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THE LETTER OF ST. PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS
"Hymn to Christ"

After commending the Colossians' religious life, the Apostle Paul writes one of the most beautiful passages in his letters. It is the so-called Hymn to Christ, which begins with a praise of the Father. The glorification of the Father, which was dear to the heart of the Son, logically takes center stage in this praise. How could we understand God's glorious deeds if we did not recognize Jesus as the Father's envoy? The church in Colossae must be mindful of the glory of the Son of God, so that their faith may be firmly rooted and any teaching that seeks to overshadow the glory of Jesus may be rejected.

"Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross." (Col 1:12-20)

Therefore, let us first turn our gaze and hearts toward our Father, from whom all things come. In His incomprehensible goodness, He has had mercy on humankind's misery and provided them with a way out. This way out is not merely a rescue in the hour of dire need, which is enough to merit infinite thanks. Rather, He wants to grant us a share in the saints who dwell in the light. He wants to restore our dignity as human beings created in His image so that we may be united with Him in eternity. However, to do so, he had to free us from the power of darkness. For through sin, the devil had gained power over humanity, from which they could not free themselves. Someone stronger had to come. The Father sent this One to us—He who stands above all yet took the path of humility for our sake. Thus, those freed from death are brought into the kingdom of Jesus's love. As the text makes clear, Jesus's voluntary sacrifice was necessary for us to obtain forgiveness of sins.

Let us pause to ask a serious question: Are we as aware of this today as the Apostle proclaims? Do we understand that human beings need an encounter with the Lord—an encounter that is unequivocal? No one can forgive sins except God Himself, and only the Lord Jesus can do so. It is therefore disconcerting that the unique position of Jesus Christ for all people is no longer sufficiently emphasized within the Church in recent times. More and more often, one hears voices suggesting that there are other equally valid paths to God for followers of other religions. This is very misleading. When one truly internalizes St. Paul's text, one can only wonder how anyone could arrive at such a viewpoint.

If a person has not encountered Jesus through no fault of their own, it will certainly not be held against them. Our Father will judge them justly. However, this does not mean that the proclamation of Christ's message of salvation for all people—who are reconciled to God through Him—can be relativized or nullified. Anyone who does so is no longer proclaiming what St. Paul taught the Colossians and what the Church has faithfully proclaimed for centuries. Her missionaries were sent to the ends of the earth, often giving their lives for Christ.

Even if we do not yet grasp the full scope of salvation through the Son of God, we cannot help but be awestruck by what St. Paul made clear to the Colossians:

"(Christ is) the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

This is what our faith tells us. Jesus' position as the Son of God is so unique that we serve Him with joy and gratitude for that reason alone. For in Him we were created, and everything was created through Him and for Him. This alone is enough to recognize the Lord we are privileged to follow in the Church. We must never forget this; otherwise, we separate ourselves from the glory of Christ, which applies to all people, even if they are unaware of it. However, it is precisely the Church's task to make this known to all people.

Tomorrow, let us reflect on the final lines of this wonderful hymn!

Meditation on the reading of the day (Commemoration of the Faithful Departed):

https://en.elijamission.net/the-blessed-souls-of-purgatory-3/