# DECR Chairman: We learned on own experience that Jesus Christ - God Incarnate



***DECR Communication Service, 05/02/2022.***

On May 1, 2022, on the 2nd Sunday after Easter, the Apostle Thomas, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Moscow church in honor of the icon of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow" on Bolshaya Ordynka.

Vladyka was assisted by the press secretary of the Synodal Department for Monasteries and Monasticism, rector of the Moscow metochion of the Vvedensky stauropegial monastery of Optina

Hermitage, Archimandrite Melchizedek (Artyukhin), doctor of theology, professor of the OCAD, hegumen Serapion (Mitko), the clergy of the temple.

After a special litany, the archpastor offered up a prayer for peace and an end to internecine strife.

At the end of the service, Metropolitan Hilarion addressed those present with a sermon:

"Christ is Risen!

Reading the gospel stories about the Resurrection of Christ, we can pay attention to the fact that the disciples of the Savior did not immediately believe that Christ was resurrected. Having heard fr om the myrrh-bearing women about the resurrection of Jesus, the apostles did not believe. When the resurrected Christ appeared to two disciples on their way to Emmaus, they did not recognize Him. Their hearts burned, they listened to His words, but only when He broke and gave them bread, they recognized Him.

The holy evangelists do not hide from us the fact that not all of the disciples recognized Jesus Christ as risen from the dead at once. This news seemed too incredible. In the Gospel of Mark we hear how the Lord appeared to the disciples and reproached them for not believing even when they saw Him resurrected. The Gospel of Matthew tells how the disciples came to the mountain wh ere the Lord called them, and some worshiped Him, while others doubted.

Only the Gospel of John clearly and firmly testifies not only that Christ is risen (of course, all the Gospels speak of this), but also tells us fr om the very beginning to the very end that Christ is God Incarnate. Again, we can remember how other Gospels begin: “The genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David , the Son of Abraham " (Matt. 1.1) - Matthew begins his Gospel; The Gospel of Mark begins with the words: “The beginning of the Gospel, Jesus Christ…” ( Mark 1:1); Luke begins his Gospel with an appeal to Theophilus and mentions that “many have already begun to compose stories about events that are completely known between us” ( Luke 1.1 ).

And only the Apostle John begins his Gospel with a loud statement that “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). It is no coincidence that this particular gospel reading was chosen by the Church for the service of Easter night - so that on the night of the Resurrection of Christ all of us would hear that “the Word was God”, that the Word was incarnate and dwelt with us, full of grace and truth; so that we hear that the Lord Jesus Christ is not a simple man who came into the world, not one of the prophets, but God Himself, incarnated and became a Man. From the beginning to the end of his Gospel, the apostle John holds and proves the idea that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate.

Other evangelists tell about the miracles of the Savior, give us His words and parables, but only John builds his entire Gospel as proof that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate. John selects only those miracles and those teachings of the Savior that are needed in order to once again confirm that Jesus Christ - Son of God, true God who incarnated and became a Man without ceasing to be God.

There is not a single parable in the Gospel of John, because all this has already been said by other evangelists. The task of the Evangelist John is to prove and reveal to all of us that the Lord Jesus Christ is God Incarnate for us. That is why he talks about an episode that other evangelists kept silent about and that we hear today: about how the Lord appeared to the disciples, but Thomas was not among them. And when the disciples announced to Thomas that they saw the Lord risen, he said: “Unless I see the wounds from the nails on His hands, and put my finger in the wounds from the nails, and put my hand in His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

Eight days later the disciples were together again, and Thomas was with them. And the Lord again appears to His disciples, having passed through closed doors. He immediately turns to Thomas and says to him: “Put your finger here and see My hands; give me your hand and put it in my side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing” (John 20:27).

And then Thomas exclaims: “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). He pronounces the very first Creed, which sounded in the history of the Christian Church even before the dogmas were formulated, as the Creed that we read and hear at the Liturgy was finally approved. The simplest and most concise Creed was uttered by a disciple of the Lord: "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Thomas confessed Jesus Christ not only as Lord, but also as God Incarnate. It is for this reason that the evangelist John tells this story - to end with wh ere he began, that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). And we see how the earthly history of the Lord Jesus Christ ends, how He appears to His disciples and how one of them confesses Him as Lord and God.

Following Thomas, this confession has been repeated by thousands and millions of people over the course of twenty centuries. And every time when the Pascha of Christ comes, when we meet the Lord Jesus Christ resurrected, someone worships Him, and someone doubts, as was the case with His first disciples. But this confession of faith always sounds in our heart: “My Lord and my God!”, for we have believed and learned from our own experience that the Lord Jesus Christ is not just a man, but He is truly God Incarnate.

The Church was not immediately able to fully formulate this truth. What Thomas said was the original faith of the Church, but it took more than three centuries for that faith to be put into dogma form. Because there were various attempts to explain who Jesus Christ is, why He came, how the Divine and

human natures are combined in Him.

In the 4th century, when the Church emerged from the catacombs, when the persecution of Christians ended, when, it would seem, all the conditions were in place for the Church to flourish, a certain Arius, presbyter of Alexandria, appeared, who began to assert that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, was created God the Father is not the True God, but only the highest creation. The Holy Church fought this heresy for nearly a century. After all, this statement was not just a private opinion of one presbyter - this heresy captured the minds of people, captured the church hierarchy. Reading about what happened in the 4th century, we are amazed at how many people shared this false teaching and what efforts it took the Church to finally overcome it. Not one, but two whole Ecumenical Councils were needed in order to finally crush the Arian heresy.

The Arian heresy touched upon the very essence of Christian doctrine, for it falsely answered the question of who Jesus Christ is, erroneously asserting that Christ is not God Incarnate, but a man, and that He is not consubstantial and not equal to God the Father.

But the Holy Church, proceeding from the creed, which was imprinted on the pages of the Gospels and runs like a red thread through the entire Gospel of John, and also resounds in the epistles of the holy Apostle Paul and in other New Testament writings, proved again and again that the Lord Jesus Christ is God Incarnate.

Celebrating the Resurrection of Christ and remembering today how the Lord appeared to His disciples, how He appeared to Thomas, we are again and again affirmed in this faith, which we received from the apostles themselves, from the holy fathers. This faith was carried by our ancestors through the most severe persecutions, suffered through suffering and washed with the blood of the new martyrs. And we profess this faith today, and together with Thomas, with the entire apostolic community, together with the entire Church, we turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and say to Him: “My Lord and my God!”. Amen .

Christ resurrection!"

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