

May 8, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Holy Archangel Michael's Serbian Orthodox Church, Hibbing, MN,

I greet you in the name of the Risen Lord on the Feast Day of St. Mark the Evangelist.

Christ is Risen!

In the Gospel of St. Mark we hear a certain recollection not to be found in any of the other Synoptic Gospels (meaning the parts of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke that are pretty much identical stories). The Gospel of John stands on its own as it comes from the same author as Revelations, those who have ears to hear let them hear!

Anyway, the following quoted evangelical recollection takes place as the mob came to arrest Jesus Christ prior to His Crucifixion. "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men (the mob) laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked (Mk14:51-52)."

The central point of highlighting this quote is that the young man mentioned here was St. Mark. As many of the Saints have done, they do not mention themselves in "I" or their name, but rather in the third person out of humility.

All that being said, what does this mean for us?

Well, if an enormous Saint and Evangelist, like St. Mark, could have been stripped completely naked of all he had. (Here we must remember the disciples had basically nothing except Jesus Christ Himself in the flesh, which is more than all creation could ever ask for.) Then, we must realize that this is the ebb and flow of the spiritual life. God, The Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has given us more than we could ever ask for, but sometimes, as is the nature of the spiritual life, or rather a life in Christ. We are left feeling naked, just like St. Mark when the Lord went to his crucifixion. However, what came next? His resurrection. The glorious unending day that every Christian awaits.

Just like when we plant tomatoes, if we water them all the time, their leaves will be green, but their roots will be shallow. However, if we don't water them too much their leaves may turn a bit yellow and a bit wilted, but their roots are simultaneously digging very deep into the soil to find water.

This is the nature of the spiritual life. Every crucifixion comes with a resurrection. The goal is to not give up during the crucifixion, but hopefully wait for the resurrection, just like St. Mark. Even though, as a disciple, he fled naked when the mob came to take away Jesus, he still became a bishop, an evangelist, and a great Saint.

May He Who Rose from the dead Christ our True God, through the intercessions of St. Mark,
have mercy on us and save us.

The Blessings of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with all of you,

Fr. Constantine "Dean" Franck