

Sunday of Orthodoxy 2022

Торжество Православ'я

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Як святкувати таке радісне Богословське свято як Торжество Православ'я у такому сумному, болючому році?

По можливості, потрібно зосередитися на головній темі Торжества Православ'я – правдива чиста богословська думка конечно потрібна у правдивій Святій Церкві.

З іншого боку, неясна, чи навіть помилкова, думка може закласти підґрунтя для неправильної, шкідливої і навіть гріховної поведінки чи лиходіяння.

Цим празником ми відзначаємо повернення ікон у Церкву Православну. Це свято підсилює розуміння важливості правдивої ідеї про ікони, а з нього і Боговтілення нашого Господа Ісуса Христа. Тобто, ми можемо мати ікони в Церкві, бо Христос народився й воплотився, й так Він Правдивий Бог і правдива людина.

Orthodoxy leads to Orthopraxis and the opposite is also true bad Theology engenders bad actions.

How can we celebrate such a joyous feast as the Triumph of Orthodoxy at a time of sadness, anger and anxiety seeing our beloved Ukraine suffering under the attack of an evil tyrant who has given himself to the service of Satan?

We can look at the real meaning of today's holiday: We celebrate God's Gift of the Truth which we see expressed by the veneration of icons. We

celebrate, as Orthodox, the Truth not just today but throughout the liturgical year. We celebrate the return of icons because we again declare that Christ is born a man and is truly God and truly Man. He is both our Saviour and our brother who is here to protect us.

Truth in action underlines our truth in belief. A simple well-known example of this is the sign of the Cross. When we have the sign of the Cross, we make sure that the thumb and two fingers are completely even to underline the understanding that the Holy Trinity is seen as 3 equal persons. One essence and 3 persons. If the fingers are not even, maybe we will begin to think that the Holy Trinity is not necessarily equal – which is the beginning of heresy. Improper action can lead to confused belief.

We this year, see examples from the other side – negative examples of how confused or bad Theology lead to disastrous actions:

- One clear example, from our southern neighbours is when a mis-directed Theology helped a non-democratic tyrannical conman become a type of “Christian” president who must be followed beyond all reason.

Without a doubt the biggest example of confused religious thought or Theology leading to a tragic war is what we see now in the attack by one evil tyrant on the good people of Ukraine. There are many so-called reasons in the twisted tyrant’s mind, but bad theology makes it easier for some to support the tyranny.

There has been a long Tradition in Muscovy of treating the Tsar as if he were a special representative of the Lord God Himself. To oppose him was to oppose God. This has produced a cult of emperor worship like that which challenged the Church in the Roman Empire. They have changed out Christ for the wannabe Tsar and the Kingdom of God for Руський Мир/ the Russian World. All this in time has emboldened a tyrant to attack Ukraine and bomb maternity hospitals simply because he has decided that Ukraine has no right to exist.

We are directed and warned in the first Epistle of St. John that we should “test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Is it God’s will that there should be a war in Ukraine? In the words of the New Testament: “Certainty not” / “жодним способом”.

It is a just use of force to oppose an evil tyrant and to protect one's home and loved ones. Let us not be fooled by the words of a false prophet/tyrant serving the evil one and his minions.

Orthodoxy follows Christ and protects those in danger and need: not as others who think their beliefs allow them to attack and kill the innocent. Ukrainians are protecting themselves and others in danger and neighbours are feeding and sheltering the needy. It is blessed Christ – centered (Orthodox) work to oppose the evil tyrants.

Let us work and help / let us pray for peace and justice/ let us be strong and someday we will be back celebrating joyously the Triumph of Orthodox as Christ spoke through St. Paul to the Thessalonians and to all of us: "Rejoice always" (2 Thess 5:16).