Fourth All-Souls Saturday

Sister Karen Boros

"In the ocean of this life, my deeds have made me sink to the very bottom. But like Jonah in the belly of the whale, I cry to You: 'Draw me out from the abyss of my faults, I pray You, the Son and Word of God.' "

Matins for the Fourth All-Souls Saturday: Canon, Ode Six

As the greatfast journey began, we enthusiastically set out, hoping to arrive at the Radiant Resurrection Feast as a better person. We want to experience *metanoia,* a change of heart. Surely, it would be a shame if we were not a little different by Holy Passover Sunday. Yet, do we make our list of goals as if preparing for a trip and expect to check off our accomplishments as the weeks go by? Do we independently decide where we should change? So perhaps by now, the fourth Saturday of the Holy Great Fast, we are tired and discouraged, and maybe our goals have become burdensome. Is it because we have set out alone on this greatfast journey, focusing on ourselves? Perhaps, our purpose has been influenced by mundane considerations: we want a new improved product.

In order to journey to Pascha, our eyes must be fixed on the Lord. Our minds must be open, and our hearts soft and pliable. We must give ourselves over to quiet prayer and listen to where Jesus calls us to change our lives. We respond by taking the first step and leaving the rest of this transformation to Him.

Today, we make our third and final universal commemoration during the Holy Great Fast for all of the faithful departed. They have already gone to their eternal reward and have experienced the healing transformation and sublime forgiveness that is with the Just Judge—the Lord Jesus. As we pray for the repose of their immortal souls, let us bear in mind how the holy gospels show us that Jesus heals, forgives, and transforms those who believe and trust in Him. He usually expected some initial step or action on the part of the person seeking His help. Likewise, He expects us to make the effort to respond to where He calls us to change. Yet, only by His power will we experience the fullness of healing, of a change of heart. Only by His power will we be different when the day of the Holy Resurrection Feast arrives and when we, like the faithful departed for whom we pray today, also stand in judgement before Him.

For those of us who have journeyed thus far alone, let us renew our faith and trust, put aside our ego-centered goals, and walk with the Lord Jesus. In the quiet of His presence, let us listen to His call and allow the Light from on high "to visit us and direct our path along the way of peace." *(Matins for the Fourth Greatfast Saturday: Canon, Ode Nine)*

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Hebrews 6:9-12
Mark 7:31-37