

Any suggestion that God might, in response to sin, alter his attitude toward rational beings compromises the divine immutability and destroys the Love that God is. The LORD is not a creature. He does not live in time. He is not affected by the events of history, nor is he is subject to passions. "In the mind of the Creator," Isaac explains, "there exists a single even intention with respect to all rational beings, and there exists with Him a single love and compassion which is spread out over all creation, (a love) which is without alteration, timeless and everlasting" (II.40.1). The divine love precedes God's creation of the world and does not change in response to the actions of his creatures. It preveniently embraces the righteous and the unrighteous. "God has a single caring concern for those who have fallen, just as much as for those who have not fallen" (II.40.3). If the agapaic Deity is so promiscuous and indiscriminate in his love, what then of his justice? St Isaac famously replies, "Do not call God just, for His justice is not manifest in the things concerning you" (I.51, p. 387). How can we call God just, when we see the owner of the vineyard giving the same wages to those who worked the entire day and to those who worked only one hour? How can we call God just when we see the father lavishing gifts upon his prodigal son who had thrown away his inheritance on women and wine? "Where, then, is God's justice?" asks Isaac—"for while we are sinners Christ died for us!" (I.51, p. 387).

--Fr. Aidan Kimmel

Announcement: Please remember to mark your calendars for the parish meeting on Sunday, November 4.

SAINT PAUL ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

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Sunday, October 29, 2017
21st Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 4



"The Rich Man and Lazarus"

**TODAY WE WILL CELEBRATE THE DIVINE LITURGY OF
ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Epistle – Galations 2:16-20

Brothers and sisters: knowing that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Gospel – Luke 16:19-31

At that time, Jesus told this parable: "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Laz'arus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Laz'arus in his bosom. And he called out, `Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Laz'arus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, `Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Laz'arus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, `Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, `They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, `No, father Abraham; but

if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, `If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

What profundity of richness, what mind and exalted wisdom is God's! What compassionate kindness and abundant goodness belongs to the Creator! ... In love did He bring the world into existence; in love does He guide it during this its temporal existence; in love is He going to bring it to that wondrous transformed state, and in love will the world be swallowed up in the great mystery of Him who has performed all these things; in love will the whole course of the governance of creation be finally comprised. (Discourses II.38.1-2)

I say that even those who are tormented in Gehenna are tormented with the torments of love. Torments for love's sake, that is, the torment of those who perceive that they have sinned against love, is harder and more bitter than the tortures of fear. The sufferings that take hold of the heart through the sinning against love are more acute than any other torture. It is absurd to think that the sinners in Gehenna are deprived of the love of the Creator. ... I say that the hard tortures are grief for love. (I.28, trans. Patrik Hagman)

I am of the opinion that He is going to manifest some wonderful outcome, a matter of immense and ineffable compassion on the part of the glorious Creator, with respect to the ordering of this difficult matter of (Gehenna's) torment: out of it the wealth of His love and power and wisdom will become known all the more—and so will the insistant might of the waves of his goodness. (II.39.6)
--St. Isaac the Syrian

The world begins in love, is ordered, maintained, and sustained in love, and concludes in love.

The divine love is absolute, unconditional, unmerited, gratuitous, extravagant, prodigal. It intends every human and angelic being, the righteous and the wicked. Isaac is clear. No one is "to the front or to the back of God's love." God has a "single equal love" for saint and sinner alike (II.38.2).