

Do we Bear the Name of God?*

Sts. Cyprian and Justina had already acknowledged our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior, had accepted Baptism in His Name, and had, indeed, as a Bishop and as a Deaconess, undertaken missionary work, preaching the majesty of God.

Like the God-inspired Paul, they were thus shown in Grace to be “chosen vessels,” to “bear the Name” of the Lord “before the nations, kings, and sons of Israel” (Acts of the Apostles 9:15), a fact that ultimately led them to glorious martyrdom.

It is, to be sure, a great honor and blessing for a person “to bear the Name of God” before men, to confess the good confession of His Holy Faith, to disseminate the message of the Gospel regarding the Name of the Triune God, and to fight the good fight of Truth and Life in Christ.

A great honor, yet also a great responsibility. To bear something implies that one carries it as a weight or a burden, and thus one experiences difficulty, is forced to put forth effort, and increases his heedfulness, devoting himself to his task, being constantly vigilant therein.

Bearing the Name of the Lord is, then, a ministry of the highest responsibility, and a difficult witness. This is because to bear the Name of Christ is to bear a cross in His Name, enduring in patience and with thankfulness, for the sake of Him Who was crucified for us, crucifixion with Him, that we might dwell with Him eternally.

Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, is also a King, though a crucified King. His Glory is His Cross, His Sufferings. All of these underscore the Crucifixional-Resurrectional quality of the course of our life on earth, up until the time that we enter into the endless glory and blessedness of his Heavenly Kingdom.

But let us put forth the following question: Do we, in our day, bear the Name of God with knowledge and constancy? Do we firmly hold, in deed and word, to the confession of our Holy Orthodox Faith, such that there is betokened in us the same Divine pleasure that



was betokened in the “the Angel of the Church in Pergamos”? “These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith” (Revelation II: 12-13).

The Name of God is the most precious thing that God’s love of mankind has entrusted to us: it is our inestimable source of wealth; it is our life; it is the high station that we assumed through Holy Baptism. I wonder if we are conscious of this Divine calling of ours. “[Y]e were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Those who bear the Triune Name of the True God live, above all, in communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. By way of the holy life of Grace within the Orthodox Church, we sate the thirst in our souls, and imbibing from the Spirit of God, we are deified: “The Father being the Wellspring (Fountain) (Jeremiah 2:13), while the Son is called River (Psalm 65:9), we are said to drink of the Spirit. Indeed, it is written that ‘we have been all made to drink into one Spirit’ (1 Corinthians 12:13). But being wetted by the spirit, we drink from Christ; ‘for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ’ (1 Corinthians 10:4).” (See St. Athanasios the Great, First Epistle to Bishop Serapion, “Concerning the Holy Spirit.”)

The glorious Martyrs Cyprian and Justina yet again, on the occasion of their commemoration, remind us of this great honor and responsibility of ours. Let us continually search our consciences to see whether we cling to the Name of God, and let us take care, calling upon the holy intercession of these Martyrs, in humility and surpassing purity, to bear worthily the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, that we might gain eternal life. Amen.

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[of Blessed Memory]



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