

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
1	Robert Dewar	22
1	Jabra Khalilieh	18
1	Mary Thomas	67
1	Elias Bahou	12
2	Shheila Armaly	13
5	Albert Dabous	13
5	Renee Karra	12

ETERNAL LIGHT

- **May 5:** for the good health of Mona Bisharat from her family
- **May 19:** In loving memory of Adel Younes from his family
- **June 2:** In loving memory of Ernest Younes from his family

- **40 DAYS MEMORIAL SERVICE for Adele Samaha, offered by her daughter Caroline Saliba and her family. May her memory be eternal.**
- **40 DAYS MEMORIAL SERVICE for Rafik Khader, offered by George Homsy. May his memory be eternal.**
- **ONE-YEAR MEMORIAL SERVICE for Salem Besharat, offered by his family. May his memory be eternal.**
- **The coffee hour today is offered in memory of Salem Besharat by his family.**
- **5 YEARS MEMORIAL SERVICE for George T. Mahshie, offered by his wife Laraine Mahshie. May his memory be eternal**
- **Ushers, May 5:** Mounir Ayad, Michael Sinanious, Wael Haddad, George Nims, Raed Dallal,
- **Ushers, May 12:** George Ajami, William Besharat, Berj Atikian, Habib Tannous, Richard smith

- **A big thank you** to all the choir members, the chanters, the ushers, the altar servers, everyone who made our journey to Pascha a beautiful and wonderful celebration. Special thanks to George Homsey for cleaning the church during Holy Week several times. For Rami Younes and his team for decorating the bier of Christ. The teens who decorated the church. The parish council who helped on Holy Friday. To Waddah who prepared all of our services. Those who took care of our candles. To all of you many years. Christ is Risen.
- Father is out of town next Sunday. Next Sunday is Mother's Day.
- Engaged couples meeting on May 23rd at 7:30 PM.
- Grief Support will be on Thursday, May 30th at 7 PM.
- Mid Pentecost Vespers on May 21st at 7 PM.

THE 24th ANNUAL ST. GEORGE GOLF TOURNAMENT

- Our Annual St. George Golf Tournament is on Tuesday, June 25, 2019 at **Emerald Hills Golf & Country Club, 14001 Warden Avenue (14001 Concession #5)**. Registration and Lunch at 11:30 am. Tee off time 1:00 pm, Dinner 6pm. The price for golfer including dinner is \$250. Our goal for the golf tournament this year is to raise \$100,000 so we need everyone's help to achieve that! If you choose to not play golf, we also offer dinner only, tickets for \$75. We need everyone's participation. A portion of the proceeds will be going to Autism Ontario (York Region Chapter).
Mark your calendar and reserve A.S.A.P. Please Fax or Email registration forms to aftim.nassar@gmail.com Aftim Nassar 416- 895-2767, Richard Smith 647-280-0883, John Younes 647-982-7645, Fax 416-743-6155 \ www.stgeorgeto.com

MOTHER'S DAY LUNCHEON AT THE CENTRE

- On Sunday May 12, following Divine Liturgy, we will be hosting a luncheon at the Centre in honor of all Mothers. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children under 12 years. For reservation and tickets, please call Joelle Cheikh (647) 713-5995 Raed Touma (647) 648-2037 or Fouad Kodsi (416) 917-5457. Thank you. Hope to see there
- **Wine and Holy Bread Donations:** if you like to donate towards the wine or holy bread, please see the office. \$350 for Holy Bread, and \$300 for wine.
- **Parish Life Conference** will be at our church between July 4 -7 of this year. We will have a table set up soon to register and buy souvenir journal ads. For more information please see Sana Besharat, Richard Smith, or Samantha Nassar.
- **PLEDGE FORM:** Please fill your pledge form for 2019 if you have not done so. Please see **Colette El-Hajj** for blank pledge form. Thank you
- Please, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Attiah, Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Isabelle, Nassar, Adel and Valentine. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- If you are new to our parish or a visitor, please introduce yourself to one of the ushers and speak to Fr. George. We want to welcome you to our family of St. George. If you want to join our church, please speak to Father after Liturgy.

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FIRE ROUTE & HANDICAPPED PARKING, AND PARKING LINES

- Please make sure not to park on the side of the church or in front of the Fire hydrant, for this is a fire route, also ensure not to park in the spots designated for handicapped parking. Anyone who parks and does not show a handicap permit on the window will be tagged.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRISTITS BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION AND CONSEQUENCES FOR THE WORLD *by Petros Vassiliadis*



What is the reason for defining the event of the Resurrection of Christ as “Radiant”—“Lampri”? And what makes the faithful exclaim in the words of Saint John Damascene: *“This is the day of resurrection, let us be radiant O people: Pascha, the Lord’s Pascha. For Christ our God has passed us from death to life, and from earth to heaven, we who sing the song of victory”* (Katavasia of Pascha)? It is undoubtedly, the conviction of the Orthodox the world over, but also of all Christians, that fear of death was vanquished: *“Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and to those in the tombs, He has granted life,”* triumphantly exclaims one of the oldest, together with the *Phos hilaron* (Gladdening light), hymns of the Christian Church.

However, the true fact of death, the result of man’s fall, and of his free choice to disobey God and thus break communion with Him, was not abolished. Death, as human being’s ultimate enemy, *“will be the last enemy to be destroyed”* in the words of Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 15:26). By means of their faith in the Resurrection of the Son and Word of God, the faithful will be able to live true life, *“in abundance of life”* according to John the Evangelist: *(I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,* John 10:10). This is the life, rid of the catalytic influence of the devil, that God gave to humanity by the Resurrection of Christ, who *“did trample down death and did abolish the devil”* (the correct wording of the euchologion in the funeral service).

By His death Christ did abolish the devil that until then had the power of death, thus liberating humanity that used to be enslaved by their fear of death. In the words of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews: *“That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”*(Hebrews 2: 14–15. See also *“putting an end to the agony of death...because you will not abandon my soul to Hades”* in the book of the Acts of the Apostles 2:24 and 27). This conviction was preserved unchanged in the century long tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church, where, Easter, that is the Resurrection, is re-enacted not only every Sunday, especially during the Orthros, but it is also celebrated every year with even more joyfulness than in the Western world, where they celebrate more the Birth of our Saviour. There are other differences between the Western and Eastern Christianity, in the theology and in the conscience of the faithful, as for instance the “eschatological”—and therefore doxological—dimension of the Christian self-awareness, in contrast with the “historical”—and therefore more missionary—practice of our brothers in the Western world. The resurrection however, remains the element that represents more than any other the Orthodox Christian self-awareness, while in the Western world, until very recently, Crucifixion was the predominant signifier.

The first theologian to have developed and established the determining importance of the Resurrection of Christ was St. Paul, the great Apostle to the nations. In his first, and, according to many, oldest written text, the first epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul refers, for the first time, to the significance of the Resurrection for the future of the Christians: *“For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep”*(4:14). In other words, faith in the resurrection of Christ, leads to the partaking of the faithful to the eschatological Kingdom of God, a state by far more glorious than even that of Paradise. For this reason, and after quoting an apocalyptic text, using a language that all his readers would be able to understand, he concludes his argumentation by the phrase *“and so we will be with the Lord for ever”*(4:17).

Some years later addressing the community of Corinth, Paul further developed his teaching on the subject of the resurrection of the dead, especially in chapter 15 of his first epistle to the Corinthians that was going to act as a catalyst in determining the Christian faith. In it we find the well-known quote of the apostle: *“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless”*(15:17). For Paul, the Resurrection of Christ was not an isolated past event, a wonderful intervention of God in the created world that lifted at once fear of death and its domination.

It was rather the beginning of humanity's salvation, which will be completed at the "eschaton." In this chapter of his epistle, the apostle invokes the sermon of the first church about the cross, the resurrection and the apparitions of the risen Christ, as this message was delivered by eye witnesses, men and women apostles of Christ, and was recorded in the early Christian sources (15:3ff). One of the basic reasons for the extensive development, in this epistle, of the Christian teachings on Resurrection, was the conviction of certain Christians in Corinth, that there was no resurrection of the dead (*"some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead,"* 15:12).

This conviction maybe due to a misinterpretation of many traditions of early Christian, New Testament, but also extra biblical Christian sources (such as the Q source, the most ancient source of the Synoptic Gospel tradition, the Epistle of James, St. Thomas Apocryphal Gospel etc.), that put at the heart of their teachings not the Cross and Resurrection of Christ, but the eschatological, moral and prophetic teachings of the Historical Christ. The apostle makes it clear that the resurrection of Christ ensures the *resurrection of the dead*. To illustrate his point, he uses two theological motifs. First of all, the Adam-Christ, first man-second man: *"For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive"*(15:21-22). The second motif he uses is the *psychic-pneumatic* body that is the natural, earthy body of this life and the heavenly body after death. He describes how the new body will replace the old one, at the resurrection of the dead: *"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body"*(15:42-44).

Finally, he describes the future resurrection of the dead, using, as he did in 1 Thessalonians, the widely known apocalyptic themes of the Old Testament and of the intertestamental sources, the last trumpet that will sound. This is the real "mystery" of immortality in Christ: *"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality"*(15:51-53). And he concludes, triumphantly exclaiming, in the way that the orthodox celebrate Christ's Resurrection: *"O Death, where is your victory? O Death where is your sting?"* (15:55).

The Resurrection of Christ, therefore, as *"The Feast of Feasts"* and *"The Festival of Festivals,"* is the fundamental truth and the ultimate event of Christian faith. It is the most decisive act of the liberation of humanity from the fear of death and devil's power. It is the beginning of the new creation and the very assurance for the salvation of human beings affirmed by the certainty of the heavenly resurrection of the dead, which is a concept widely different from that of the Greek philosophical theory on immortality of the soul. It is precisely for this reason that we read in the later New Testament sources that Christ during the burial of his earthy body and his Resurrection *"He also went and preached to the spirits that were in prison"* (1 Peter 3:19).

This is the reason that the Byzantine painting tradition represents the fact of the Resurrection by the "Descent to Hades." The descent to hades is also hinted at in another passage of this letter: *"For this is why the gospel was preached even to the dead,"* 4:6, and in the Acts of the Apostles (2:24. 27-31). Many researchers consider that the principal literary source is the apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, where we find the dialogue between hades and the devil. The Resurrection, in other words, is not merely a fact of paramount historical importance, but it overarches history giving it a new sense, orientating it towards a new world, a new life, completely different from the conventional life of decay, strife and death.

*This is an introduction to a forthcoming album that contains visual art works of modern iconographers from all Eastern Orthodox Churches, but also from the Oriental Orthodox Churches, who participated in an international competition of iconography organized by the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO), with the title "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ". This initiative by the IAO, both in regard to the choice of the subject, and its opening up of the competition to the Oriental Orthodox Churches, underlines the universal and ecumenical character of the Resurrection of Christ. It reaffirms the importance of this pioneering organization to the contemporary witness and pursuit of Orthodoxy "*that they all may be one*" (John 17:21) as Jesus Christ commanded, or the words of the prayer petition "*for the union of all*" during the liturgical services of all the Orthodox around the globe, as the ultimate goal of divine economy, which according to the Apostle of the Nations and the basic Christian teaching is the union of all "*so that God may be all in all*" (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Petros Vassiliadis is Professor Emeritus of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) and Director of the Inter-orthodox Post Graduate Program "Orthodox Ecumenical Theology" of the International Hellenic University (IHU).