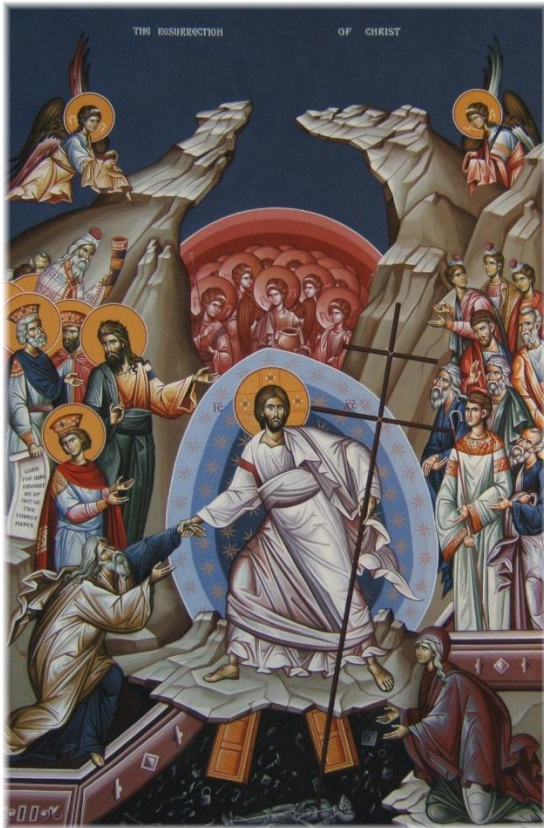


Scripture Reflection: Praying the Easter Story



The Icon of the Descent into Hades

“Do not be afraid” Angel Gabriel

“In the end, everything will be all right. If it’s not all right, it’s not the end” Fernando Sabino (2004)

“All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well” Mother Julian of Norwich 1400a.d. (Revelations of Divine Love)

“Life is not dead it merely changes”
Funeral liturgy

“Every message about Jesus is a message about all of us” Richard Rohr OFM

One of the most rewarding methods of prayer is to take an excerpt of the gospel and think about its meaning. Choose a sentence or phrase and repeat it in your mind. Repeat it during the day and “inhabit it”. What do you think it is really saying? E.g. “I have come so that they may have life and live it to the full” Jn 10:10. What is this saying to you? What is a “full” life?

In Eastern Orthodox Christianity the painting of icons uses this method beautifully. They are not pictures of a real event, but a meditation by the artist to develop a spiritual meaning of an event often from the gospels.

The above icon shows Jesus after his death on the cross going into the place where the all the dead are waiting, not being punished. Note that some of the people there have halos and some not. He is liberating *all* humanity into life. What happens to Jesus happens to us all. Jesus rose from the dead and so do we. Life is there for us all. Jesus says in John’s gospel “I have come not to judge the world but to save it”

There are mountains at the side of Jesus which tell us that Christ brings salvation to *all* creation not just humanity. The figures either side of Jesus are Adam and Eve which represent all humanity being lifted out of death and into new life in the Kingdom of God. We are saved from sin and death. The keys, locks and chains represent all that holds us in the grip of sin, which Jesus, by his death, has broken. We are saved from sin not judged. The Orthodox church sings “Christ has trampled death by death” The icon above represents the phrase from Hebrews 2:14 “that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil”. This has been accomplished by The Saviour’s death and resurrection. “Christ is risen! Truly risen!

“We are Easter people, and we are called to celebrate the whole earth as the body of Christ” Illia Delio