

The Light of Christ in Christians

(17.1.2021)

Christ is "*the true Light*" (see John 1:9). Those who believe in Him and are members of His One Holy Church, receive His light. This is how Christians themselves become light, by reflecting the light of Christ that is within. They cannot keep it to themselves or hide it! The Lord said, "*You are the light of the world...*" (Matthew 5:14). Christ's mission for Christians is for them to spread His light to others.

But how does this happen?

-With their bright presence. What this means is that their illumined lives can be seen in their purity. A person can receive light from a Christian who reflects the light of Christ with their serene face, pure gaze, and gentle speech. This can be seen in the following story: There were three monks who used to visit St. Anthony the Great every year to be instructed by him. Two of the monks would ask him various questions about asceticism and the spiritual life, while the third monk listened in silence. On one occasion the Saint said to the third monk, "You have been visiting me for so many years, and yet you never ask me a single question." The monk humbly replied that "It is enough for me to see you, Abba." And yet, he still learned a lot. When the light of Christ illuminates the human soul, it effortlessly touches those around it.

-With their enlightened speech. With the command of their Teacher, the Holy Apostles proclaimed the Gospel of Christ to many nations, from Great Britain to India, and brought the light of Christ to the universe. Their work continues to this day with the light-bearing people of the Church, all over the world. There are Saints who were distinguished not only for their zeal, but also for the effectiveness of their work, being declared "Enlightened." Saints such as Sts. Cyril and Methodios, Enlightener of the Slavs, and St. Gregory the Illuminator of Armenia. The Church calls the Three Great Hierarchs (Sts. Basil, Gregory and John Chrysostom) "the greatest beacons of the threefold divinity," who with the bright rays of their teaching, illuminated the universe (see the Apolytikion of the feast of January 30).

Of course, not all Christians are called by God to reach the heights of these Saints, but we can all contribute to the missionary work of our Church, each according to their ability and circumstance. In this way, more and more people may receive Christ's Light. There are many who were living in the darkness of separation from God, with frustration and despair, and were saved by the efforts of ordinary Christians, bearing this light in their minds and hearts!

-With shining works. The Lord Himself said to us in this way: "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven*" (Matthew 5:16). Let us not think that the Lord is pushing us to do works that are beyond our ability. He is not talking about big projects, but good ones. Just as the humble lamp (which He spoke of earlier) lights up a house, so we (in receiving light from Christ) are a light for the people in our household with our worthy example. From our Christian behavior we help enlighten our children, our husbands and our wives. Many husbands have been saved by the holy conduct of their wives! How many Saints were raised by holy mothers? There is no need for constant reprimands, scolding, complaining and hurtful behavior. Good works done with sincere love will have the right effect.

It is the same way when we make such efforts in our communities, willingly participating in every good work of the Church and wider society. We will have positive results when we have love for all, and become living examples of justice, honesty (in our dealings and professions), fidelity, service to those in need, patience, kindness, and forgiveness to those who hurt us. This behavior will move other people, and guide them to repentance. They will understand that what Christ teaches is not impossible, because there are people today living by it. In this way, more people will come to Christ the Savior; They will be drawn to Him, so that their own souls may be illumined and-as Christ said-they will glorify their Heavenly Father!

My dear brothers and sisters, may we keep the Light of Christ within us, being a constant source of light. May we radiate this light all around us, and through luminous example and words, glorify God. Amen.