

Fathers of the 1st Council
The Gospel According to John 17:1-13

"...And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true god, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent"

OIKOS

Let us hear the Church of God crying out with a loud proclamation, "Let the thirsty come and drink. The bowl that I hold is a bowl of wisdom. I have mixed its drink with the word of truth, and it pours out not water of Contention, but of Confession." Imbibing this confession, the actual Israel sees God who says, "See, see that I AM, and I am not altered. I am God first and I am thereafter, and aside from Me there is no other at all." Hence will partakers be filled, and they will praise the great mystery of piety.

How could we know God if we don't know who we are?

Is there certitude in any human heart about who we are? Or who we might become?

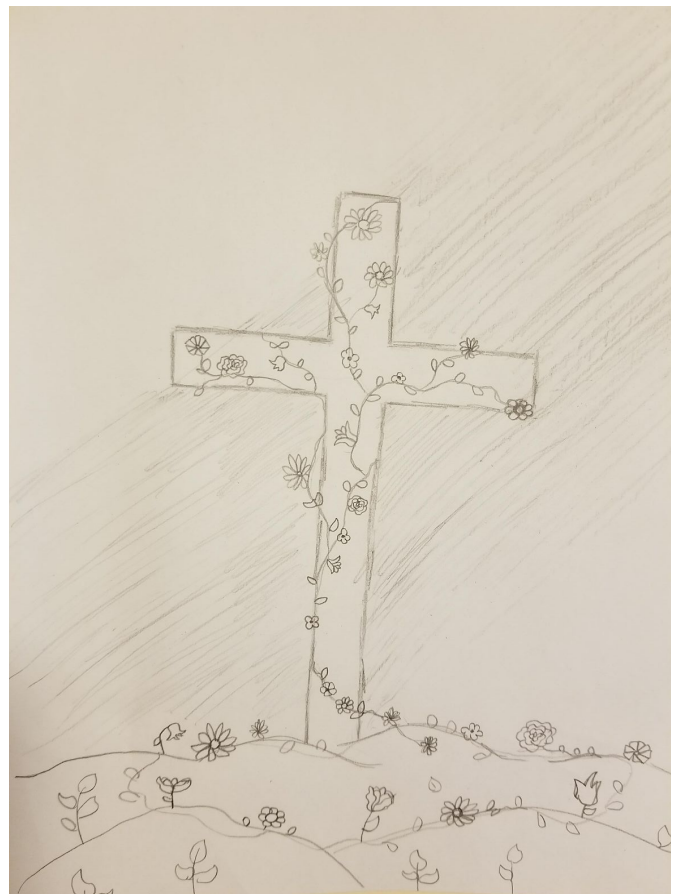
How much does this question scare us or give us hope? How can we approach Him with uncertainty in our own heart?

If you take time to speak to an adolescent then you see the unhidden desire to find answers to questions that trouble a young mind. But then, young or old, the mind is the same: troubled.

But let us spare ourselves from unnecessary trouble. "...Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known me Philip?"

(Jn 14, 9).

There is fatherly love in the way Jesus calls his apostle. In the way He utters his name. A love never hidden from the son and yet unknown to him. The love that opens to us the gate of eternal life. In the gospel, we see the son, Philip, who asks for the father. And yet, it is to Him that he talks.



How could we be blind to the fatherly love that gives us birth? The fatherly love that walks us on the way to Emaus? The one that prepares you food on the shore and asks for honey before the ascension so you can believe and not disbelieve. We cannot believe and take the cup of salvation and render to God what He rendered to us if we do not taste from the fatherly love. If we do not get to know the first thing that God does not hide away from us: the love of the father for His son. How is it for God to have all the heavenly joy to share with His people, and yet, for His people to keep away from it?

There is nothing that can be done or accomplished, nor any step to be set on any given path if one has not known this love in his heart. This is what moves life ahead of death. This is what surrenders the fear to joy. This is what separates the sheep from the goats. Before going to Jerusalem for Pentecost, we need to take time to stay with Jesus, by the seat of the father. To take a glimpse at this love. So our soul can be touched and wounded. Unhidden, yet unknown to men, the fatherly love is always there for the son to discover.

How do we come to the knowledge of it?

It is true that the doubt was seductive from the very beginning: "did he say to you...?" (Genesis 3, 1); and what followed after that was a violent break away from Truth. The break away did not touch the heart deep enough though. Only the surface, so much so that the pain did not produce repentance, but the contrary. And being away, death became the option to giving up on life. So much so, that it became permanent and even shame diminished in the hearts of men. It was the eternal option for any human inconvenience.

Within Christ's resurrection, death is taken away as an option. When the Son, obedient to the love of the Father, shares this with man, every tomb becomes so empty recognizing within itself the sign of eternal life.

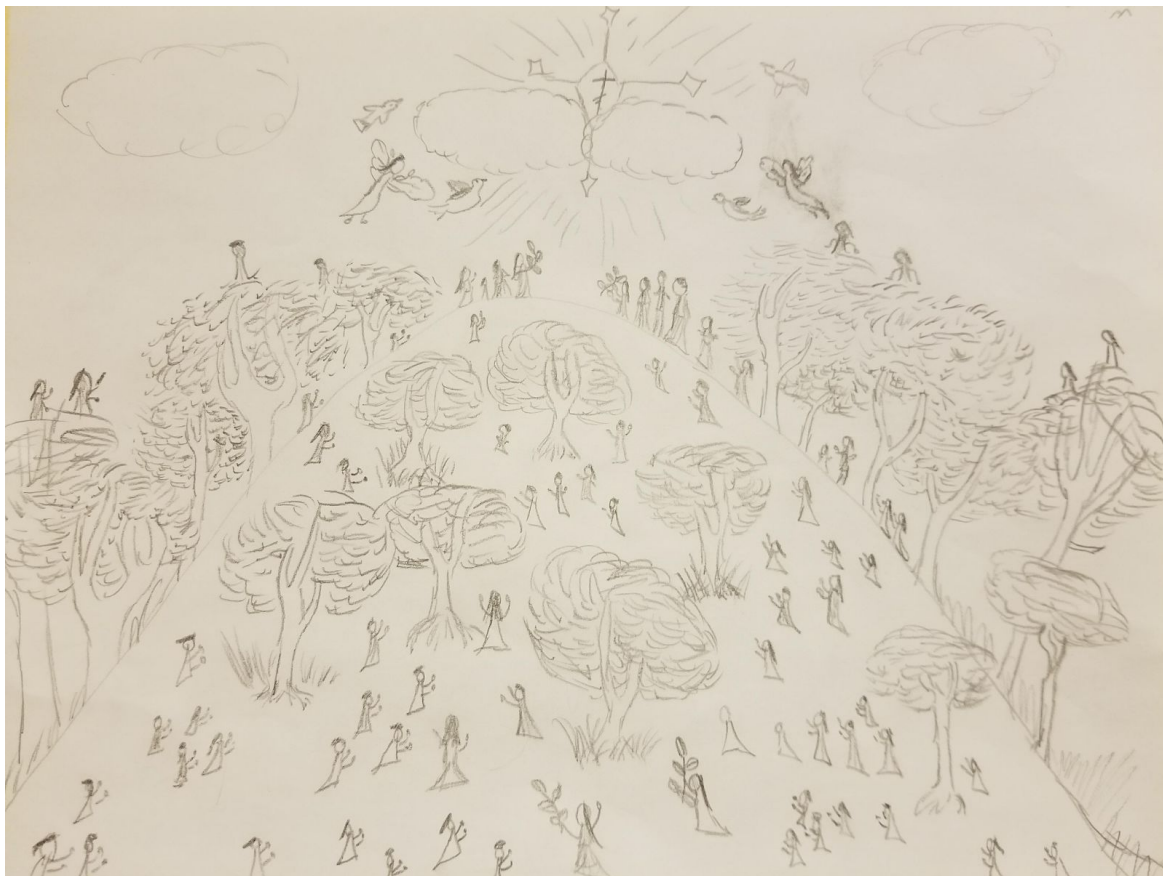
There is still something fresh to discover in the heart of man that touches the birth of human life. The son has yet to discover what he has. The love of the Father. Unhidden, unsearchable but revealed from the beginning of time, before the morning star.

It is still hard to believe and painful to accept. But is it not the truth of our life that love is rather rejected than accepted? Don't we rather hurt those who easily care for us? There is this tendency that we still struggle with that still lingers in our heart. To become strangers to the caregivers. To go back to the first doubt, abandoning the first love. And yet, despite all this, within prayer God pierces your heart with joy. A joy that is every time deeper than the previous one. To bring back the attentiveness of our being to the fresh water not yet drunk, the need for us to render to Him what he rendered to us.

Holy Ascension

Acts of the Apostles 1:1-12

"And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven."



Christ is among us!

He is among us because He has risen from the dead. It is for us to keep ourselves present and alive within Christ's resurrection. Breaking through the fear. As father said.

To keep not only the memory of the resurrection alive but our hearts also. He is taken into heaven so He can always be with us. The tomb was not empty but rather full of movement in the morning. The myrrh bearing women, the angels, Jesus talking to Mary, Peter and John rushing in to see the sign of the resurrection. It is the sign of everlasting life. The universality of the resurrection leaves any human tomb empty. Bearing within itself the signs of the resurrection. ...

When the apostles spread the news of the resurrection and the forgiveness of sins, they did not do that in untrodden territory. The seed had been planted. The resurrection was alive in any human life, which at times and with violence would remain resistant to life. However, the apostles spoke in Truth to those where truth was already spoken from within. It was reassuring. The freedom of sharing with each other and the beauty of witnessing to the world, or rather in a personal manner, to all those who were already chosen. The encounter happened. And the bars of iron broke.

John 11, 49-53

But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all; 50 you do not understand that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish."^[f] 51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 53 So from that day on they took counsel how to put him to death.

"In the trap which they hid is their food taken (Ps. 9:15)

"This has been the case They said that they would kill Jesus, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation...and when they killed Him these things happened to them...Do you see how great is the force of the High Priest's authority? For, since he had in any way been deemed worthy of the high Priesthood, although unworthy thereof, he prophesied, not knowing what he said. The grace merely made use of his mouth, but did not touch his accursed heart...Do you see how great is the power of the Spirit? From an evil imagination, It was able to bring forth words full of marvelous prophecy.

St John Chrysostom

The gospel and St John Chrysostom's commentaries brought to me memories from last year, while seeing the goodness we now share with increasing gratitude. I think it is good not to forget, otherwise we'll be haunted by the memories, having back flashes every now and then. There is a right way to remember, not to forget, in order to be able to share the goodness we are now experiencing. I think both these realities are linked together. We must not dwell on the details of the events, but on their meaning. And also, at times, it is good to listen to each other. Over the weekend I talked to a child who also had memories and thoughts about last year's events. It was good to hear how the experience was perceived through the eyes of a child.

A short encounter

A short story about last Wednesday. I watched the interaction between two people, who were bearing a similar type of cross in their lives. One was young, the other one was in a wheelchair. They belonged to different generations, yet shared something in common when it came to the burden they carried. It was touching to see how much they respected each other, the younger showing care for the older. The scene was so "unorthodox" but at the same time the candor and genuineness of goodness were so obvious. I felt fortunate to see all this and I was thinking how this "unorthodox" encounter happened within the church. And this is what the church should be doing. Allowing people to live and express the goodness that is pressed down in their soul by the silent violence with which people use their lives. Our community is really blessed to behold all this within the church today. I don't think we even know and understand how blessed we are.