

I Await the Resurrection of the Dead (part 2) (Holy Monastery of St John the Vaptist, Kareas Attikis)

[Ξένες γλώσσες / In English](#)



The resurrection of the dead, then, will certainly take place. The angel's trumpet will definitely sound (Rev. 11, 15-18). What is important for us, however, is that we should have accomplished something in our life on earth towards the sanctification of our soul and body, so that the resurrection will not be 'unto judgment' for us, but 'unto eternal life' (Matth. 25, 46).

Of special benefit to us in this preparation is remembrance of death, vigilance and continuous readiness for our imminent departure from the world to heaven. Remembrance of death invigorates the soul and expands our existence, impelling us along the never-ending path 'from glory to glory' (2 Cor. 3, 18). Remembrance of death also aligns us with the desire of the whole of creation, which, although it has been groaning in labour pains until now (Rom. 8, 22), continues to be nourished with hope and awaits its own liberation and its own eternal 'beyond'.



The mystical sight of the 'opposite bank', of our eternal homeland, fortifies us on the path towards sanctification and in our efforts to prepare ourselves, insofar as we can, for the 'great moment', the revelatory encounter with the 'Only Beloved' (I. John 3, 2).

Moreover, the expectation of our relocation to our real, celestial homeland is an encouragement for us to develop closer relations with the citizens of heaven, the holy angels, as well as with our brothers and sisters who are already glorified, who lived 'in the Lord' and 'departed in the hope of eternal life'. Because both the holy angels and our fathers and brethren who have already departed this life are watching our struggle and support us lovingly with their holy intercessions to the Giver and Sponsor of our life.

Remembrance of death, observance of the commandments, our relationship with the angelic world and with the departed lead to a continual diminution of the ego. They also help us to cut off our own will and to submit the whole of our life and existence to the will of God. Finally, they strengthen us in our acceptance of the demise of our loved ones and, at the same time, encourage us to concern ourselves with and to prepare more seriously for the matter of our own departure.

When the compass of our life turns towards our destination, then the notion of death loses its threatening nature and is transformed into the 'sight of the unseen',

into an extension of our existence into the eternity of God and, in the end, into expectation of that unique moment in time which will take us to our 'great feast'.

If all this is in place, our life acquires a different meaning and we hasten to complete our repentance and make ourselves receptacles of the myrrh of the new life. Because each of us knows that, at that time, everything will become apparent and all our works will be revealed, all the weft woven during our lifetime on the warp, the image of God in which we were created.

For the true children of Christ, death is a great feast, in preparation for which we struggle and labour all the days of our life. The struggle to prepare for this feast also sparks the spirit of repentance, of vigilance and the readiness of the Wise Virgins in the parable. It also makes us beings of praise and thanksgiving, particularly at times of pain and in the distresses of life. In this way, the faithful have a foretaste of the kingdom to come, rejoice in their own eternal dimension in Christ and confess that indeed 'the hour is coming and now is' (John 4, 23). Moreover, this attitude to life transforms the present age into a solid bridge over which Christians can safely pass and enter the eternal bower of His children, of those 'who have come out of great tribulation' (Rev. 7, 14).

In the unfading light of eternity, the image of our life will be revealed. Then our labours will shine and the effort that each of us has made to keep their love for Him and their neighbour intact and the faith unblemished will be seen. There we will see the measure of our patience. It will then become apparent whether we have worked 'like a faithful steward' (Luke 12, 42) on the canvas of the image of God with which we were endowed by the All-Good Father and Creator when we took our being from Him, together with the prospect of being His children in all eternity (John, 1, 12).

Everything, then, is to be interpreted through the perspective of beyond the grave. As in the spiritual life, the sweetness of the fruits of our struggles begins to become apparent after we have already accepted our personal cross and the abandonment of our own will, so, too, the eternal and immortal delights will essentially become visible when we have breached the final rampart of our ego. In other words, when, 'in all things and for all things', we commend our body and soul into His hands, as a final offering of thanks to Him Who gave us life and freedom as precious gifts and as an 'irrevocable endowment' (Rom. 11, 29).

If the faithful live and proceed with these experiences, then they can stand up against the harshness and dilemmas of this life, not in an effort to avoid them, but in veneration of their own cross and approaching all the sorrows of life as 'the hem

of His garment' (Matth. 9, 20).

In this way, the faithful have a foretaste of the great celestial festival and do not merely bear with patience every sadness and adversity but also desire, or, rather, hasten to attain to their eternal homeland (Saint Ignatius the God-Bearer).

In other words, the death of the body isn't the end but the beginning. It's the birth into a new life which was given to us by Christ through His Cross and His own holy Resurrection.

After Christ's Resurrection, the faithful no longer grieve over those who have departed this life, nor are they concerned over what will happen when they leave behind the fleeting things of this earth. They simply live in order to become sanctified, for the sake of their suffering and risen Lord, singing joyously at all times: 'Christ has risen'.