



Homily for the Sunday of Saint Thomas by St. John of Kronstadt

Christ is Risen!

Beloved brothers, so Bright Week has passed and taken with it our deeds to the throne of the Heavenly Master and Judge: there, brothers, there are our deeds now. I say this in order to frighten with the fear of the heavenly judgment those who unworthily, not Christian-like, spent the feast of the bright Resurrection of Christ and to comfort those who spent it with temperance and spiritual joy.

How did very many spend the feast of the bright Resurrection? I would not like to call to remembrance foul human deeds but they, together with those that performed them, need to be remembered and judged on behalf of God. The all-bright feast was met, after the bright Paschal service, with dark deeds: intemperance and drunkenness, fights, cursing, and all types of sin. Consider that we fasted before the feast only in order to, with even more eagerness, rush into all fleshly, sinful deeds so that we can unashamedly and with insolence indulge in every iniquity. Alas! Woe unto us!

All those who met the feast with intemperance and drunkenness, adultery, cursing, and other similar deeds of the flesh lost all the benefit which they had received (if they even received any) from the

fast, lost the benefit from repentance and communion of the Holy Mysteries, trampled them as an unreasonable animal under their feet, lost the acceptable time for salvation, given them by the mercy of the Lord, time which will not be returned. It was proper to say to you during the fast, behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2) for it was just then that you had come to the saving font of repentance and to the all-cleansing, true Mysteries of the body and blood of the Lord. Now your confession and communion is put off until the next fast but who knows if the Lord will vouchsafe you to again confess and commune? Who knows if you will repose in those very iniquities with which again, after the font of repentance, you have defiled yourself? How painful, how piteous, beloved brothers, that so soon you have turned out to be betrayers of Christ and have given yourself over to the devil to serve him, the original murderer, the author of, and instructor in of every type of sin! You are, using the words of the Savior, and I, a great sinner, am as well are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do (John 8:44).

What, then, remains for us to do, beloved brothers? To pray and weep for our sins. To weep that not Christian-like and not even human-like did many of us meet the feast but like vile idol worshippers and like wild animals, which have not been fed for a long time with their favorite food. To weep that we have trampled upon the great, soul-saving Mysteries of Christ, that is, repentance and communion, and counted them as nought. To weep that the time, given for salvation, we have thoughtlessly lost. May we weep and pray to the Lord that He “not become angry with us neither destroy us with our iniquities” (first morning prayer) but would return us to the way of repentance and make us skilled performers of His commandments. Let us firmly decide from now on not to give ourselves over to intemperance and drunkenness and all the sins which follow, and with tears ask the Lord that He, with the Grace of the Holy Spirit, would strengthen us in our intentions and good deeds.

Brothers! May we all shed tears for we all unworthily met the great feast of the Lord and angered our Lord; not in this way, not in this way indeed, should we meet the feasts of the Lord. We need to meet them with spiritual joy in the Lord, for our deliverance from sins and for our eternal salvation through Christ, the Son of God, with deeds of mercy, temperance from passions, visiting the church of God in spirit and truth and with simplicity in food and clothing.

O, you, decorated with gold and a multitude of precious fabrics, women and maids! In the name of the Lord, I direct my speech to you! What a multitude of poor would you have been able to cause to rejoice on the all-bright day of the Resurrection of Christ and, in that way, worthily meet that great feast, if you would have, in generosity and Christian love, changed even a few of these decorations into money and given that money to the poor who are so many in our city? Would it not have been reasonable, in a Christian way, if you had fewer precious clothing and the money remaining you had given to the poor? What rich mercy would you have received on that day from Christ the Lord? Yes, truly Christian-like would you have then met the feast of Christ’s Resurrection. But now what? You are decorated like idols but the members of Christ are without clothes; you are satiated but the members of Christ are in want; you roll in every possible pleasure but those are in tears; we are in rich and decorated dwellings but those are in cramped conditions and uncleanness, in dwellings which are often not any better than a pigsty. We do not have Christian love and, therefore, there is no true feast of the Resurrection of Christ, for those truly celebrate the Resurrection who himself is raised from dead deeds to deeds of virtue and Christian faith and love, trampling on intemperance, luxury, and all of the passions. Brothers! May we celebrate the feasts of the Lord as Christians and not as pagans! Amen.