

WEEKLY MEDITATION

THE LEAVE-TAKING OF THE EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS CROSS (SEPTEMBER 21)

Many people think of their faith in terms of membership in their church. Some think of membership in terms of voluntary associations or clubs. From this comes a language that includes such things as 'member in good standing' or 'dues-paying member', which is unfortunate, because our new life in Christ, our membership in His Mystical Body - the Church, is something rather more - and quite different - than simply belonging to a club. To make our life in Christ into a sort of hobby, a personal interest pursued in association with like-minded or at least ethnically similar folks, is surely a slight to our Lord and His Lordship over us and His world. We speak as Orthodox Christians about the power of divine grace to save and transform - but would an outsider see any signs in us of a life- and world- transforming faith? Sometimes I am afraid that we can look more like a private club than a movement and a way of life?

Our faith is in the Risen Christ, Whose Resurrection manifests the power and presence of the Kingdom of God, and of Whom we are members as His Body and are therefore to be His agents in doing the will of His Father in performing works of righteousness, of love and compassion, of reconciliation and justice, of beauty and kindness. This lived faith must embrace the whole of human life. To live as disciples and followers of Christ, as authentic members of the Church, must have an impact on how we speak and deal with one another, let alone do politics, education, science, art, social welfare, health care, marriage, family life, business, economy and so on.

The very first step in our life as adult, reflective Christians is to ask:: in what way are we striving to live consciously and intentionally as Christians, in the light of the power and distinctive challenges of the Gospel.?

~Fr. Andrew