



Part 1: The Kisses of Love



The Holy Book Song of Songs is a dialog between two main characters: the Shulamite (A Palestinian young girl) and the Beloved. The Shulamite represents the human soul or the Church as a whole, while the Beloved represents the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Shulamite:

1:2 Let Him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for Your love is better than wine.

The human soul looks upon her Bridegroom, and sees that He is the Holy of Holies, while she is tormented in the muck of sin and the entanglements of the world. While she has hatred and spite, He is the ultimate love:

“He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” (1John 4:8)

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34)

“... To know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” (Ephesians 3:19)

Seeing her condition, she was ashamed to call Him by His name, but rather addressed Him in the third person saying, “Let Him...”

As she saw Him on the Holy Cross, she understood His ultimate love:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

She understood that He loves no one but her. He is her beloved. Hence, she did not ask for one or two kisses, but rather all “*The kisses of His mouth.*”

The Lord Jesus does not cease kissing His children who return to Him, regardless of their sins and transgressions. When the father saw his prodigal son coming from far, “*He had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*” (Luke 15:20)

These are holy kisses of true love, not of deception: “*Now he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed Him.*” (Matthew 26:48-49)

In the Divine Liturgy, we are taught to “*Greet one another with a holy kiss*” but why?

“...So that we may escape the image of Judas the betrayer, and offer a spiritual kiss” (Reconciliation prayer of St. John).

“...Through Your Philanthropy, You did not burn the deceitful betrayer when he drew near to You, but you kissed him the kiss of fellowship, luring him to repentance, and the knowledge of his transgression” (Reconciliation prayer of Patriarch St. Severus).

How should our kisses be?

“Not with an evil sensation, resentful of Your fear; nor a deceitful thought, full of the evil of the betrayer; our thoughts not conforming to malice; but with the longing of our souls, and the joy of our hearts; for we have the great absolute sign that which is of Your only-begotten Son.” (Reconciliation prayer of St. Cyril). ✙