



61st Year

March 17, 2013

Pamphlet #11 (3120)

THE GARMENT OF CHRIST

Our Lord Jesus Christ, as Son of God, has absolutely no need of garments neither for covering, nor for adornment. The brilliance of His divine glory comprises His bright garment and majestic adornment, as the Psalmist reminds us: "thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest [thyself] with light as [with] a garment" (103:1).

He wants to garb us with a bright garment which will shine from His own eternal light, so that we partake in His lifegiving grace, because "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1:4).

In order for this to happen however, we must make a big change, as the Ap. Paul tells us: "To cast off from over us the works of darkness and for us to put on the weapons of light". What does this mean?

The darkness of sin and the light of virtue

Before the Lord dresses us with his glory and light we need to be delivered (cast off) the garment of darkness which is sin, and furthermore now, when it is time for each of us. Because our life here, where everything that darkens the mind and blackens the soul is performed, finishes, leaves quickly, early on reaches its end (the night advanced). For as long as this life lasts, it is an opportune time for us to take off from in us, all the guilts which judge our soul and the sinful defilements of our body, and for us to cast off from our mind, the dark garment of sin.

Once we are delivered from the influence of sin we ought to work spiritually, to cultivate the gospel virtues in our life, so that we put on the light of Christ, to be surrounded by the grace of His great glory.

The Lord says that "I must perform the works which He entrusted me to do (here) Who sent me (to earth), so long as my presence upon the earth lasts, so long as there is time" (Jn. 9:4). While Basil the Great urges us to work here, for as long as we are living, the works of faith because "the end (death) of each of us is near". And gradually to put on all of the Lord, as the Apostle exhorts us: "Put on our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14). Because first we ought to put on the light-like virtues of the Lord and then "the cause of all lights Christ" (St. Nikodemos), in other words the fullness of virtues which is the Lord Jesus. That we be baptized sacramentally in His grace for us to put on Christ, as the Apostle reminds us again: "Whoever of you were baptized in Christ, have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

The care for the garment of Christ.

It doesn't suffice for us to be granted the garment of the grace of Christ, but we must preserve it clean, spotless from the offence of sin. And we will achieve this, as the Ap. Paul again tells us, if we don't alter the care for our body into the satisfaction of fleshly desires, "and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts." Because we don't put on a portion of Christ, but all of Christ. There doesn't exist, in other words, room for sin. Athanasios the Great says that "God wears all of you, so that everyone of us puts on God". Christ wears all of us in His love so that we also put on all of God in us. There is no room for wicked deeds which offend the All Holy Spirit in any of the members of the Church of Christ. Because the fabric of the bright garment which Christ gives us is spiritual. The garment of Christ is the grace of the Comforter (St. Nikodemos) and sin can't be thought of, nor does it fit.

Because however, we are humans and we are easily swayed into sin it is good that we have in mind the beautiful exaposteilarion of the Bridegroom Service: "I see Your bridal chamber my Savior adorned and I do not have a garment to enter inside it. Brighten the garment of my soul o, o giver of light and save me". The spiritual struggle we put forth brightens the world of our soul, it corrects our journey towards Christ. So for this reason also, the Ap. Paul advises us "Let us walk honestly, as in the day", in other words let our life be bright as the day, without dark spots of sinful behavior.

How contemporary man is dressed

In our time some people dress simply and others enlist the fashion and the fashion designers in order to impress with their expensive clothes. And they analogously adopt their natural behavior. Both their garments as well as their behavior, from the minute they are not being inspired by the spirit of Christ, are garments and adornments which don't endure in time, they bear in them corruption and vanity.

The Church, always throughout time projects the garment of the virtues of Christ. Whoever chooses to put on Christ has a spiritual perception of His beauty. They see with the eyes of faith, like the chief disciples of the Lord on the day of His Transfiguration, that "His garments shine like light". They can't be compared in color and brilliance with the garments of contemporary man. Their quality is indelible and their beauty eternal. For this reason the Theotokos first chose to be garbed with the heavenly robe of glory of Her Son and God. David characteristically says: "Your queen stood at your right garbed in golden garments". The grace of the garment of Christ shines more than gold. And whoever enjoys this honor rejoices spiritually because God granted them to put on "the garment of gladness".

Christians are baptized "in Christ" and put on Christ. They put on His saving grace and proceed in the light of His commandments. They struggle to preserve their spiritual garment bright in order to enter into the eternal bridal chamber of the Bridegroom of the Church of Christ.

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