



Holy Ascension Russian Orthodox Church

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Christ is born! Glorify Him!

Dearly beloved in the Lord brothers and sisters,

“Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh,” (I Tim. 3:16).

It is a great mystery that the Word became flesh. The invisible is has been made visible, God born of a Virgin.

God did not become a radiant Angel nor any other creation or power, but chose to become a man.

The mystery of the incarnation is called a mystery specifically of godliness (piety), for it demands a response, a response of virtue.

Are we able to pose the question: “Who am I?” Can we fathom the depth of our existence?

An earthen cave contains the uncontainable One, and yet I have found myself drawn from the earth.

Innumerable Angelic hosts invisibly glorify God, and my invisible soul – angelic both in the swiftness of mind and agility of thought – is capable of the same.

Even before the incarnation of the Son of God, man has been a summation of all that God has created. Within man abundantly is found attributes and elements from both the invisible and visible worlds. He is a microcosm, a reflection, or perhaps in a sense it could be stated that he is a center of the universe. If intuitively we feel within ourselves a particular grandeur, then in theological terms clearly man is referred to as the “crown of creation.”

And so from all that is visible and invisible – in particular it is upon man whom the honor it is to be the apple of God’s eye, the object of His desire. He has chosen us. He has become One of us. And through us He unites Himself to all of creation.

Nonetheless this great mystery overwhelms more so, if we comprehend that through the incarnation of the Son of God, that which God is by nature, He gives to His Saints by grace! Man is God’s friend. Man sees God face to face. Man converses with God as an equal. Man participates in that which otherwise is known as unapproachable Glory.

How can we be participants of this glory and honor?

”Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength and will all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself,” (Luke 10:27).

In other words, by expansion of one’s heart one partakes of God’s glory. The Saints contain their neighbors in their heart, even those who have wounded them. By love they have overcome both their own infirmity and that of others.

And just as God is Omnipresent, and in all times and places cares for the world, so we too should “be present,” we should listen, we should attend, we should participate in the needs and concerns of our neighbor. His sorrow is our sorrow. His joy is our joy.

This process is identified as witness and martyrdom. We are witnesses of God’s love and we are martyrs for His Holy Name.

This is our godly response to the great mystery: God has appeared in the flesh.

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