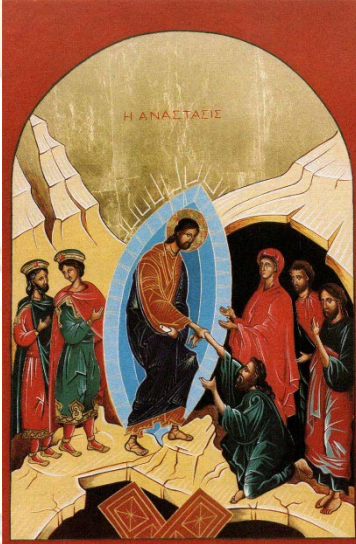


# Η ΑΝΑΣΤΑΣΙΣ

## CREATE: THE CLEARING

Lent, 2024 with Icons Through Western Eyes with Russell Hart

### 3/3/24 - The Clearing of the Temple/The Harrowing of Hell



This meditation acknowledges that the clearing of the Temple [John 2:13-22] and the Harrowing of Hell icon refer to separate events — one that occurred in time, and one that continually repeats itself within and beyond time. In both instances, Christ is Don Quixote [“The Man of LaMancha”], willing to “march into Hell for a heavenly cause.” As Jesus demonstrated in His earthly life, He stayed faithful to His values and convictions despite adversity and opposition. And in so doing, he “harrowed” Hell.

When we love ourselves more than God, all things become our enemies. Hell is self-love carried to its ultimate conclusion, which is the end of all joy and meaning. It may be found within corrupt systems, such as Jesus encountered in the Temple, and can be found in other people, certainly, but more significantly, Hell is ourselves, when we are cut off from others by reason of our own self-centeredness.

But suppose that God has other ways of reaching us — ways that we cannot now imagine because they are beyond the range of the experiences of this earthly life? This may be the meaning behind this verse from the Apostle Peter: “*He went and preached to the spirits in prison.*” [1 Peter 3:19]. Or as W.H. Auden observed, “*Hell is neither here nor there ... Hell is hard to bear.*” Divine love exists beyond the borders of space and time, and this is what the Psalmist had in mind with these words, “*If I ascend into heaven, you are there, there too if I lie in my bed in Hell.*” [Psalm 139:8]

Hell, Thomas Merton writes, “*...is where no one has anything in common with anybody else except for the fact that they all hate one another, and cannot get away from one another and themselves.*”

Divine love is everywhere. It rejects no one, even though we are free to reject divine love. But we cannot do this without inflicting pain on ourselves, and the more determined our rejection, the greater our suffering. [Kallistos Ware]

I can hear my Savior calling, “Take my cross and follow me.”  
I’ll go with him through the garden, I’ll go with him — all the way.  
I’ll go with him through the judgment, I’ll go with him— all the way.  
He will give me grace and glory, and go with me — all the way.  
*Where he leads me I will follow; I’ll go with him — all the way.*

~ E. W. Blandy