Pray for Brother Alexander

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When a victor asks you to pray for him, it means that he offers you his victory. “Can you do anything with this victory?” he seems to say. It is true, not anyone can triumph over his own victory and feel as deep as brother Alexander that he has nothing to do with it. At his own level, however, a common man offers various victories on the market, victories that he cannot always use, so that today’s world seems to be one in which victories are suspended, are for sale. At every step, there is a victory of the modern world, having no master, being certain of itself.

Being certain of their deed, some say, “Take, eat, this is my victory, which spills over the world for you and your happiness.” Others, more uncertain about what they have to do, say, “Here is my victory; see what can come out of it.” A few get angry: “Don’t you see what I accomplished?” As good mercenaries, the scientists, the politicians, the technicians, all of them won the battle, receiving their money and glory. The rest of the people are, with or without their will, for sale.

But don’t we find a human miracle and a blessing even in this situation? The conditions for a deeper solidarity among the people of today have been created through it; a solidarity between unequal people. It would have been such a spiritual disaster if victory remained in the hands of victors, if the physicists, the biologists, the sociologists, and the politicians knew what to do until the end, or if the super-technicians became better manag-

* During the Orthodox Liturgy, at the moment of the Eucharist, the priest intones the words of institution at the moment of the consecration of the Eucharist: “Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you for the remission of sins.” See also Matthew 26:26.
ers! It would have been such a disaster if brother Alexander had the conscience of a victor when he entered the monastery! The world would have been separated between human subjects and human objects or, rather, between privileged humans, the victors, and the sub-humans. The human miracle is that victory can be shared.

And it is shared even on a political level, where the victor thinks that he maintains victory with power. The one who has lived attentively and especially serenely during communism realizes that an apparently odd result is reached: this revolution is, after all, for the benefit of the rich, not of the poor; the poor people’s wealth now comes from the rich, which is no big deal; but the poor is given the ideal of enrichment. But a man frustrated by the ideal — and at this level this means “meaning of life” — is in a way destroyed. In the meantime, anyone who possessed something and was alienated by possession can at times feel that he is reinvested as human, reestablished. Some people from the upper classes, who no longer knew their human measure because of their easy lives, discovered when they were dispossessed of their goods and privileges that they knew something and that they could do something; they even discovered that they wanted something and that they could do something, and even that they wanted something with all their hearts. In a sense, they discovered their own necessity. Today, they no longer aspire to regain liberties, in plural, but only that liberty which fulfills their interior necessity.

After all, it should not be surprising; if someone was alienated by his possession, this was the possessor; instead, the man who lived under the level of possession was in sub-humanity. The revolution just raised the latter to the condition of a human being. Doesn’t he risk his humanity only beginning from here? The victory of communism in a large part of the world is not for him at the end. Who can do something with this victory? The true surprise could be that one day we would see that those who defend the menaced revolutions are not their supposed beneficiaries — just like in the chapter from Hegel’s Phenomenology, where the generosity of the one who wants to help the oppressed
encounters the opposition of their solidarity with their oppres-
sors.

If, however, communism, which wanted strongly to obtain a
certain thing, has a chance to obtain something else, then capi-
talism, which does not want almost anything, has even more
chances to obtain something completely different. There is
something else beyond the two worlds opposed today. It’s not
the two of them which are still interesting, but rather a subtler
thing, a third human condition different from these two. A child
is a third starting from a certain moment: it is no longer impor-
tant what the parents want from him and what they invest in
him. It is not important what the tree bringing forth the seed
wants. From a certain moment, it is no longer important what
the states and the governments want regarding a person, whom
they fostered directly or indirectly; this person entered another
growing process, under another law. From a certain moment, it
is no longer important what happens to us externally. Very seri-
ous things can happen to us, but they no longer mean anything,
in a sense…