of the Divine Kingdom.

Christ is Risen! In Truth He is Risen!

† Archbishop KYRILL

Pascha 2007 A.D.

Epistle of the Synod of Bishops to the God-loving Flock

Dear in Christ fathers, brothers,
sisters, loyal children
of the Russian Church Abroad:

Christ is Risen!

“As the sun outshines the stars,” writes bishop Gregory of Nissa, “so does Holy Pascha surpass all other church celebrations.” The church refers to “the Beautiful Pascha,” “the Feast of feasts and the celebration of celebrations.” Blessed Metropolitan Anthony profoundly explained that, if every feast is a mystery, then the Feast of feasts, Pascha, is the mystery of mysteries. The first Christians called Pascha “the Day of the Lord”, for it embraces with its light the whole Universe, “the seen and the unseen worlds,” the worlds of the living and the dead. Everyone tries to come to church on the day of Pascha in order to greet the mysterious holy joy. The best expression of Christians' Paschal joy lies in the celebratory words: “Christ is Risen!” – “Indeed He is Risen!”

The Pascha of the Lord is the cornerstone of the new, true life of the world. Pascha forever confirmed faith in the eternity of life. The Apostle Paul wrote that “If Christ did not rise, then our faith is in vain.” Is it not for this reason that our heart trembles and glows with the fire of life, seeing the “eternal joy” and feeling the authentic celebration of the church day “which the Lord hath made”?

How can one become worthy of the great holiness of Pascha? How can one live Pascha in all its fullness? How can one cleanse oneself of sins and passions in order that one may with a clean heart, together with the angels, glorify the Resurrection of Christ, bow to Him, as the only One who is Holy and Without Sin, the One who defeated death and gave “those in the tombs” eternal life? How should one spend these bright days, leading to the reestablishment of peace and unity of the Local Russian Orthodox Church, which will occur on the feast of the Ascension

of the Lord? How can one prepare for these events?

“Come close to God,” writes the apostle James, “and He will come close to you.” Bishop Tikhon of Zadonsk teaches that “When one prays with all one’s strength and all one’s heart, one’s heart will be filled with God’s love.” It is necessary to have constant heartfelt prayer, to participate in the mysteries of the church, to have the correct manner of life, to fulfill the tenants of the faith, to actively do good. Let us turn our hearts to Christ and ask Him for forgiveness of all of our sins that prevent us from “partaking of the feast of faith and receiving the riches of holiness.” Let us fight our weaknesses, work within the laws of Christ, “be active for the faith, which at one time was committed to the saints,” in order to attain the Life-giving Christ in our hearts.

We call on the God-loving clergy and flock to pray in this bright state that the forthcoming visit to Russia by the delegation of the Russian Church Abroad goes well and serves for the benefit of the entire Russian Orthodox Church. It is necessary that the prayerful preparation for the coming celebrations in Moscow take place not only in private prayers, but among everyone together in church at Holy Liturgy. Therefore, the Synod of Bishops has adopted the following petition to be pronounced during the Litany of Great Supplication starting today and continuing until the 6th Sunday of Pascha: “Bless oh Savior the good intentions, of thy servants, the Most Reverend Metropolitan Laurus, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, and his companions, and accept their prayers, grant them a spirit of wisdom and reason, place in their hearts a spirit of fear of Thee, a spirit of piety and zealotness for the glory of Thy Holy Name, in order that they may in a well-pleasing manner fulfill the task of building up the unity of the Holy Russian Church, as one Body of Christ. Grant them safe travel in the air and a safe return, hear and have mercy.”

In this we again and again underline that our Church does not intend to step away from the path our fathers taught us, to change anything in its complete rejection of any false teachings, such as “ecumenism,” which distort the purity of the Orthodox Confession of Faith. On the contrary, beloved in Christ, by the will of God we are now receiving the opportunity to meekly, but without any stepping away from the Truth of the Holy Fathers, provide feasible help to our

Orthodox people and to warn them about all manner of “liberal” and “syncretical” interpretations of the words of Christ and the dogma of the One, Holy and Apostolic Church.

The prayer “Receive Ye the Body of Christ, taste ye of the fountain of immortality,” which usually accompanies those communing from the chalice, during the Paschal period is sung before its appearance, as if calling all to come forward. For this reason, let us come frequently to the communion of the Holy Mysteries of Christ during these bright days. Then our Pascha on earth will be unto us a foreshadowing of the future Pascha, “opening the gates of Heaven for us.” Such a celebration of Pascha will help us to resurrect together with the Man-loving God and to prepare in a proper manner for the coming reestablishment of full brotherly relations within the Local Russian Orthodox Church. Amen.

Truly Christ is Risen!

With Paschal joy in the Risen Christ,

*Metropolitan Laurus
of Eastern America and New York
First Hierarch
of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia*

Archbishop Mark of Berlin and Germany

*Archbishop Hilarion of Sydney, Australia and New
Zealand*

*Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco and Western
America*

Bishop Michael of Geneva and Western Europe

Bishop Gabriel of Manhattan

6/19 April 2007

Christian Marriage According to St. John Chrysostom.

For a happy married life, it is not enough for a groom to have made a prudent choice of a bride, and the bride a choice of the groom, and for them to have solicited God's blessing for the union. There is more that needs to be done. They have to behave, to establish their relationship, in a way worthy of God's blessing, and not bring misfortune down upon themselves; so that marriage, the source of pure happiness, does not become the source of innumerable ills of the couple's own making. "Marriage can be a refuge," says Chrysostom, "but also a shipwreck, not due to its own nature, but rather at the hands of those who abuse it. For he who observes the rules within it will find, in his home and wife, comfort and relief from all troubles he meets in other places. Yet one who approaches marriage rashly and carelessly, even though he may enjoy contentment in his worldly pursuits, will find unpleasantness and distress in his own home."

All the blessings of marriage are based on mutual love, on mutual trust and respect, and the resulting harmony of the spouses. "There is nothing more valuable than to be loved by your wife, and to love her. A wise man understands that agreement between man and wife is one of the greatest blessings." "Where this exists, there is every bounty and every happiness, but where it is absent, then nothing can help, all else fails, and life is full of unpleasantness and unhappiness. Therefore we should seek this before all else."

Mutual love between spouses should not depend on their respective beauty, and should not diminish if one of them for some reason becomes less beautiful, or even ugly. Chrysostom directed this teaching particularly toward husbands, for in some cases, their love wanes in proportion to their wives' fading beauty, which formerly enticed them, or as they begin to notice their physical flaws. "Turn not away from your wife because of her ugliness," teaches St. John. "Hear what is written in the Scriptures: 'The bee is little among such as fly, but her fruit is the chief of sweet things' (Sir. 11:3). A wife is a creation of God. When you insult her you insult her Creator. So how should one conduct oneself towards a wife? Do not praise her for her appearance; praise, hate, and love of this nature are characteristics of unchaste souls. Search instead for beauty of the soul; imitate the Bridegroom of the Church."

Love between man and wife should be so constant and strong that it could survive against any unhappiness, disappointment, and temptation. Chrysostom instructs husbands: "Care for your wife as Christ does for the church. Even if you must give up your life for her, tolerate repeated losses, and suffer something terrible, you must not abandon her, for by suffering thus, you will have done nothing in comparison to that which Christ did for

the Church."

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An appreciation of the mutual need which man and wife have for each other can serve to resolve and strengthen love and harmony between spouses. "God divided the activities of our lives into two areas, public and domestic. Wives were entrusted with the household, and men were given civic duties: in commerce, in the courts, in councils, in war, and such things. A wife may not be able to throw spears or shoot arrows, but she can operate a spindle, weave cloth, and successfully engage in similar domestic duties. She cannot give opinions in the councils, yet she can advise at home, and often when the husband suggests something concerning the home, it turns out that the wife's suggestion is far superior. She cannot manage the state treasury, but she can raise children, notice ill intent of maidservants, keep watch over the honest behavior of servants, freeing the husband from all these troubles, personally taking care of the pantries, the handiwork, the cooking, keeping clothes presentable, and all else which is unworthy of a husband to do, even difficult

for him, no matter how many times he undertakes it.

"For this is also the result of the wisdom and caring of God, that he made them that are most capable of the most important affairs less able and useful in the less important things, so that there be a real need for a wife. If God had made men capable in both areas, then the female sex could easily fall into contempt in man's eyes. Again, had he entrusted the most important issues to the wife, then wives would become excessively proud."

There will be neither agreement nor love between spouses, when each demands love and devotion from the other, while making no effort to fulfill their duties. This will cause not peace and agreement, but rather

discord, for it expresses not love and indulgence, but rather stubbornness and arrogance. Therefore the best method for preserving peace between spouses is for them to have mutual respect for their separate duties and for each to keep strictly to them and fulfill them.

"Even if others do not do what is required," says Chrysostom, "we should do what is expected of us ... for each will receive what he deserves. Such is a marriage in Christ, a spiritual marriage. So let not the wife wait for virtue from her husband before exercising hers, for this will be unimportant. Similarly, let not the husband wait for the good behavior of his wife before he begins to care for her, for this will no longer be virtuous on his part. Let each one, as I said, fulfill their responsibilities in advance."





If both spouses strictly observe their responsibilities, then peace and agreement will necessarily follow. "If both spouses try to fulfill their responsibilities, then mutual benefits will quickly follow. If, for example, the wife is prepared to endure even an irate husband, and a husband does not irritate a cross wife, then complete peace will be established between them, and their lives will be like a harbor, free from waves."

Due to their mutual love, and in the interest of their common well-being, each should be understanding and indulgent of the other's flaws. They must arm themselves with patience in the face of the most bitter displeasure, insults, and disappointments. Chrysostom says: "What is to be done if the husband is meek and the wife is nervous, sharp-tongued, a blabbermouth, a spendthrift, (a common fault among women) and has many other failings? How can he, poor fellow, stand this daily unpleasantness, pride, and shamelessness? Or what if she is modest and quiet, and he is rough, suspicious, short-tempered, and enjoying the arrogance of wealth and power, treating her, a free woman, as a slave, and thinking her no more than a servant? How can she endure such humiliation and oppression? The Apostle says: "Bear all this slavery, for you will only be free when he dies, but as long as he lives you must zealously try to reason with him and improve him, or, if this is impossible, bravely endure the endless attacks and relentless verbal abuse."

Elsewhere, Chrysostom advises husbands to arm themselves with indulgent patience, and wives with complete submissiveness, in order to stop all discord. "One may say: 'My wife is foolish, wasteful, and has many other flaws.' Put up with it all patiently. This is why you occupy the position of the head, to heal the body. It is written: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." (Eph. 5:28) Wives are also subject to this law."



If a man should have a bad-tempered wife, it is his obligation not to become irritated, but rather to humbly consider this tragedy the handiwork of God, punishing him for his sins. "Your wife may wage war against you," says Chrysostom, "She may meet you when you return home in a rage, wielding her tongue like a sword. It is sad when your helpmate becomes your enemy! But examine yourself. Did you never harm a woman in your youth? And thus that wound, inflicted by you on another woman, is now being healed by a woman, and the ulcer of another woman is being cauterized by your own wife. That a bilious wife is a punishment to the sinner is written in the Scriptures. A bad-tempered wife will be given to a sinning husband, given as a bitter antidote which will dry up the evil juices of the sinner."

If, as Chrysostom teaches, an ill-tempered wife is a divine punishment, then clearly, the husband must endure it with absolute patience, and therefore nothing can justify physical violence against a wife. This violates the teachings on Christian patience and indulgence, and the understanding of love, which a husband must always maintain. Chrysostom emphatically condemns that inhumane treatment of wives which one frequently encounters, especially among the lower classes, as the highest degree of cruelty and barbarity.

To correct the inadequacies of a wife, he recommends patient reasoning, not vituperation, and certainly not violence. "If a man beats his wife," he says, "it is a great dishonor, not only to her, but also to him. I say to you wives and husbands, may God save you from such a sin as would lead a husband to the necessity of beating his wife. I speak here of a wife, but it should be disgusting to a person of noble character to beat or raise his hand against even a slave ... All the more then is it disgraceful to raise your hand against a freeman. Everyone understands this, even according to pagan law, where a wife who is beaten by her husband is no longer obligated to live with him, and he is no longer worthy of living with her. Is it not the height of illegality to so dishonor, like a slave, your life-friend who has long been helping you in life? Such a husband, if one can call such a person a husband at all, is on the

same level as one who murders their father or their mother. For if we have been commanded to leave our mother and father for our wives' sake, then it is not to insult them thus, but rather to fulfill God's law, which our parents so long to do that they agree with great zeal to being left, and even thank God for it. Is it not then the height of dishonor to abuse her, for whom God commanded us to leave even our parents? Is this not insanity?"

"And what of the resulting ignomy? What words can even describe the howls and groans of a wife in the streets, when neighbors and passers-by are confronted with a house of one committing such a dishonor, like a wild animal, as it were, devouring its prey in its den? It would be better if the earth would swallow up such a scoundrel, than that he show himself again in public. 'But my wife', you say, 'is impertinent.' So be it. Do not forget that she is your wife, a weak vessel, and you her husband. For this reason you were put in charge and made the head, in order to endure the weakness of your wife, who should be obedient to you. Therefore act in a way that your authority be respected, which will only occur if you refrain from dishonoring your subordinate. It is the same with a Tsar who is more respected the more honorably he treats his ministers and subjects. If he demeans and belittles their virtues, his own glory suffers considerably. So too, will you substantially diminish the credibility and dignity of your own leadership if you dishonor your wife, whose honor is subordinate to your own."



The best way to correct the bad character of your wife is by judicious leniency and attentive efforts to eliminate her defects. "If something unpleasant transpires at home because of a mistake of your wife, then," Chrysostom counsels the husband, "you should comfort her, not increase the unhappiness. Even if you have lost everything. But there is nothing more sorrowful than to have a wife at home who is not favorably inclined toward her husband. There is no mistake of your wife which you could point to, nothing you can even imagine, which will cause more sorrow than discord with your wife. For this reason, your love for her should be more valuable than anything else. If we are all obliged to carry each other's burdens, then a husband should, all the more, do so for his wife. If she is poor, do not humiliate her for it. If she is foolish, do not attack her, but rather correct her. She is a part of you, and you, together with her, make up one body. 'But she is cantankerous, a drunk, and tends to lose her temper?' If this is so then you should grieve over this, but not get angry; pray to God, that He might change her; remonstrate with her, try to persuade her, and use all means to rid her of these defects.

"If you start to beat and persecute your wife, then these sicknesses will not heal, because violence is overcome by meekness, not cruelty. Also, remember that you will be rewarded by God for your meek handling of your wife. It is said that one of the pagan philosophers had a cantankerous, bilious, and impudent wife. When he was asked why he put up with her, the sage answered that, in her, he had a school of philosophy in his own home. 'I will be more patient than others,' he said, 'if I study in this school every day.' Does this amaze you? I sigh deeply when I see pagans who are wiser than we are, we who are commanded to emulate the angels, or, even better, who are ordered to reflect God Himself in our analysis of meekness. It is said that her bad temper was the reason why the philosopher did not get rid of his wife, and some even say that it is for this very reason that he chose her. If you make a mistake in choosing a wife and bring a bad, unbearable one into your home, then at least follow the example of the pagan philosopher, and do your best to improve her, and do her no ill. And once you have succeeded in bearing the spousal yoke in harmony with her, you will acquire other advantages, and spiritual endeavors will come quite easily to you."



Chrysostom teaches that the love of a husband towards his wife, on the whole, should be a reasonable feeling. It should be based on the spiritual qualities of the wife, and it should be aimed at correcting and improving her. Therefore the husband is guilty in his own eyes, before his wife, and

before the judgment of God if he remains indifferent to her weaknesses and faults and pays them no attention. But on the other hand he should not let them irritate him, and cruelly persecute his wife for them. Meekness combined with reasonable leniency and love are the most reliable methods for her improvement. "Even if your wife has sinned much against you," says Chrysostom, "Forgive her all. If you took one with bad morals, teach her goodness and meekness. If your wife has a fault, drive out the fault, not the wife. If after much experience you find that your wife is incorrigible and stubbornly sticks to her habits, then still do not get rid of her, for she is part of your body, as it is written: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:24). Let the faults of your wife be uncured, you will nonetheless be rewarded greatly for having taught and reasoned with her ... It is out of fear of God that you should suffer so much unpleasantness and put up with a bad wife as if she were a part of your own body."

Speaking of the responsibility of the husband to teach his wife, Chrysostom recommends the very approach this issue. "Your wife," he says, "loves superficial jewelry, expensive, fashionable clothes, talks too much, and is presumptuous. It is hard to imagine that one person could have all these faults, but let us imagine such a person, and let the husband try to improve her any way he can. How is a husband to improve her? He can achieve this, not by forbidding her everything at once, but if he starts with the easiest thing, the one she is least attached to. If you are impatient and try to improve her all at once, you will achieve little. So don't confiscate her jewelry to begin with, rather allow her to wear for some time. Start instead by discouraging her use of makeup. However, do not use intimidation and threats for this, but rather persuasion and caresses. Explain to her that others think poorly of her for this, tell her of your opinion and decision, and remind her frequently that not only do you not like it when her face is made up, but that you find it extremely unpleasant. Tell her that this greatly disappoints you, and that even the most beautiful women lost their attractiveness this way.

"Reason with her in such a way as to remove her passion, but do not speak to her of Gehenna [Hell – trans.] or the Kingdom, [Heaven – trans.] (for this will be a waste of time), but assure her that she appeals to you much more when she is as God created her, and that other people will not find her beautiful or handsome when she has painted and smeared her face ... If you tell her many times and she doesn't listen to you, then still don't stop telling her. Say it not in confrontation, rather with love. Sometimes show her a displeased expression, and at other times caress and coax her. Soon you will no longer see her with a disfigured face of bloody (painted red) lips, neither brows blackened by soot, as if from the hearth, neither cheeks which look like the painted walls of a tomb, for all this – soot, dust, and ashes -- is all stench. We should bear all the weaknesses of our wives, in order to correct that which we wish. Once you correct this fault, then the others will also be easy to correct. Then you can move on to gold jewelry and talk to her about it in a similar fashion, and this way little by little, reasoning with your wife, you will be comparable to a skillful, devoted slave and a patient farmer and master."

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Those joined in marriage have no right to refuse to fulfill those demands which are inherent in its concept and goals. Explaining the words of the Apostle, "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband" (1 Cor. 7:3), Chrysostom says, "The Apostle uses the word 'due' because neither of them are their own master, rather they are slaves of each other. So, when you encounter a loose woman, enticing you to sin, tell her: 'My body belongs not to me, but to my wife.' Let the wife say the same to those that attempt to defile her chastity: 'My body is not mine, but my husband's.'"

"In other parts of the Old and New Testaments the husband is given great authority over the wife, for example: "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3:16). Paul also makes this distinction: "Let every one of you...love his wife...; and the wife see that

she reverence her husband" (Eph. 5:33); and here nothing more or less is meant than that there be one authority. Why? Because previously he spoke of chastity. In other areas, says Paul, the husband has the prerogative, but not when it concerns chastity. The husband doesn't own his own body, rather the wife does. Here there is total equality and no prerogative. "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a tim" (1 Cor. 7:5). What does this mean? "Let not a wife decline to fulfill the will of a husband," he says, "and a husband not decline to fulfill the will of the wife." Why? Because terrible ills result from this kind of abstinence - adultery, fornication, and destruction of homes."

"And he properly says, do not defraud, using here the word 'defraud', in contrast to duty earlier, for to abstain on one's own, without the consent of your spouse, would in fact be defrauding him. Now, if having convinced me, you take something that belongs to me, that is not defrauding me, but if someone takes something against another's will, and by force, then he defrauds. Many women do this. They thereby become guilty of their husband's lust, and all is thrown into disorder, when agreement should be valued above all else."

"And, in fact, let us see why should it be valued above all else. Take a man and wife. Assume the wife abstains from her husband against his will. What then? Might he not fornicate? And even if he does not, might he not become sad, irritated, inflamed, angry, and cause a multitude of troubles for the wife? What is the use of fasting and abstinence, if love is spoiled? None at all, for so many hurt feelings, so much worry, so much duress results from this! "Christ commanded through Paul that wives not separate from their husbands, and that they not deprive each other, except by concurrence. But some wives neglected their husbands for the sake of abstinence, as if it were an act of virtue, and were thus reduced to adultery."

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Man and wife are obliged to remain faithful to each other. Violating the marriage bed is one of the most terrible crimes. Because of this Chrysostom condemns this sin with all his might. His condemnation is just as valid today in modern society, where this sin is most common among men and women. Condemning the husband who is unfaithful to his wife, St. Chrysostom says; "What excuse has he? Do not speak to me of natural passions. That is why marriage was instituted, so that you would not have to cross the line. For God, in the interests of your contentment and honor, gave you a wife for this reason, so that you would satisfy the arousals of nature through your wife and freed yourself from lust. But you, with an ungrateful soul, cause Him dishonor, reject all embarrassment, break the rules given to you, dishonoring your own good name."

"Why do you direct your gaze on somebody else's beauty? Why do you contemplate a face which does not belong to you? Why do you violate a marriage – dishonor your marriage bed?" "Not for this did your wife join you, leaving her father and mother and her entire home, to suffer dishonor at your hands, so that you could prefer a vile slave to her, and cause great strife. You took a partner for life, equal to you in honor, and free. Does it make sense to have taken her dowry, save it and not squander it, and then to corrupt and defile that which is more precious than a dowry – the purity of chastity and your body, which belongs to your wife?"

In order to deter someone from being unfaithful in the marriage, Chrysostom often, and with great vigor and eloquence, shows how unhappy and tortured the violator is. "Look at the adulterer, and you can see that he is a thousand times more unhappy than those in chains. He is afraid and suspicious of everyone: his wife, the husband of the adulteress, the adulteress herself, servants, friends, acquaintances, brothers, the walls themselves, his own shadow, and even himself. And what is worse, his conscience cries out and torments him daily. If he imagines God's judgment, then he can hardly stand for fear. The pleasure is short, but the unhappiness prolonged, for day

and night, in town or in the desert -- his accuser follows him everywhere, threatening him not with a sword, but with unbearable torture, defeating and killing with fear.”

The causes which tempt husbands to be unfaithful did not escape the caring eye of Chrysostom. First among them are theaters, in which immoral songs were sung, and seductive shows were put on, often featuring naked women. Chrysostom cautions husbands against such entertainments. Our age also has many similar temptations against the chastity and faithfulness of husbands. Thus not literally, but in their essence, the condemnations and warnings of St. Chrysostom are relevant to contemporary society.

“I must tell you,” he says to husbands, “those of you who spend the whole day on such entertainments make a laughing stock of honest marriage, and cover a great mystery with shame. Tell me, what will you think of your wife, after having seen women so disgraced at the theater? How can you look at her without blushing, when you have seen her whole sex dishonored? Do not argue that the theater is just acting, because this acting has made adulterers out of many, and has upset many homes. What is your wife to think of you when you return from such a dishonorable spectacle? Do not think you are without sin because you did not dirty yourself with the harlot, for in your thoughts you did everything ... I am not against merriment, but it should occur not at the expense of chastity, and not with shameful and numerous sins.”

To avoid any seduction and temptation a married man should not gaze upon the beautiful faces of women, and with longing enjoyment marvel at them. “The Savior did not forbid looking at women,” says Chrysostom, “rather He forbade looking at them with lust. If He did not mean this, He would have only said, ‘whosoever looketh on a woman. But He said, ‘Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her’ (Matt. 5:28), in other words, he who looks at her in order to derive voluptuous pleasure. When you behold another beauty with desire, you insult your own wife, because you turn your gaze from her,

and you insult her whom you gaze at, for you interact with her against the law. Though you did not touch her with your hand, you did with your eyes. That is why it is called ‘adultery.’”

Chrysostom gives the following advice to husbands to resist when desire rises for someone else’s wife. “If you notice that a passion is kindled toward another’s wife, and as a result your wife no longer appeals to you, go into your bedroom, open the epistle of Paul, and put out the flame, frequently repeating the words of the Apostle, “To avoid fornication let every man have his own wife” (1 Cor. 7:2). In general, in his behavior to all women, the husband should act in such a way as to avoid any suspicion of unfaithfulness. “Avoid,” he says, “not only adultery, but even the slightest suspicion. If your wife is needlessly suspicious of you, calm her and convince her. Don’t reproach her with anger and arrogance, she is only acting out of great care for you. She is concerned about her right of possession. That possession is your body, and it is more precious to her than any other.”

“And the husband should not act in such a way that he arouses suspicion. Tell me, why do you spend the whole day with friends, and only evenings with your wife? This will inevitably bring on suspicion. And if your wife accuses you, do not take offence. She does so out of affection, not because she is insolent. This accusation results from a fiery love, a heated disposition, and worry. She is worried that no one steals her wedding bed, that no one takes her greatest good, deprives her of her head.” St. John adamantly advises husbands and wives that they should not be suspicious of each other on the basis of words and rumors, or for any other insignificant reasons, and they should not, either on their own or through other people, watch each other, so that they do not, through pettiness or paranoia, ruin the happiness of their marriage.

http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/marriage_chrysostom_e.htm

“Parish Bulletin”

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