



# REUNION

The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil  
(The Basilians - The Basilian Fathers)



Volume 16 No. 3

OF THE CHURCH

OF MAN WITH GOD

July 2007 A.D.

~ CATHOLIC ~

From Metropolitan Archbishop *Paul, S.S.B.*  
To the flock entrusted into my care:

One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Catholic means universal, the church universal, the undivided Christian church, the church which has historical continuity. More recently there has been an apparent attempt by the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church to claim exclusive rights to the term Catholic. Guess they forgot about the Holy Orthodox Catholic and



## COMPREHENDING THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN LIFE BY CONSIDERING AND COMPREHENDING THE ENDING OF HUMAN LIFE

If you are having difficulty comprehending why a human is a human from the instant of conception you must look to the soul.

Every living thing has a soul. It is the soul that makes a thing live. When the soul leaves grass, a tree, a frog, a cow, a human, that thing dies. It may be that even angels have souls but being spirits their soul and spirit never separate.

The East thinks of humans as being physical body, spirit, and soul. In the West the thinking has combined the spirit and the soul, sometimes naming the combination the spirit and sometimes naming the combination the soul.

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Apostolic Church. And perhaps both have forgotten about the Coptic Church, the Armenian Church, and other portions of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

How can any part of The Church claim exclusive rights to that which it does not properly comprehend?

The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is Catholic in that the Holy Spirit is Catholic. The Holy Spirit is Universal, the Holy Spirit is everywhere and so too is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. But

the Holy Spirit's being everywhere as God is everywhere does not mean everything is possessed of the Holy Spirit. As an example, Hell is a real place, occupied at present - as far as we know - exclusively by spirits, but sometime in the future to be occupied also by complete humans. Since Hell exists, God is there, the Holy Spirit is there, but God the Holy Spirit is not in Hell. It is quite simple if one thinks about it; or if one does not think about it, it is still quite simple. But this is incomplete, for in the sense of the Church the word Catholic also means exclusive, the only, just as God is exclusive, the only God.

There is but **ONE** of these things and it  
(Continued CATHOLIC on page 19)

## COCK FIGHTING

Last year there were two States in which cock fighting was legal. Soon there will be none.

Apparently a hatched chicken is more valued by society than an unborn ("unhatched") human, for torturing and killing unborn humans is still legal in all States.

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## WHEN PEOPLE VOTE FOR SOMEONE JUST BECAUSE THE CANDIDATE IS "ONE OF THEM" They often get what they deserve

When your - yes your - support for a candidate is founded even in part in your sharing or having the same or similar ethnic backgrounds, or any other factor which is not a matter of character, abilities, and the intent to promote Godly good for the people, then you will find yourself visited with the evil of the candidate should the candidate be elected.

Gedeon (Gideon), Judge of Israel, had  
(Continued SUPPORT on page 15)

## FREE OR SLAVE?

When a person can and does engage in any activity which comes to their mind or their desire, is that person acting in freedom or in enslavement?

We have numerous examples of people engaging in every type of pleasure possible. From the wealthy celebrity to the most financially destitute known only to those near whom they live, every delight of the senses is available. But not just delights of the senses are available. Delights of the mind, promises of science and technology are believed and accepted as reality, and the appearance is treated as the reality.

(Continued FREE-SLAVE on page 8)

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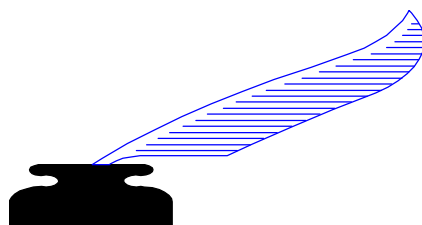
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+ Paul, S.S.B.,  
 Publisher .

+ *The Basilians - The Basilian Fathers* +

**LETTERS**

*(The Editors reserve the right to reject any submissions, and to edit as necessary. Letters must be typed, single space, signed, and include the sender's name address, and day and evening telephone numbers - If your typed letter is accompanied by an ASCII DOS Text copy on a floppy, we will thank you with extra prayers - Ed.)*



**WORLD WIDE WEB:**

**The direct connection to the computer which functions as the message, file, and communications center for The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil, is:**

**http://www.reu.org**  
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**Issues of REUNION, in color, in Adobe PDF and HTML, are available at:**

**http://www.reu.org/public/news.htm**



**On Line Chat Room: at the main web site log-in http://www.reu.org**  
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**Current Active Mailing Lists  
 Originating From BasilNet ReuNet  
 HIOC BBS**

**The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil - The Basilian Fathers**

Each ML has its own rules, which are posted in the ML on a regular basis. Abbreviated commands are also in the signature of each ML message sent via e-mail. You must have permission from the appropriate ML administrator to gate a ML.

**PRAYERS**

Prayer requests operates under a simple premise. When we pray for each other we fulfill a portion of our Christian duty. Prayers for the living and for the dead are allowed and welcome. Those who make prayer requests agree to include the prayer requests of all who make them here. Prayer requests **MUST** be moral and for moral

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If you wish to receive **REUNION** please see \*\*\*\* above, and fill in your name and address below and send to:  
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 Harahan, Louisiana 70123

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 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued WEB from page 2)*

purposes . . . hopefully morality will not have to be defined at length (i.e.: use common sense).

Participants and subscribers agree to honor the moral prayer requests posted, and to pray for those intentions and persons for at least one week.

**BIBLE-DAY**

Every day we try to post a Chapter of one of the Books of the Bible on the ML for discussion. This began with Genesis, Chapter 1, and continued to the end of Genesis, and so on to the next Book. Discussion is not limited to the Chapter posted each day. We use the Douay-Rheims translation which, while it sometimes has editorial comments biased against the Orthodox Church, is a basically a good, non political translation.

**SERMONS**

A place to exchange sermons by Christians. POSTERS must be, and certify they are: male; duly ordained Priests, Deacons, Ministers, or seminarians of, a Christian Church, Jurisdiction, or Religion; that the Creed of the Council of Nicea is the Creed, or expresses the basic dogma, of the Church of which each participant is a member. Rabbi may participate and post. (Us Christians may learn something). ANYONE may RECEIVE the ML.

When you post in this ML you must provide your church/religious affiliation in the post.

**STUDIES**

The STUDIES ML is a list which studies Orthodoxy and the Theology/Dogma of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church. We attempt to have the text of what ever book/publication we are using posted in pertinent parts during the discussions. This is a slow moving ML, primarily because most people do not wish to or have the time to or are not inclined to read and study as is required for participation in a ML

such as this. However, for those who do, it is well worth the effort.

**ONE-BODY**

This is a mailing list designed to promote and further reunification of the Holy Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church with the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church and all other Jurisdictions of the Body of Christ; and to bring each and every human being into union with Christ Jesus our Lord.  
**Activity - very light.**

**REU\_PUB**

This ML sends REUNION (publication) to its subscribers, without the pictures and graphics which are in the paper publication. The ML does support discussion, and discussions encouraged. Mainly used for those who desire to receive the Newsletter but do not have access to the WWW (each issue is available on-line), those for whom telephone access to the BBS part of the system is not readily available, and those to whom we can not send a free print copy.

**If you are already registered to use the message and file center for the Basilian Fathers, you may link to the listserver directly by logging in, selecting SUBSCRIBE MAILING LISTS in the menu and entering your e-mail address for the ML to which you wish to subscribe. If you are not already registered as a "user" you may go to the log-in menu, register, and then use the automatic system.**

Or,

You can e-mail commands to the listserver using the addresses and commands below:

**BasilNet ReuNet HIOC BBS  
Listserver E-mail Commands**

If you experience problems with the ML or listserver you may contact the system administrator (sysop) via e-mail to Sysop@reu.org

**User Commands**

subscribe  
Subscribe to an email list.  
E.G.:

To subscribe to a mailing list, send a message to:

listserver@reu.org

In the message area put:

subscribe studies

subscribe sermons

subscribe prayers

subscribe bible-day

subscribe one-body

subscribe reu\_pub

unsubscribe

Unsubscribe from an email list.

inactive

Make yourself inactive on the list. This is good for when you leave on vacation, or just don't want any email for a while.

active

Make yourself active on the list again.

get

Request an information file from the server. The list administrator may set up files for you to retrieve that may contain various information. Do not use a file extension.

help

Retrieves this information.

info

Retrieves information on email lists hosted by this server

Please note: our e-mail system uses spam filters which are set very strictly, to the extent they even block out entire networks if those networks have a history of sending, relaying, or otherwise being involved in sending spam to our system. Many of the words in our spam filter are sometimes used in non-spam e-mail. If your e-mail is bounced, you may log on to the BBS and contact whomever it is you desire directly in Conference mail area 0 (zero), so we can add your e-mail address to our filter by-pass.

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## THE BASILIAN FATHERS

(The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil)

**It is with sadness for Oblate John Ryan that we inform you his beloved friend his wife of many years, Shirley Ryan, has fallen asleep in the Lord.**

### SOME SUGGESTIONS REGARDING “INTENTIONS” WHILE PRAYING THE GREGORIAN (WESTERN) RITE DIVINE LITURGY

The very first opportunity to “individualize” the Western Rite (Gregorian) Divine Liturgy is in **THE PROTHESIS** which may be prayed as early as at Vespers of the day preceding the Divine Liturgy or as late as immediately prior to the Divine Liturgy.

At the very beginning of the Prothesis the Priest prays:

**V. Accept O Holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, this unspotted sacrificial victim which, I, unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offenses, and negligences, and also for those here present and for all faithful Christians, both living and dead (here may be named or stated the particular person(s) or intentions, if any, of this Divine Liturgy), that it may avail (+) me and them unto life everlasting.**

The instruction (*here may be named or stated the particular person(s) or intentions, if any, of this Divine Liturgy*) means what it states. If you, the Priest, pray a Morning Offering wherein you dedicate all of you that day as a prayer in union with every Divine Liturgy prayed throughout the world, and in that Morning Offering pray for specific

and groups of individuals and intentions, at that place in the Prothesis you may simply state, “For all the persons and intentions in my Morning Offering,” and all those persons and intentions will be included in that Divine Liturgy.

If it is a Sunday, since on Sundays the main intention in every Divine Liturgy is supposed to be for the Parishioners of that particular Church (or members of a Monastery and all other Parishioners if it is a Monastery, etc.) then you may simply state, “For all the persons and intentions in my Morning Offering, especially our Parishioners.”

And at other times, instead of saying, “especially our Parishioners,” the Priest may state the special intention of that Divine Liturgy.

The wise lay person attending Divine Liturgy will silently read and pray these prayers with the Priest, and pray for their own special intentions as well as those voiced by the Priest, at that point.

Though the **Collects** and **Secret** are stated in the rubrics for each Divine Liturgy, usually there is the opportunity for the Priest to add one additional prayer to those in the rubrics. It is implicit that this be done on Sundays where the intention of the Divine Liturgy is always for the Parishioners.

One of the best “sets” of these prayers for use for parishioners is a modification of that **FOR FRIENDS AND THOSE DEAR TO US** on page 1439 of The Gregorian Divine Liturgy altar book (missal).

In its proper form the first collect for Friends and Those Dear to Us states: **O God, Who by the grace of the Holy Spirit hast poured the gifts of charity into the hearts of Thy faithful, grant unto Thy servants and handmaids, for whom we implore Thy clemency, health of soul and body, that they may love Thee with all their might and with their whole love may execute**

**what things are pleasing to Thee. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.**

Simply, mentally revise it while praying it, to state: **O God, Who by the grace of the Holy Spirit hast poured the gifts of charity into the hearts of Thy faithful, grant unto our parishioners, for whom we implore Thy clemency, health of soul and body, that they may love Thee with all their might and with their whole love may execute what things are pleasing to Thee. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the same Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.**

Technically, the collects and prayers for the Church are supposed to provide the form of prayer for parishioners, with it being understood the intention is for parishioners. But “understood” is not sufficiently explicit and if it can be avoided by acceptable modification of an existing, non critical or non crucial, prayer, then avoiding “understood” should be considered.

Most of the prayers in the Divine Liturgy may not be changed or modified in any manner. But prayers such as these may be slightly modified so-as-to include or apply to the specific needs and intentions for which prayers are being offered.

In a future edition of the altar book we probably will include additional collects and prayers

Also remember after the beginning of the Canon, immediately prior to The Commemoration of the Living (page 786 of the altar book), is an additional opportunity to specifically state additional intentions for which the Divine Liturgy is being offered. Again the Priest has the opportunity to simply state, “For all the persons and inten-

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tions in my Morning Offering, especially \_\_\_\_\_.”

After **THE EPIKLESIS** is **THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD** (page 788) . Here the Priest may easily pray, “for all the dead and the intentions for the dead in my Morning Offering, especially (or particularly),” and then name those deceased who are in his prayers that day or for whom it has been requested the Divine Liturgy be prayed. Of course, in a Requiem this should be virtually instinctive.

The **Final Blessing** presents an additional opportunity for individualization. In all but the smallest of congregations it is virtually impossible for the Priest to focus on each individual participating in the Divine Liturgy (not, in attendance, but, participating). But he can focus on individuals and groups, fleeting in his mind through them and also a representation of those individuals in his daily prayers.

The portion of the Altar Book (Missal) which contains **ADDITIONAL PRAYERS AND SECRETS** should not be overlooked as a source of inspiration and means by which intentions can be included in the Divine Liturgy.

Remember, the Divine Liturgy should never be treated as an obligation, even though it is. It should be considered as that in which we are able to draw closer to God, to in a sense “intermingle” with God; a “golden” opportunity of immeasurable proportions beyond the ability of mere humans to comprehend. Yet an opportunity of which the faithful can obtain continual full advantage.

Two of the special intentions in the Additional Prayers and Secrets are rarely used. But they should be used as often as possible, especially by laity requesting Divine Liturgy being prayed for special intentions. These two special intentions are: **For Our Enemies And Those Who Have Hurt Us**, and, **For Those Whom**

**We have Hurt And the Victims Of Our Sins.** While it is always good to request Divine Liturgy be offered for your ill relative or deceased friend, praying for those who have harmed you and those whom you have harmed should be a part of one’s regular prayer life.

Review these prayers, contemplating them in their proper place in the Divine Liturgy.

**FOR OUR ENEMIES AND THOSE WHO HAVE HURT US**

COLLECT (PRAYER)

God of peace, lover and guardian of charity, give to all our enemies true charity and peace, grant them the remission of all their sins, and mightily deliver us from their machinations. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

THE SECRET (PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS)

Be appeased, we beseech Thee, O Lord, with the gifts we offer, mercifully deliver us from our enemies, and grant them pardon of their sins. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION)

May this communion, O Lord, deliver us from our sins and defend us from the snares of our enemies. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

**FOR THOSE WHOM WE HAVE HURT FOR THE VICTIMS OF**

**OUR SINS**

COLLECT (PRAYER)

O Lord, stretch forth Thy hand to those whom we have harmed, and to the victims of our sins, that they may be healed of the harm we have done against them, and that they may forgive us of our transgressions

THE SECRET (PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS)

May the sacrifice which we offer Thee, O Lord, for the victims of our sins, be an acceptable gift unto Thee, and let it profit those whom we have harmed, that they may be made whole and hold no aversion to us. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION)

Hearken to the prayers of Thy penitents, O Lord, we beseech Thee, and grant these holy elements which we have received from Thee, may bring us and the victims of our sins to eternal life. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

Of course, it would be best if the person desiring these special intentions be present when the Divine Liturgy is being offered and prayed, since these prayers not only are directed to the benefit of the “other” person or persons, but also to the benefit of the one desiring them.

Priests should also remember to have special intentions in the Divine Liturgy for those in government. The prayers may at first seem to be archaic, but on reflection, considering the way government actually works, the prayers are entirely appropriate.

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(Continued SSB NEWS from page 5)

**FOR RULERS (GOVERNORS OF STATES GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS)**

**COLLECT (PRAYER)**

Almighty, everlasting God, in whose hand lie all governments and the rights of every nation, look graciously upon our rulers, so that all over the world The Holy Church and its teachings may stand whole and unimpaired under the shelter of Thy hand: (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

**THE SECRET (PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS)**

Graciously accept the prayers and offerings of Thy servants, O Lord, and, for the honor of Thy name, safeguard the rulers of our country. May all governments serve Thee, and all governments that serve Thee be secure, and their security bring Thy peace to all Thy people: (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

**POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION)**

O Lord, guide our rulers and governors; nourish them with spiritual and bodily food; and preserve them from the evil foe. (V.) Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, throughout all ages of ages. (R.) Amen.

Just imagine the potential if these prayers were regularly made part of Divine Liturgy throughout the world.

**LITURGY OF THE CATECHUMENS**

At the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, when you, the Priest, pray: **V. Give sentence with me O God, and defend my cause against the ungodly people, O de-**

**liver me from the deceitful and wicked man,** do you ever think you are asking God to deliver you from yourself?

Each of us knows to some level the extent of our own ungodliness. Even though we may have some level of confidence we are on the correct path to eternal salvation, only a fool considers himself to be safely ensconced in God. The wise person acknowledges at the very least an occasional inclination to ungodliness in himself and fights the inclination. But even an occasional inclination is sufficient to seek assistance in one's own cause against one's own ungodly inclinations, and especially against one's own ungodliness.

If one thinks one is without ungodliness, one need but remember that Our Saviour said even the just man sins seven times a day. At the least this means we all sin every day, and therefore we all are ungodly every day. One who does not accept this is deceiving themselves, and therefore is one of the deceitful from whom we pray to be delivered.

If we acknowledge our own deceit, then we will be intentionally praying for deliverance from our selves, and this is good. It is good because we are the source of much of our own temptation.

In a very real sense each of us is the most wicked and deceitful person we know, for we not only know ourselves better than we know anyone else, but we also continually tempt ourselves. If we acknowledge this then when we pray asking God to: **defend my cause against the ungodly people,** and ask Him: **O deliver me from the deceitful and wicked man,** we are seeking assistance against our most constant source of sin, ourselves.

This is a form of assistance which God readily grants. With the constant diminishment of the most consistent bad influence comes the ability to replace the bad influence with good influence. The evil inclinations must be replaced with something for our very nature abhors an unutilized portion of our internal structure. It is possible the placed of the dimin-

ished evil inclinations will be replaced with even more evil inclinations, but if we constantly pray that the evil inclinations be diminished we just possibly may begin to seek to replenish the place of abandoned evil with refreshed godliness.

Here, at the very beginning of the Divine Liturgy, we also remind ourselves to trust in God, in His assistance, in the eventual victory over evil, for what other belief and truth could we be expressing when we pray:

**V. Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why are thou so disquieted within me?**

**R. O put thy trust in God; for I will yet give Him thanks, which is the help of my countenance and my God.**

There are a multitude of concerns in today's world. But there are no new concerns, no concerns of a nature intrinsically different from those which have existed throughout the entire history of humankind.

Every concern with which humankind is faced is addressed in the Divine Liturgy. If the Divine Liturgy is prayed and not said; if it is prayed with intent, with awareness, with devotion; every moral concern will be satisfactorily resolved. But once resolved the Divine Liturgy must be continued for resolution is temporary because this world is temporary.

**The Blessing of God Almighty + The Father, + the Son and the + Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you, now and unto all ages of ages.**

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*(Continued COMPREHENSION from page 1)*

But the perception of the composition of a human is immaterial when one fully comprehends life is dependent on the soul. If the spirit and soul of an angel, whether good or bad, were to separate, the angel would die. But each spirit and soul, whether of a angel or of a human, are inseparable. Hence the Western perception which combines them in a human is not unreasonable.

The souls of angels and of humans are immortal. Immortal is vastly different from eternal. What ever is eternal is also immortal, but what is immortal is not necessarily eternal. To be immortal means that which is immortal will never cease being. To be eternal means that which is eternal not only is immortal, but also never began for it has always been, always "existed" - though "existed" is an inadequate expression in this instance for there is but one eternal and that is the self existing eternal God.

Humans are immortal, meaning once created they will never cease to be. A portion of them will temporarily cease to be, that portion being the physical body. Humans were not designed to have the body cease to be, but that quality of the body was lost due to the original humans who sinned thus exposing the body to death. But the human soul, by its very nature, will never cease to be.

However, a frog, or a tree, and each non-human physical creature of which we are aware has a soul which was not designed to exist forever. Such creatures are not immortal. By their very nature they were designed to cease to exist upon death.

It is the soul which gives life to a creature. The spirit and the soul are so closely intertwined so-as-to make it impossible for them to be separated. Therefore an angel can not have its spirit and its soul separated, nor can a human. Therefore, the soul of an angel can not be separated from the entire angel, but the soul can be separated from an entire human - from the human combination of body, spirit, and soul, or of

body and soul if one combines the human spirit and soul into one.

It is the soul which gives life to the body.

Therefore, when the soul of a frog or of a tree leaves the physical body of the frog or of the tree, the frog or the tree dies. It is not that the soul leaves the body of the frog or of the tree when the physical body of the frog or of the tree dies. It is the removal of the soul of the frog from the physical body of the frog which causes the physical body of the frog to die. It is the removal of the soul from the physical body of the tree which causes the physical body of the tree to die. By Divine design, when certain things happen to a frog or to a tree, the soul of that frog or that tree leaves the physical body of that frog or that tree, and the physical body dies and begins to change for its life force is gone. And the soul of that frog or that tree ceases to exist for neither the frog nor the tree is immortal, nor is any other non-human living creature of which we are aware.

It is the same for humans with one exception: the soul continues in existence for it is immortal.

It is the soul which determines the nature of the creature. A frog has a frog soul. A tree has a tree soul. And a human has a human soul.

Occasionally something causes the physical appearance of a creature to not follow the normal or customary pattern. When this occurs a frog may have two heads, a tree which would be expected to grow tall may grow more like a bush, a human may have six toes on one foot. But the soul of each is perfect bearing the essence of frog for a frog, the essence of tree for a tree, and the essence of human for a human. A frog with two heads is a frog. A bushy tree is still a tree. A human with six toes is still a human. Each is what it is because its soul carries the essence of what it is. Even a human born a monster, whether it be a unrecognizable glob of flesh at one extreme or something which has

teeth jutting out here and there, an eye over there, a recognizable elbow over there, or even one which appears somewhat in the customary form of a human but which has no brain, even a human born a monster has a perfect soul and is therefore a human for it is the nature of the soul which determines the nature of the being.

Not only is it the nature of the soul which determines the nature of the being. It is the soul which gives life to the being. Appearance has nothing to do with determining the nature of the being. Appearance has nothing to do with whether or not a creature is a frog, tree, or human. Appearance makes it easier to recognize what is the nature of of a creature, but appearance does not determine the nature of a creature. The monster human is a human, the frog with two heads is a frog, and the tree which appears to be a bush is a tree.

Because the physical body of each creature will die the physical body is subject to change. But since the soul of each creature is not subject to death but only subject to exist or to cease to exist, it does not change.

It is true that by analogy to the body, the human soul is considered as having life if it is in a state of grace, and considered as being dead if it is not in a state of grace, and therefore can be said to be living or dead, but here we refer to existence viability rather than spiritual viability. The non-human soul has no spiritual viability for only the immortal soul, that of the human, can have spiritual viability. Because it is immortal, the human soul possesses the quality of perpetual existence viability once it is created. And because neither of them are immortal, the soul of a frog does not possess the quality of perpetual existence viability nor does the soul of a tree.

Where there is life, if we wish to determine what form of life we are observing, we must ascertain the nature of the soul of that particular form of life.

*(Continued COMPREHENSION on page 8)*

(Continued **COMPREHENSION** from page 7)

Where we have life at its beginning and can not determine what the creature actually is by appearance, we can observe the DNA of the creature. The DNA of the seed of a tree will proclaim the seed to be that of a tree, and of a specific type of tree. The DNA of a newly conceived frog will proclaim the creature to be a frog, even though it will at first take on the physical appearance of a fish, and even if it develops two heads.

And the DNA of a human will proclaim it to be a human even at the unrecognizable stage of a zygote.

**Since it is the soul which gives life to the creature, and since the nature of the soul never changes and therefore determines the nature of the creature - what the creature actually is - from its inception, and since cells can not combine, divide, or do anything unless they are alive, it must be that from the instant of conception each human is a human.**

If one wishes to abuse or kill a human let that one at least be honest and acknowledge they are abusing or killing a human. But, considering the fact that the individual being considered is an individual who would abuse or kill the most defenseless of humans, perhaps honesty is not a quality to be expected.

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(Continued **FREE-SLAVE** from page 1)

These delights are justified by philosophies which teach entitlement to fulfillment of every desire while excluding accountability, and religions which teach attempting to meet any standard is an exercise in futility.

But the promises of science and technology often can not be fulfilled even in part. The appearance does not make reality: is the actress who has used numerous medical procedures and cosmetics to appear to be young and beautiful really young and beautiful? If she is, why does she fear high definition television?

The delights which seemed to be intense beyond description only last for a brief time, often to be followed by their unavoidable consequences which cause the delights to be a vague memory just seconds or hours later.

These consequences very often cause extreme agony to the one who participated in the delights. The drunken revelry is followed by a splitting headache and stomach burning with alcohol poisoning. The licentious sexual escapades are followed by horrible diseases, some of which can not be cured. *(As an aside: The advertisements for various herpes medications are nothing more than an inducement for those who do not have herpes, to engage in activity which will virtually assure the contraction of herpes. Herpes is not only not a pleasant medical condition, it is a horrible medical condition. Yet the actors and actresses in the herpes medication commercials appear to be extremely attractive people happily continuing to engage in sexual promiscuity while the disease undefatigably causes its damage and destruction.)* Of those few diseases for which there is a cure, and of the multitude for which there is no cure, a very few are not ultimately deadly, and almost all of them involve some form of debilitation.

Is engaging in activity which results in

one contracting herpes or HIV/AIDS an exercise in freedom? It can be. But only if contracting the particular disease through the conduct in which one engages is a part of the reason for which one engages in the conduct. If contracting the disease is a risk of engaging in the activity, then engaging in the activity is not an exercise in freedom for one does not wish to receive the results or **consequences** of the activity.

It is too easy to simply state that engaging in excesses is a form of enslavement to the senses, to the opinions of the masses, and expectations of one's peers. It requires mental exercise to comprehend the reality that the consequences of one's acts, omissions, mental processes, life, are part of each particular act, omission, mental process, life. The act - whether physical or mental - and its consequences can not be separated.

Since the act and its consequences can not be separated, if the act and that which it brings during its commission are desired, but its consequences are not desired, and a person engages in the act, has the person engaged in freedom or has the person enslaved their self to the act and that which it brings during its commission, **and to its consequences?**

The person has enslaved their self.

But if the act, that which is experienced during its commission, and the consequences thereof, are all desired, and a person engages in the act, then the person has engaged in total freedom. In such situation there is no enslavement, no slavery.

The potential for enslavement is not restricted to the physical senses and physical experiences. The mental processes also can lead to enslavement, especially those mental processes which disguise themselves as being based in true religion, or as concerning religion.

One of the most pure forms of thought,  
(Continued **FREE-SLAVE** on page 9)

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of exercise of the mental process, is mathematics. It is both a science, and part of the languages of the sciences. Like the other sciences, it has procedures which are able to provide theories and there are procedures by which theories may be able to be proven valid or determined to be more likely than not to be invalid. It also crosses over into the arts, particularly music, which can be expressed mathematically. One of the steps of scientific proof is that what one scientist has produced can be replicated by another scientist. Simplistic examples are: (1) every mathematician who adds one plus one will obtain two as the sum; (2) every scientist who combines hydrogen and oxygen in the proper proportions will obtain water.

But the arts are not subject to scientific replication. Very simplistically: two different composers will join the same notes in different ways resulting in totally different melodies; two painters will use the same colors in the same amounts on the same size canvass and even paint the same scent and each painting will be distinctive; likewise two sculptors; and two psychologist or psychiatrist will have two different diagnosis of the same individual.

But there are those who enslave themselves by treating psychology and psychiatry as sciences, when each really is an art.

Science seeks to discover what is and the interaction of the multitude of factors. It seeks to discover, understand, and comprehend, what something is, how it became what it is, what it will or may become, how it becomes what ever it becomes, how it interacts with other things. It seeks to discover an explanation which will cover everything. Newtonian Physics was believed to explain the universe through gravity. Einstein's Theory of Relativity was once thought to do the same. Now String Theory is held up as a potential key.

The enslaved scientist ignores the God factor and believes he can discover the Unifying Factor and comprehend it, even though he can not comprehend how a star functions, how life began, or how sentient beings came into existence. The scientist who is free from slavery attempts to discover how God put everything together and keeps it running.

Religious enslavement is often experienced in a process wherein one experiences an emotional "high" - a sudden influx of a form of ecstasy or something related to or similar to ecstasy. But the emotion soon evaporates and the person is left with a quickly fading memory. The person attempts to regain the experience, the emotion, and often succeeds, but it again fades. This is enslavement for one seeks the emotional "high" but the emotional "high" is similar to a drug induced sense of well being in that ever increasing levels of the drug are required to induce the feeling of well being.

True religious experience, without enslavement, may on occasion invoke the emotions to an extreme, but always contain elements of the intellect and the combined realization and knowledge of being in concert, in harmony, with God. In a true religious experience one plus one always equals two and the individual receives and experiences great pleasure in this. This being in concert, in harmony with God is the consequence of the freely and intentionally chosen act or omission, the experiences concurrent therewith, and the consequences thereof. Acts of true freedom (be they physical, mental, or spiritual) therefore have three consequences: the good and goodness which result from the act, the being in concert and harmony with God, and the knowledge and realization of being in concert and harmony with God.

Acts of religious slavery may result in one being in harmony with creatures of like mind, but not in one being in harmony with God.

The intellectual aspect in a true religious experience is vastly more satisfying than the emotional experience, even though the emotional experience is also satisfying. The intellectual aspect is permanent, and recalls the emotional experience in a quiet form of fullness rather than in an intense form which quickly fades.

The intellectual aspect also enables the individual to re-establish concert and harmony with God if it is lost, for the reasons for the loss can be readily ascertained and corrected because the individual is free, is not a slave.

But those transitory emotional experiences which quickly fade can not be readily re-established for they are founded in slavery and the individual is not free to re-establish that which invoked the experience. The individual is dependent on someone else or something outside of their self to complete invocation of the expedience, and the experience will never be as intense as it was at the first.

It would seem that the free person seeking to establish or re-establish, or strengthen concert and harmony with God would be dependent on God's acquiescence or at least God's cooperation. What seems to be true actually is true. It is also true that God has made it very simple and easy for one to bring one's self into concert and harmony with God. In a very real sense God has given blanket, universal, acquiescence and cooperation to each individual who desires to accept God's offer. But it is God's offer, on God's terms. Is that enslavement? No. It is similar to your being invited to my house for dinner. Generally, the invitation requires you wipe your feet before entering my house, and that you do not sit in my chair. If you accept the invitation you have not become my slave, you have become my guest, and I am obligated to you to present my best for you.

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**CHILDREN'S PAGE**



## CHILDREN'S PAGE

### *The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism*

**Q. 668. What dispositions must adults or grown persons, have that they may worthily receive baptism?**

A. That adults may worthily receive baptism:

1. They must be willing to receive it;
2. They must have faith in Christ;
3. They must have true sorrow for their sins, and
4. They must solemnly renounce the devil and all his works; that is, all sin.

**Q. 669. What is the ceremony of churching?**

A. The ceremony of churching is a particular blessing which a mother receives at the Altar, as soon as she is able to present herself in the Church after the birth of her child. In this ceremony the priest invokes God's blessing on the mother and child, while she on her part returns thanks to God.

#### **LESSON FIFTEENTH: On Confirmation (Chrismation)**

**Q. 670. What is Confirmation (Chrismation)?**

A. Confirmation (Chrismation) is a Sacrament through which we receive the Holy Ghost to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ.

**Q. 671. When was Confirmation (Chrismation) instituted?**

A. The exact time at which Confirmation (Chrismation) was instituted is not known. But as this Sacrament was administered by the Apostles and numbered with the other Sacraments instituted by Our Lord, it is certain that He instituted this Sacrament also and instructed His Apostles in its use, at some time before His ascension into heaven.

**Q. 672. Why is Confirmation (Chrismation) so called?**

A. Confirmation (Chrismation) is so called from its chief effect, which is to

strengthen or render us more firm in whatever belongs to our faith and religious duties.

**Q. 673. Why are we called soldiers of Jesus Christ?**

A. We are called soldiers of Jesus Christ to indicate how we must resist the attacks of our spiritual enemies and secure our victory over them by following and obeying Our Lord.

**Q. 674. May one add a new name to his own at Confirmation (Chrismation)?**

A. One may and should add a new name to his own at Confirmation (Chrismation), especially when the name of a saint has not been given in Baptism.

**Q. 675. Who administers Confirmation or Chrismation?**

A. The bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation or Chrismation, and he normally delegates his authority to Confirm or Chrismate to the priests who Baptize infants or receive converts.

**Q. 676. Why do we say the bishop is the "ordinary minister" of Confirmation (Chrismation)?**

A. We say the bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation (Chrismation) because it is one of the powers which a bishop may reserve to himself, though he rarely does. It is more common for the bishop to reserve Chrismation to himself in very small dioceses.

**Q. 677. How is Confirmation or Chrismation given?**

A. The bishop or priest extends his hands over those who are to be confirmed (chrismated), prays that they may receive the Holy Ghost, and anoints the forehead of each with holy chrism in the form of a cross.

**Q. 678. In Confirmation / Chrismation, what does the extending of the bishop's or Priest's hands over us signify?**

A. In Confirmation / Chrismation, the extending of the bishop's or priest's hands over us signifies the descent of the Holy Ghost upon us and the special protection of God through the grace of Chrismation / Confirmation.

**Q. 679. What is holy chrism?**

A. Holy chrism is a mixture of olive-oil and balm, consecrated by the bishop.

**Q. 680. What do the oil and balm in Holy Chrism signify?**

A. In Holy Chrism, the oil signifies strength, and the balm signifies the freedom from corruption and the sweetness which virtue must give to our lives.

**Q. 681. How many holy oils are used in the Church?**

A. Three holy oils are used in the Church, namely, the oil of the sick, the oil of catechumens, and holy chrism. In some jurisdictions and in some dioceses, all three oils are the same, especially in the Eastern Rite.

**Q. 682. What constitutes the difference between these oils?**

A. The form of prayer or blessing alone constitutes the difference between these oils; for they are all olive oil, but in the Holy Chrism, balm is mixed with the oil.

**Q. 683. When and by whom are the holy oils blessed?**

A. The holy oils are blessed at the Divine Liturgy (Mass) on Holy Thursday by the bishop, who alone has the right to bless them.

After the blessing they are distributed to the priests of the diocese, who must then burn what remains of the old oils and use the newly blessed oils for the coming year, although sometimes, especially in poorer places, the oils are kept from year to year.

**Q. 684. For what are the holy oils used?**

A. The holy oils are used as follows:

*(Continued CATECHISM on page 12)*

(Continued CATECHISM from page 11)

The oil of the sick is used for Extreme Unction and for some blessings; the oil of catechumens is used for Baptism and Holy Orders. Holy Chrism is used at Baptism and for the blessing of some sacred things, such as altars, chalices, church-bells, etc., which are usually blessed by a bishop. In some jurisdictions and in some dioceses, all three oils are the same, especially in the Eastern Rite.

**Q. 685. What does the bishop or priest say in anointing the person he confirms or chrismates?**

A. In anointing the person he confirms or chrismates the bishop or priest says: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee (or "anoint thee") with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

**Q. 686. What is meant by anointing the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross?**

A. By anointing the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross is meant that the Christian who is confirmed or chrismated must openly profess and practice his faith, never be ashamed of it; and rather die than deny it.

**Q. 687. When must we openly profess and practice our religion?**

A. We must openly profess and practice our religion as often as we cannot do otherwise without violating some law of God or of His Church.

**Q. 688. Why have we good reason never to be ashamed of the Orthodox Catholic faith?**

A. We have good reason never to be ashamed of the Orthodox Catholic Faith because it is the Old Faith established by Christ and taught by His Apostles; it is the Faith for which countless Holy Martyrs suffered and died; it is the Faith that has brought true civilization, with all its benefits, into the world, and it is the only Faith that can truly reform and preserve public and private morals.

**Q. 689. Why does the bishop or priest**

**give the person he confirms or chrismates a slight blow on the cheek?**

A. The bishop or priest gives the person he confirms or chrismates a slight blow on the cheek, to put him in mind that he must be ready to suffer everything, even death, for the sake of Christ.

**Q. 690. Is it right to test ourselves through our imagination of what we would be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ?**

A. It is not right to test ourselves through our imagination of what we would be willing to suffer for the sake of Christ, for such tests may lead us into sin. When a real test comes we are assured God will give to us, as He did to the Holy Martyrs, sufficient grace to endure it.

**Q. 691. To receive Confirmation or Chrismation worthily is it necessary to be in the state of grace?**

A. To receive Confirmation or Chrismation worthily it is necessary to be in the state of grace.

**Q. 692. What special preparation should be made to receive Confirmation or Chrismation?**

A. Persons of an age to learn should know the chief mysteries of faith and the duties of a Christian, and be instructed in the nature and effects of this Sacrament.

**Q. 693. Why should we know the chief mysteries of faith and the duties of a Christian in light of Confirmation or Chrismation?**

A. We should know the Chief Mysteries of Faith and the duties of a Christian in light of Confirmation or Chrismation because as one cannot be a good soldier without knowing the rules of the army to which he belongs and understanding the commands of his leader, so one cannot be a good Christian without knowing the laws of the Church and understanding the commands of Christ. However, the main reason is, that the fullness of the help we receive from Chrismation or Confirmation, and participation in God's uncreated Grace, is received in proportion to our knowl-

edge, understanding, and participation in the Divine.

**Q. 694. Is it a sin to neglect Chrismation (Confirmation)?**

A. It is a sin to neglect Chrismation (Confirmation), especially in these evil days when faith and morals are exposed to so many and such violent temptations.

**Q. 695. What do we mean by "these evil days"?**

A. By "these evil days" we mean the present age or century in which we are living, surrounded on all sides by, unbelief, false doctrines, bad books, bad example and temptation in every form.

**Q. 696. Is Chrismation (Confirmation) necessary for salvation?**

A. Chrismation (Confirmation) is not so necessary for salvation that we could not be saved without it; nevertheless, there is a divine command obliging all to receive it, if possible. Persons who have not been Chrismated (confirmed) in youth should make every effort to be Chrismated (confirmed) later in life.

**Q. 697. Are sponsors necessary in Chrismation (Confirmation)?**

A. Sponsors are necessary in Chrismation (Confirmation), and they must be of the same good character as those required at Baptism, for they take upon themselves the same duties and responsibilities. They also establish a spiritual relationship, which, however, unlike that in Baptism, is not an impediment to marriage.

#### LESSON SIXTEENTH: On The Gifts And Fruits Of The Holy Ghost

**Q. 698. Which are the effects of Chrismation (Confirmation)?**

A. The effects of Chrismation (Confirmation) are an increase of sanctifying grace, the strengthening of our faith, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

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Pleasure. Think about what pleasure is, what is pleasurable to you, what significance it holds in your system of values, what it means to you. Does it have different forms? Do you find pleasure in a multitude of things, places, experiences, thoughts, actions, omissions? You should for the God created universe contains a multitude of pleasures all of which can be enjoyed in harmony and concert with God.

If your pleasure is found only in one thing, even if that one thing is God, you would be accurate to spell that word with a little "G" for your concept of God is not accurate, and you are a slave. If your pleasure is found in carousing and things related to carousing, you are a slave - making no better use of your God given talents than a dog in heat on the street eating its own vomit. If your pleasure is in controlling as much as you can control, you are a slave to your desire for power.

But if your pleasure is found in all of the wonderment which God has made, and in bringing yourself into true harmony with the Creator and His creation through the means He has provided, then you are on the road to freedom.

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(Continued **SUPPORT** from page 1)

seventy sons, one of whom was Abimelech, whose mother was Jerobaal. At the time Israel had no king, but was ruled directly by God. When there was need for a human leader God would chose a leader who is referred to as a judge. Such was Gedeon.

When Gedeon died his son Abimelech desired to be the ruler of Israel.

*Judges 9:1. And Abimelech, the son of Jerobaal, went to Sichem, to his mother's brethren, and spoke to them, and to all the kindred of his mother's father, saying: 9:2. Speak to all the men of Sichem: whether is better for you that seventy men, all the sons of Jerobaal, should rule over you, or that one man should rule over you? And withal, consider that I am your bone, and your flesh.* (They were all related and all lived in the same town or area.)

*9:3. And his mother's brethren spoke of him to all the men of Sichem, all these words, and they inclined their hearts after Abimelech, saying: He is our brother: 9:4. And they gave him seventy weight of silver out of the temple of Baalberith: wherewith he hired to himself men that were needy, and vagabonds, and they followed him.*

*9:5. And he came to his father's house in Ephra, and slew his brethren, the sons of Jerobaal, seventy men, upon one stone: and there remained only Joatham, the youngest son of Jerobaal, who was hidden. 9:6. And all the men of Sichem were gathered together, and all the families of the city of Mello: and they went and made Abimelech king, by the oak that stood in Sichem.*

Jerobaal then likened the actions of Abimelech and the people of Sichem to trees seeking a ruler, which are eventually ruled by a bramble. And he further said: *9:16. Now, therefore, if you have done well, and without sin, in appointing Abimelech king over you, and have dealt well with Jerobaal, and with his house, and have made a suitable return for the benefits of him*

*who fought for you, 9:17. And exposed his life to dangers, to deliver you from the hand of Madian, 9:18. And you are now risen up against my father's house, and have killed his sons, seventy men, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his handmaid, king over the inhabitants of Sichem, because he is your brother: 9:19. If therefore you have dealt well, and without fault, with Jerobaal and his house, rejoice ye, this day, in Abimelech, and may he rejoice in you. 9:20. But if unjustly: let fire come out from him, and consume the inhabitants of Sichem, and the town of Mello: and let fire come out from the men of Sichem and from the town of Mello, and devour Abimelech.*

The people of Sichem soon decided they wished to do as they willed and ignored much of what Abimelech desired, even to the point of setting up bands of men who lived in the less populated areas and who waited to ambush Abimelech should he travel through those areas. While they waited for Abimelech they robbed all who did pass through those areas.

Matters reached a condition that Abimelech could not ignore, so he went into battle with those who had once supported him. He defeated their armies and wrecked their cities until one battle when he was hit in the head by a millstone hurled by a woman.

*9:54. And he called hastily to his armourbearer, and said to him: Draw thy sword, and kill me: lest it should be said that I was slain by a woman. He did as he was commanded, and slew him. 9:55. And when he was dead all the men of Israel that were with him, returned to their homes. 9:56. And God repaid the evil that Abimelech had done against his father, killing his seventy brethren. 9:57. The Schemites also were rewarded for what they had done, and the curse of Joatham, the son of Jerobaal, came upon them.*

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## COMPUTER FUN

In a few aspects a computer provides a good analogy or representation of a human. The case is its body, it's soul is the components especially the hard drive and CPU, and electricity is the spark of the Holy Spirit which powers everything. The world is the InterNet, your family or if you live in a community (such as a convent or monastery) your community and the other close associations you have are local networks or IntraNet.

A computer can be a stand alone system and be without viruses, spyware, worms, and the other things which cause problems until the instant it is first turned on. From that instant it has interaction with something outside of itself for it has interaction with its operator, the electrical supply circuit, its operating system, and programs even if it is not connected to a network.

Without getting too heavy into the analogy, conception is comparable to turning on the computer. It is not nice to ALT+CONTROL+DELETE a human.

Of course, computers are only able to do that for which they are programmed and utilize information which has been fed into them. Humans can conceptualize that which has never been and bring it into existence - humans can and readily do expand far beyond what ever quality humans possess which is comparable to a computer's programing.

But when a virus infects a computer the effect on the computer may range from immeasurable decrease in performance to full take over or even loss of all information, programing and the crash of the computer.

When a soul is infected with sin its reactions are similar, ranging from almost no effect in the instance of very few and very slight sin, to a spiritual "lock-up" and even spiritual death in the situation of grievously serious and persistent sin.

To avoid serious harm to a computer the operator is careful as to what is allowed to be input into his computer, and the source of that input. So too should we be vigilant as to what is input into our minds, be it through the senses, through sight, sound, being taught, or extrapolated from our own thoughts.

Just as when a computer is fed inaccurate information the result it provides must of necessity be inaccurate unless it randomly and accidentally provides a correct result, so too will human actions, including beliefs, derive inaccurate results, and even beliefs, from inaccurate information.

But while a computer can never pick and chose what information it will process, a human can, and humans often do discard truths which they wish were not truths and invent that which they term truth but which is not.

When a computer becomes infected, or has been fed a false data base, focused effort is required to rectify the situation. Occasionally something minor such as adding an incorrect spelling for a word to the computer dictionary or "spell checker" is the problem. Such a problem can usually be corrected with relative ease. But when an entire data base is false, or has been corrupted, the larger the data base the more work involved in correcting the situation.

So too must a human strive to correct inaccurate beliefs, be they religious or something common such as a person's middle name, the more entrenched the inaccuracy the more difficult the correction.

And just as when a virus infects a computer it will continue to corrupt the computer, so too will sin which has infected the soul continue to corrupt the soul.

Whether it is inaccurate information, or a virus or other program which makes the computer malfunction or leads the soul astray, or even operator error, the soul will fry or a little puff of smoke

may curl out from under the cover, depending on whether it is a human or a machine which has the problem.

Both can attain some level of protection by use of anti virus and aiti-tracking programs. For computers these are available in every price range imaginable, even free. And as it is with protecting the soul, some of the best computer protection programs are free.

The soul protection programs are best conceived as actual programs - systems which develop instinctive, adequate, and rapid response to attack, even to the extent of warding off or shielding from attack. Prayer is the foundation of these systems but prayer without the energy source of the frequent reception of the Sacred Body Eucharist will soon become rote prayer - words and mental processes occurring without thought and as such of only marginal use and effect.

When a computer anti-virus or anti-spyware program is run, the program checks the system against known hazards and isolates those known hazards. It also checks for known effects of viruses and spyware and provides notice of those effects so that further inspection can be made if necessary. The viruses and spyware are placed in a "vault" where they can be deleted, and the effected programs and files treated with remedial programs so the damage can be corrected.

Sacramental Confession and Absolution provide the means by which sin is searched out and destroyed in the soul.

Make sure your spiritual information is accurate and that you are not just operating on a set of principals which you wish were accurate and true. Keep your defenses up and actively oppose that which would infect your soul. Inspect your soul regularly, at least daily, and seek the remedies of Sacramental Confession. And maintain the batteries if you are a spiritual laptop by receiving Holy Communion when your batteries

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appear to be even the slightest run down. Actually, it is best to keep your soul, whether it is a mainframe, PC, or laptop, plugged in to the Sacred Eucharist at all times, which can only be done by frequent reception.

One of the realities which computers and souls have in common is the deletion of files on a computer is similar to the removal of sins from a soul. On a computer when a file is deleted in the normal course of programing what actually happens is the first symbol of the file is deleted or replaces with a symbol indicating the file can be overwritten. But the actual file remains on the hard drive until additional space is needed for a new file on the hard drive, then that file space is overwritten. So too is it with the soul that something of the forgiven sin remains, making it very simple and relatively easy for that sin to be re-accessed *unless* it is totally deleted from the soul by being replaced with something else, preferably a virtue, the exercise of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy, or something similar.

Always remember your hard drive soul is never fully protected, you must be ever vigilant in its use and protection, and that it is up to you to use it for good, for you also may use it for evil but then it definitely will crash.

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## COMMENTS ON SOME INDICATORS OF OUR TIMES

**More Bias and Lies by Omission by “journalist”:** On the NBC Nightly News broadcast of 19 June 2007 one of the major stories was previewed or “teased” as a review of an InterNet spoof of Senator Hilary Clinton as Tony Soprano. What the “news” piece turned out to be was a several minutes long promotion of Senator Hilary Clinton for President, complete with interviews of several women who were presented as a balanced representative sample of all American women - which they were not. Apparently the “spoof” actually is a product of the Hilary Clinton for President Campaign (or what ever her campaign is called), but if this is mentioned in the NBC piece it is done in a manner which does not lead the mention to ready memory recall.

**What do Anna Nicole Smith (Vickie Lynn Marshall), Marilyn Monroe (born Norma Jeane Mortenson), George Washington, and Robert E. Lee all have in common.** Well, all of them are dead, but what they all really have in common is that one rarely if ever sees an expressed concern as to whether or not any one of them went to heaven, or elsewhere.

**American Indian tribes are to receive 2000 FEMA trailers** intended for hurricanes Katrina and Rita victims. These trailers have been shown in many instances to be made of flimsy construction, have leaky gas lines, contain noxious and dangerous fumes, and have numerous other dangerous problems. Perhaps . . . FEMA . . . Wounded Knee . . . some connection there?? *Indian best beware of FEMA bearing gifts.*

**Men who are the strong, silent types are all wrong according to** Dr. Henry Lodge (Parade, June 27, 2007, p.16). Dr. Lodge states men must learn to emote like women, talk about their feelings like women, become more like women and abandon the traditional male traits characterized by John

Wayne and Sean Connery. Dr. Lodge has not the foggiest concept of reality - men do emote and have strong emotional attachments. Just ask any war veteran, but do not expect an answer because it is impossible to explain the “buddy” relationship to one who has not experienced it. Dr. Lodge says the isolation of the modern world formulated by cubicles in the work place, isolation in commuting to and from work, and similar societal environmental changes make rugged individualism a damaging character trait which can only be overcome by men learning to become more emotional and express their emotions like women. He fails to consider there are basic, hard wired differences between men and women, including emotional needs and responses. A man need not beat his chest and holler like Tarzan, but if he is to have any self respect, he'd best control his emotions and act with the logic proper to the situation in which he finds himself. Emoting is good for releasing frustration, but it never solves a problem. Men are resolution based, they are by their very nature geared to resolving problems. Women deal with problems by discussing them, by emoting. If you have a carbuncle on your bottom you can emote on how uncomfortable it is and endure the suffering, or you can pop the "danged" thing and get it over with. Choice is yours.

**The first line of the news article states: “House Republicans who larded legislation with law-makers’ pet projects** when they ran the House successfully forced Democrats on Thursday to be more open about Congress’ pork barrel ways.” (Times-Picayune, June 15, 2007, A-6) There are two main problems with the article. First, there is no support for the accusation that House Republicans “larded legislation”. That lawmakers “pork up” legislation may be a popular belief, but a newspaper article, if it is to be considered news, must provide supporting facts, facts which support the statements made. This one does not. It also is somewhat ambiguous in that the article seems to state that only those House

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Republicans who larded up legislation in the past are now requiring more openness. Second, the article openly attacks House Republicans for forcing more openness. It would seem that applause for more openness is in order, not opposition to more openness. Or is openness bad when Democrats are forced to be open and good only when Republicans are forced to be open? The basic concept should be applause that at least some measure of openness regarding pork barrel projects is being forced upon Congress, but who ever wrote the article obviously desires such openness be applied only to Republicans. Or, perhaps, was this really just a means of attacking Republicans? Perish the thought.

**Judge Roy Pearson, Jr., lost his \$67.3 million law suit against a cleaners which he claims lost or damaged his pants, may be made to pay the defendants' court costs and possibly their attorneys' fees, and may possibly not be reappointed to his position as a result of his law suit.** Enough said.

**Chinese Exports - Imports to the USA:** Considering the problems recently experienced with various Chinese products, including but not limited to pet food, toothpaste, automobile tires, lead painted children's toys, sea food, and China's internal problems with fake and poisonous blood platelets, baby food, and food protein products which contain no protein, and its smuggling export of fake and pirated CD's, watches, and clothing, is it possible China has been exporting politicians and government officials to the USA for the past several decades?

**Virginia Tech Tragedy???** The murder of five faculty members, twenty-seven students, and himself, by Seung-Hui Cho, and his wounding of an additional twenty-five people on April 16, 2007, at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), has been consistently termed a tragedy. This was not a tragedy. This was mass murder and maiming by a man who ap-

parently became increasingly mentally unstable from his early years in middle school and high school until the time of his suicide while attending university. To term this a tragedy is to diminish the reality of the death by murder of thirty-two people, the wounding and maiming of twenty-five people, the effects on all of the people in all of their families, the suicide of a man and its effects and the effects of his actions on his family and friends. This was not a tragedy. This is a horror. Seung-Hui Cho was a member of the Centreville Korean Presbyterian Church. Some of his family members had believed he may have suffered from some form of autism but apparently he never received a psychological examination or diagnosis. Seung-Hui Cho apparently was quite intelligent. Had he been offered a good education in true Christianity (not to disparage that which is provided by Centreville Korean Presbyterian Church since that quality is not known) it is possible he could have overcome any innate reserve or disfunction. That he apparently was not offered a good Christian education is the tragedy. Or, perhaps he was offered a good Christian education, and rejected it. That too would be a tragedy.

**Mexican women can now legally kill their children,** if yet unborn, under Mexico City's new abortion law. Do the Democrat Party, libertines, and Planned Parenthood call this preparation for immigration to the USA? Does the Republican Party oppose this because it will diminish the number of people available to become cheap labor? Has some group been inadvertently omitted from this insult? Consider the omitted included. Are illegal immigrants from Latin America necessary to make up for the more than forty million USA babies murdered by abortion since such murder became legal in the USA?

**IRAQ:** We are given the US death count on the daily TV news, but rarely are informed of the unified call of Sunni and Shia for the US to fight al-Qaida and the militants entering Iraq for the purpose of killing Iraqis and disrupting what progress has been made towards

some form of democracy and peace. But when was the last time you were sure you heard the truth on TV news, or were sure you read the truth in a newspaper for that matter?

**The 1-800- sex phone business has a new entry.** For years these predators have sought men to telephone women for obviously illicit erotic purposes. But now there are similar telephone numbers being advertised for homosexual men to call. The only difference between the two types of TV commercials is that in the ones featuring women, the women keep at least a small portion of their chest area covered . . . In both instances men are being duped into believing they may actually have the opportunity to meet someone who meets their anticipation of attractiveness. Each intended victim who "gets smart" and ignores this type of trash may wind up saving two things: their money, and their soul.

**Federal Courts are beginning to promote vile language** on TV and radio. Apparently an insufficient number of potentially good people are not being killed by abortions, so the U. S. Court of Appeal for the 2nd Circuit in New York has struck down a ban by the Federal Communications Commission on the use of certain "expletives". One possible reasoning is since not enough potentially good people are being killed by abortion, perhaps the remaining potentially good people can be made to become evil by corrupting the influence of any positive moral experience.

**Hershey, the chocolate candy company,** is actually held in a form of trust for the town of Hershey. A while back the trust attempted to sell of the candy company, stating it could use the profits from the sale to better take care of the town. The people in the town work at the candy company, and probably would have all lost their jobs because the company probably would have moved and the product made elsewhere. It looks like the trust administrators attempted to make money by the sale (lots of

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bonuses, legal and accounting preparations and fees, all the normal and possibly quite legal but definitely immoral shenanigans). But the matter “sourred”. Now Hershey is issuing complaints that increases in dairy costs are hurting Hershey’s bottom line. Look for the trust administrators to try to sell off the company again sometime soon.

**Oh, the Chinese are being blamed for the increase in dairy costs.** Apparently the Chinese are using more milk protein. First they used more coal and coal prices went up. Then more petroleum and gasoline prices went up. Now milk and milk prices are going up? Guess all that milk from all over the USA is being loaded on milk tankers and shipped to milk terminals in China. Wonder if China has offshore milk terminals similar to the offshore petroleum terminals in the Gulf of Mexico? Were there not recent stories about milk producers dumping milk because they could not obtain a reasonable price - a price sufficient for them to remain in business so that it was less expensive to dump the milk then send it to be processed? Something just does not add up. But now we know why gas stations charge for air. The Chinese are breathing more of it so there is less of it to go around and the gas stations have to charge for it even though compressed air is a by-product of the system which pumps gasoline from the station’s tank into your car.

**1850's California:** Do you know what happened back in 1850, in California?

California became a state.  
 The State had no electricity.  
 The State had no money.  
 Almost everyone spoke Spanish.  
 There were gunfights in the streets.

Basically, it was just like California today, except the women had what God gave them and the men didn't hold hands!

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(Continued CATHOLIC from page 1)

is not just *a* but is also **the CHURCH**; and it is **HOLY** because it is within or one with God which is why there is but **ONE** of these things called church for there is but one God and therefore there can be but one church; and it is **APOSTOLIC** because it has continual continuity from present to the Apostles and thence into Christ Jesus, God; and it is **CATHOLIC** because being within or one with God and God being everywhere or universal so too is the **CHURCH**.

Where the Holy Spirit is, there too is the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The Church is One. The human administrators seem to continually forget this.

Occasionally what was once a viable part of The Church dissolves itself from The Church and calls itself the true church but in dissolving its union with The Church it inevitably dissolves itself from the Dogma of The Church and the Sacraments, particularly Holy Orders, the Sacred Eucharist, and Sacramental Confession and Absolution, thus destroying the splinter group’s Apostolic nature or character. Eventually Baptism becomes optional in these splinter groups and when an attempt is made to administer it the administration is made by a variant on what Christ, God, dictated, making the administration invalid. Nothing can be more horrible than hearing the words, “I Baptize thee in the Name of the Lord,” for these are not the words which Jesus Christ, God, required for Baptism, and therefore there can be no Baptism made with these words. And this is why such words are horrible, for someone apparently desired Baptism for themselves or for another but did not receive it or give it because the words were not from The Word.

The True Church is exclusive and any attempt to supplant it or replace it will be without effect on it. The Schisms within The True Church are the same as

having different parts of a person’s body beat and fight against the other parts. The Schisms are a form of insanity caused by the administrators who have not yet learned to avoid Satan’s words, “I will not serve.” These administrators will deny they refuse to serve, but they will only serve in their own way, not in God’s way. Therefore, in actuality they refuse to serve. Thus they have divided The Church so it is under differing forms of administration. United, The Church would immediately be successful against Satan and evils of this world. When will the fist cease hitting the stomach, the foot cease kicking the nose, the mouth cease spitting everywhere, the fingers cease attempting to poke out the eyes and stopping up the ears, the bowels cease blocking everything making the whole body ill, the mouth cease refusing to consume the nourishment required by the entire body, and ears cease refusing to hear the Word of God calling for harmony in His Church?

The Church in this world is the Body of Christ in this world. It is the manifestation of Jesus Christ, God, One in the Father and in whom the Father is One, and as They are One so is the Church to become One. In this world The Church is the manifestation of Christ, it is an energy of God. In this world members can join the Body and leave the Body. In the next world the members are One with God and those individuals who are not One with God will never be One with God while those which are One with God will remain One with God for all eternity. The commonality of the Communion of Saints persists in the Body of Christ joining those in the Body in this world with those who are One with God in the next world.

Why Oh Why do fools continue the disharmony in the Body? They risk being cast out like waste.



Christ's Peace,

+ Paul, S.S.B.

## REVENGE, HATE, AND CHRIST

We have recently experienced the deaths of several people who have harmed thousands if not millions of people. Mr. Kenneth Lay, of the ENRON fraud, and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian who was the al Qaeda leader in Iraq, are two of the most memorable of these.

When Mr. al-Zarqawi was killed people rejoiced saying he received what he dealt out to others; that his seventy-two virgins would all have horns on their heads; and generally rejoiced at the thought that he would be spending all eternity in Hell.

When Mr. Lay died people again rejoiced saying he would no longer be able to enjoy the fruits of his ill gotten money; that it was a shame he did not live to go to jail to be raped by the other inmates; and again generally rejoiced at the thought that he would be spending all eternity in Hell.

Is this "having compassion one of another" (1 Peter 3:8)? No. Is this "blessing (*blessing others, even those who hurt you*) for unto this are you called, that you may inherit a blessing." (1 Peter 3:9)? No. This is being angry with another, wishing evil upon another, so-as-to make the one who who is angry, who wishes evil, be in danger of receiving judgment. (Mat. 5:22).

It is good and proper that everyone, especially Christians, be joyful that Mr. al-Zarqawi and Mr. Lay are no longer able to hurt people. But it is not good and proper for us to rejoice at their deaths, for in death they no longer are able to repent. It is not good and proper to rejoice at the prospect of their being in hell, for it is never good and proper to rejoice at the suffering of another or the evil which befalls another - even self inflicted evil. Such rejoicing is a sin.

To presume that either one of them is in hell is also a sin; the sin of presumption, of placing one self in the Seat of Judg-

ment reserved to God.

Revenge against another person has no place in Christianity. Hate of another person has no place in Christianity. Jesus Christ God did not and does not engage in either of these, did not teach them, taught and acted against them, and indicated there is no place in His Father's house for those who have either revenge or hate as character traits or practices.

Christ also made it very clear that we should live lives which do not induce others to hate us, or to wish revenge against us. It is very important to understand that this does not include living lives which allow others to engage in immorality. By way of example: if your child is seeking an abortion, and if you prevent the abortion your child will hate you, and even seek revenge against you, perhaps by charging you with some sort of criminal conduct, you must prevent the abortion through non sinful means, without regard to the hatred and revenge that will be induced in your child. When Christ instructed us to live lives which do not cause others to hate us or seek revenge against us, He was telling us to avoid sinful conduct, especially sinful conduct which induces others to sin through hate or desire for revenge. He was telling us that if we have caused others to hate us or to desire revenge against us, and these were caused by our sin, that we must seek those who hate us or desire revenge against us, and do our best to correct the situation and seek forgiveness from those we have caused to sin through our sin.

Ref: 1 Peter 3:8-15; Mat. 5:20-24

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## DON'T CHANGE THE MENU

The people were hungry. Jesus provided them with food: bread and fish. The people ate what Jesus provided and were satisfied.

From this we learn that when we eat what Jesus provides, we are satisfied, and only then are we satisfied.

Knowing this, *why do people change the menu, and still expect to receive the nourishment provided only by that which Jesus provides?"*

Foolish people and evil people both attempt to mislead people of faith by directing our attention elsewhere. In some instances they attempt to explain the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves of bread and fishes, by saying when Jesus had the small amount of food distributed, He shamed or otherwise induced those who had brought food with them, into sharing their food with those who had none. But if this had happened, then this remarkable occurrence would have been what had been told - for to have four thousand people all sharing their food would have been at least a remarkable occurrence, if not a miraculous occurrence.

But what is stated is that the people had been with Jesus for three days and had nothing to eat. And these words are the words of Jesus: **Mark 8:2. I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days and have nothing to eat. 8:3. And if I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way: for some of them came from afar off.** To change what happened is to change the words spoken by Jesus. To imply that Jesus did not know about any food the people had with them is to say He is not God. And to believe that anyone had any significant amount of hidden food after three days, is to believe that people could hide a substantial amount of food about their persons for three days without anyone knowing about the food.

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*(Continued MENU from page 20)*

Those who wish to change this from a miracle of multiplication of bread and fish, would also change Jesus from being God, into being a man who could not see four thousand people carrying three days' worth of food.

They are people who wish to change the menu Christ has given to us.

The menu that says you can have sexual relations, but only with the one person of the opposite gender to whom you are married.

The menu that says you must not kill. That experiments involving an human egg fertilized by an human sperm are experiments on humans. That developing an human and then killing that human for any purpose, especially for the purpose of harvesting stem cells, or any cells, or any body parts, is the immoral killing of an human being.

The menu that says abortion is the immoral killing of an human being.

The menu says that not paying a living wage so that you may be enriched at the expense of the workman, is immoral, and may be tantamount to slavery.

The menu that says each individual person is loved by God, made in the image and likeness of God, and must be treated with respect, even if they are evil.

The menu that says we must be careful so that none of our acts, thoughts, words, deeds, and anything else about us, ever gives scandal, ever leads another astray from The Way taught by Christ.

The menu that says we must never substitute any menu for the menu given to us by God.

Ref: Rom 6:3-11; Mark 8:1-9

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## PERSPECTIVE ON FRUIT

There was a Priest who would sit outside to pray morning prayers. Usually it was dark, the sun not yet having risen, but occasionally he was late and it was daylight.

Sometimes when he was praying late in the morning, he would see lizards, ants, caterpillars, and other insects, and he would watch them for a little while. The lizards would move slowly, creeping up on what ever they saw, cocking their heads to one side and examining their next meal with an intensely focused eye, then, snap!

And the Priest would shake his head and say to himself, "You are supposed to be praying," then smile at the wonder of God's creation and know that he had been praying. That he had been praying praise of God for the wonder of everything that exists, but that now it was time to pray for people.

Some would say that if we did what God designed us to do, just one tenth as well as the lizard does what it is designed to do, that something or other would happen. But we **DO**, do what we are designed to do, and we do it not just one tenth as well as a lizard, but one hundred per cent. For we are designed to act within our free will, and this each one of us does.

Unlike lizards, what God designed us to do, and what God desires us to do, are different, as is why God created each of us.

Lizards are designed to worship God by doing what lizards do. They do worship God in the manner He designed. And that is why He created each lizard.

We can only partially express why God created each of us, because we are capable of only slightly comprehending or expressing anything about God, particularly why God does or does not do something. But we do know God created each of us because He desires that each of us share eternal happiness with

Him in Heaven; because He loves each one of us; because in creating each person He shows forth His goodness.

He designed each of us so that each of us can freely accept or decline His offer. He also designed each of us so that each of us can pursue accepting or rejecting His offer, and do what is necessary to accept or reject His offer.

He desires that we accept His offer. He would not make the offer if He did not desire that we accept it. But He will not force us to accept His offer.

Our free will is so extensive that we can actually lead lives which include doing things which are good for all of creation - all people, all things which have life, and all things which do not have life - and yet reject worship, love, and following God's desires and commandments. We can give away all of our wealth to help the poor, and at the same time reject God, and the only place we will be able to go at death is Hell.

We can also be totally inept at doing that which benefits the world; but if worship and love God, and constitutently desire, seek to, and generally do our best to follow God's desires and commandments - if we accept God and His offer - then we will cast ourselves into His Love at the time of our death.

Usually, those who reject God bear fruit which is not beneficial to mankind or the rest of creation. We think this makes such people easy to detect, and it does. But there are many who bear fruit which is not beneficial to mankind or creation, who are not evil, who not only have not rejected God, but who have actively accepted Him. The only means of ascertaining whether they are good or evil is to become familiar with them, to observe and know them, and see whether their spiritual fruit is good or evil.

Now, Who can do that?

Some who attempt to make such a de-

*(Continued FRUIT on page 22)*

(Continued **FRUIT** from page 21)

termination so do because they have a deep seated desire to condemn others, or to have smug spiritual superiority - and these have rotten fruit themselves. But others seek to discern the good or evil about others, so-as-to assist others in goodness where possible, and to learn what to avoid themselves, and to avoid that which should be avoided.

What are the fruits of the drug addict who engages in prostitution to earn the money needed to purchase the drugs her body and mind crave and need, who hates her drug addiction, attempts to break it but constantly fails, despises herself in her prostitution, has real and valid sorrow for her sins, true repentance for them, prays constantly and those prayers are real prayers to the real God, and worships God regularly in the manner He has declared He desires? What are her fruits?

What are fruits of the politician who supports abortion on demand because she believes it is politically beneficial for her, who glories in her position and the accompanying social prerogatives and perks, who goes to church on Sunday because that is what one does and because she gets a good feeling from the services and songs, who prays - even regularly, and who in her own mind has done nothing worthy of Hell?

The discerning individual sees the fruits of the prostitute as those of someone trying desperately to be with God, and those of the politician as those of someone intent on their own desires and not God's.

But not even the discerning individual can know.

Ref: Rom 6:19-23; Mat. 7:15-21

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## WE ARE CALLED TO UNQUESTIONING COMPLIANCE WITH GOD'S WILL - AND THAT IS WHAT WE SHOULD ASK GOD TO HELP US ATTAIN

The Psalm states: *Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy: and teach me thy justifications.*

It is impossible for us to comprehend God. The best we can do is to follow what each Person of the Blessed Trinity has taught us and ask each Person of the Blessed Trinity to keep teaching us and continue helping us.

We can not understand why God sometimes seems to help us without our asking for help, and at other times it seems we have to beg Him for help.

Why is it that the comparatively innocent suffer because of the sins of evil people - why does God allow that to happen?

Why do the innocent suffer at the hands of the evil - why do adults kill unborn babies? Why does not God stop this killing?

Why did God make mosquitoes, cock roaches, and fleas?

Why is it that no matter how much one attempts to keep from committing sins, one commits sins anyway?

Why did God make some food taste so good, and also make it so that if we eat too much of it we get sick?

*Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy: and teach me thy justifications.*

If we think about this very simple passage from Psalm 118 all the questions we have about God and why He does things the way He does become comparatively unimportant. We are called to unquestioning compliance by the Psalmist, and the Gospels, and the teachings of the Apostles. All the ques-

tions we have are mental exercises which can be beneficial but they are not essential. Doing what God wants us to do simply because He is God and we are creatures - that is most important.

If this goes against the grain, then perhaps another reason for doing what God wants us to do will be of assistance.

There is not a human or a group of humans (even all human together) which knows why God made mosquitoes, fleas, and cock roaches, much less *how* He made them.

Nor can anyone or group explain *why* God made any one person, any people, all people. God Himself has revealed to us that He made each of us because He loves each of us. But all of the mental power of every human in combination can not comprehend that love. And the question of *how did God make us* remains unanswered.

Simply put, God has more brains than any one of us or all of us put together. It makes sense to follow the instructions of someone who knows what he is doing, and God has proven He knows what He is doing. Since His "doing" includes our very existence, only a fool would intentionally disregard God's advice.

A fool does not say: *Deal with thy servant according to thy mercy: and teach me thy justifications.* A fool says: *I don't care.*

A fool also believes he knows why God made mosquitoes, cock roaches, and fleas, and will forcefully tell you the reason (don't take this out of context).

Ref: Eph 4:1-6; Mat 22:34-46; Ps. 118:124

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**IMITATION OF CHRIST**  
**By Thomas a Kempis**

BOOK THREE

The Twenty-Third Chapter

Four Things Which Bring Great Peace

The Voice of Christ

My child, I will teach you now the way of peace and true liberty. Seek, child, to do the will of others rather than your own. Always choose to have less rather than more. Look always for the last place and seek to be beneath all others. Always wish and pray that the will of God be fully carried out in you. Behold, such will enter into the realm of peace and rest.

The Disciple

O Lord, this brief discourse of Yours contains much perfection. It is short in words but full of meaning and abounding in fruit. Certainly if I could only keep it faithfully, I should not be so easily disturbed. For as often as I find myself troubled and dejected, I find that I have departed from this teaching. But You Who can do all things, and Who always love what is for my soul's welfare, give me increase of grace that I may keep Your words and accomplish my salvation.

A Prayer Against Bad Thoughts

O Lord my God, be not far from me. O my God, hasten to help me, for varied thoughts and great fears have risen up within me, afflicting my soul. How shall I escape them unharmed? How shall I dispel them?

"I will go before you," says the Lord, "and will humble the great ones of earth. I will open the doors of the prison, and will reveal to you hidden secrets."

Do as You say, Lord, and let all evil thoughts fly from Your face. This is my hope and my only comfort -- to fly to

You in all tribulation, to confide in You, and to call on You from the depths of my heart and to await patiently for Your consolation.

A Prayer for Enlightening the Mind

Enlighten me, good Jesus, with the brightness of internal light, and take away all darkness from the habitation of my heart. Restrain my wandering thoughts and suppress the temptations which attack me so violently. Fight strongly for me, and vanquish these evil beasts -- the alluring desires of the flesh -- so that peace may come through Your power and the fullness of Your praise resound in the holy courts, which is a pure conscience. Command the winds and the tempests; say to the sea: "Be still," and to the north wind, "Do not blow," and there will be a great calm.

Send forth Your light and Your truth to shine on the earth, for I am as earth, empty and formless until You illumine me. Pour out Your grace from above. Shower my heart with heavenly dew. Open the springs of devotion to water the earth, that it may produce the best of good fruits. Lift up my heart pressed down by the weight of sins, and direct all my desires to heavenly things, that having tasted the sweetness of supernal happiness, I may find no pleasure in thinking of earthly things.

Snatch me up and deliver me from all the passing comfort of creatures, for no created thing can fully quiet and satisfy my desires. Join me to Yourself in an inseparable bond of love; because You alone can satisfy him who loves You, and without You all things are worthless.

The Twenty-Fourth Chapter

Avoiding Curious Inquiry About the Lives of Others

The Voice of Christ

My child, do not be curious. Do not trouble yourself with idle cares. What matters this or that to you? Follow Me.

What is it to you if a man is such and such, if another does or says this or that? You will not have to answer for others, but you will have to give an account of yourself. Why, then, do you meddle in their affairs?

Behold, I know all men. I see everything that is done under the sun, and I know how matters stand with each -- what is in his mind and what in his heart and the end to which his intention is directed. Commit all things to Me, therefore, and keep yourself in good peace. Let him who is disturbed be as restless as he will. Whatever he has said or done will fall upon himself, for he cannot deceive Me.

Do not be anxious for the shadow of a great name, for the close friendship of many, or for the particular affection of men. These things cause distraction and cast great darkness about the heart. I would willingly speak My word and reveal My secrets to you, if you would watch diligently for My coming and open your heart to Me. Be prudent, then. Watch in prayer, and in all things humble yourself.

The Twenty-Fifth Chapter

The Basis of Firm Peace of Heart and True Progress

The Voice of Christ

My child, I have said: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you."[34]

All men desire peace but all do not care for the things that go to make true peace. My peace is with the humble and meek of heart: your peace will be in much patience. If you hear Me and follow My voice, you will be able to enjoy much peace.

The Disciple

What, then, shall I do, Lord?

*(Continued KEMPIS on page 24)*

(Continued **KEMPIS** from page 23)

### The Voice of Christ

Watch yourself in all things, in what you do and what you say. Direct your every intention toward pleasing Me alone, and desire nothing outside of Me. Do not be rash in judging the deeds and words of others, and do not entangle yourself in affairs that are not your own. Thus, it will come about that you will be disturbed little and seldom.

Yet, never to experience any disturbance or to suffer any hurt in heart or body does not belong to this present life, but rather to the state of eternal rest. Do not think, therefore, that you have found true peace if you feel no depression, or that all is well because you suffer no opposition. Do not think that all is perfect if everything happens just as you wish. And do not imagine yourself great or consider yourself especially beloved if you are filled with great devotion and sweetness. For the true lover of virtue is not known by these things, nor do the progress and perfection of a man consist in them.

### The Disciple

In what do they consist, Lord?

### The Voice of Christ

They consist in offering yourself with all your heart to the divine will, not seeking what is yours either in small matters or great ones, either in temporal or eternal things, so that you will preserve equanimity and give thanks in both prosperity and adversity, seeing all things in their proper light.

If you become so brave and long-suffering in hope that you can prepare your heart to suffer still more even when all inward consolation is withdrawn, and if you do not justify yourself as though you ought not be made to suffer such great things, but acknowledge Me to be just in all My works and praise My holy name -- then you will walk in the true and right path of peace, then you may have sure hope of seeing My

face again in joy. If you attain to complete contempt of self, then know that you will enjoy an abundance of peace, as much as is possible in this earthly life.

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[34] John 14:27.

### The Twenty-Sixth Chapter

#### The Excellence of a Free Mind, Gained Through Prayer Rather Than By Study

### The Disciple

It is the mark of a perfect man, Lord, never to let his mind relax in attention to heavenly things, and to pass through many cares as though he had none; not as an indolent man does, but having by the certain prerogative of a free mind no disorderly affection for any created being.

Keep me, I beg You, most merciful God, from the cares of this life, lest I be too much entangled in them. Keep me from many necessities of the body, lest I be ensnared by pleasure. Keep me from all darkness of mind, lest I be broken by troubles and overcome. I do not ask deliverance from those things which worldly vanity desires so eagerly, but from those miseries which, by the common curse of humankind, oppress the soul of Your servant in punishment and keep him from entering into the liberty of spirit as often as he would.

My God, Sweetness beyond words, make bitter all the carnal comfort that draws me from love of the eternal and lures me to its evil self by the sight of some delightful good in the present. Let it not overcome me, my God. Let not flesh and blood conquer me. Let not the world and its brief glory deceive me, nor the devil trip me by his craftiness. Give me courage to resist, patience to endure, and constancy to persevere. Give me the soothing unction of Your spirit rather than all the consolations of the world, and in place of carnal love, infuse into me the love of Your name.

Behold, eating, drinking, clothing, and other necessities that sustain the body are burdensome to the fervent soul. Grant me the grace to use such comforts temperately and not to become entangled in too great a desire for them. It is not lawful to cast them aside completely, for nature must be sustained, but Your holy law forbids us to demand superfluous things and things that are simply for pleasure, else the flesh would rebel against the spirit. In these matters, I beg, let Your hand guide and direct me, so that I may not overstep the law in any way.

### The Twenty-Seventh Chapter

#### Self-Love is the Greatest Hindrance to the Highest Good

### The Voice of Christ

My child, you should give all for all, and in no way belong to yourself. You must know that self-love is more harmful to you than anything else in the world. In proportion to the love and affection you have for a thing, it will cling to you more or less. If your love is pure, simple, and well ordered, you will not be a slave to anything. Do not covet what you may not have. Do not possess anything that can hinder you or rob you of freedom.

It is strange that you do not commit yourself to Me with your whole heart, together with all that you can desire or possess. Why are you consumed with foolish sorrow? Why are you wearied with unnecessary care? Be resigned to My will and you will suffer no loss.

If you seek this or that, if you wish to be in this place or that place, to have more ease and pleasure, you will never rest or be free from care, for some defect is found in everything and everywhere someone will vex you. To obtain and multiply earthly goods, then, will not help you, but to despise them and root them out of your heart will aid. This, understand, is true not only of money

(Continued **KEMPIS** on page 25)

*(Continued KEMPIS from page 24)*

and wealth, but also of ambition for honor and desire for empty praise, all of which will pass away with this world.

The place matters little if the spirit of fervor is not there; nor will peace be lasting if it is sought from the outside; if your heart has no true foundation, that is, if you are not founded in Me, you may change, but you will not better yourself. For when occasion arises and is accepted, you will find that from which you fled and worse.

A Prayer for Cleansing the Heart and Obtaining Heavenly Wisdom

Strengthen me by the grace of Your holy spirit, O God. Give me the power to be strengthened inwardly and to empty my heart of all vain care and anxiety, so that I may not be drawn away by many desires, whether for precious things or mean ones. Let me look upon everything as passing, and upon myself as soon to pass away with them, because there is nothing lasting under the sun, where all is vanity and affliction of spirit. How wise is he who thinks thus!

Give me, Lord, heavenly wisdom to learn above all else to seek and find You, to enjoy and love You more than anything, and to consider other things as they are, as Your wisdom has ordered them. Grant me prudence to avoid the flatterer and to bear patiently with him who disagrees with me. For it is great wisdom not to be moved by the sound of words, nor to give ear to the wicked, flattering siren. Then, I shall walk safely in the way I have begun.

The Twenty-Eighth Chapter

Strength Against Slander

The Voice of Christ

My child, do not take it to heart if some people think badly of you and say unpleasant things about you. You ought to think worse things of yourself and to believe that no one is weaker than your-

self. Moreover, if you walk in the spirit you will pay little heed to fleeting words. It is no small prudence to remain silent in evil times, to turn inwardly to Me, and not to be disturbed by human opinions. Do not let your peace depend on the words of men. Their thinking well or badly of you does not make you different from what you are. Where are true peace and glory? Are they not in Me? He who neither cares to please men nor fears to displease them will enjoy great peace, for all unrest and distraction of the senses arise out of disorderly love and vain fear.

The Twenty-Ninth Chapter

How We Must Call Upon and Bless the Lord When Trouble Presses

The Disciple

Blessed be Your name forever, O Lord, Who have willed that this temptation and trouble come upon me. I cannot escape it, yet I must fly to You that You may help me and turn it to my good. Now I am troubled, Lord, and my heart is not at rest, for I am greatly afflicted by this present suffering.

Beloved Father, what shall I say? I am straitened in harsh ways. Save me from this hour to which, however, I am come that You may be glorified when I am deeply humbled and freed by You. May it please You, then, to deliver me, Lord, for what can I, poor wretch that I am, do or where can I go without You? Give me patience, Lord, even now. Help me, my God, and I will not be afraid however much I may be distressed.

But here, in the midst of these troubles, what shall I say? Your will be done, Lord. I have richly deserved to be troubled and distressed. But I must bear it. Would that I could do so patiently, until the storm passes and calm returns! Yet Your almighty hand can take this temptation from me, or lighten its attack so that I do not altogether sink beneath it, as You, my God, my Mercy, have very often done for me before. And the more difficult my plight, the easier for You is

this change of the right hand of the Most High.

The Thirtieth Chapter

The Quest of Divine Help and Confidence in Regaining Grace

The Voice of Christ

My child, I am the Lord Who gives strength in the day of trouble. Come to Me when all is not well with you. Your tardiness in turning to prayer is the greatest obstacle to heavenly consolation, for before you pray earnestly to Me you first seek many comforts and take pleasure in outward things. Thus, all things are of little profit to you until you realize that I am the one Who saves those who trust in Me, and that outside of Me there is no worth-while help, or any useful counsel or lasting remedy.

But now, after the tempest, take courage, grow strong once more in the light of My mercies; for I am near, says the Lord, to restore all things not only to the full but with abundance and above measure. Is anything difficult for Me? Or shall I be as one who promises and does not act? Where is your faith? Stand firm and persevere. Be a man of endurance and courage, and consolation will come to you in due time. Wait for Me; wait -- and I will come to heal you.

It is only a temptation that troubles you, a vain fear that terrifies you.

Of what use is anxiety about the future? Does it bring you anything but trouble upon trouble? Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. It is foolish and useless to be either grieved or happy about future things which perhaps may never happen. But it is human to be deluded by such imaginations, and the sign of a weak soul to be led on by suggestions of the enemy. For he does not care whether he overcomes you by love of the present or fear of the future.

Let not your heart be troubled, therefore, nor let it be afraid. Believe in Me

*(Continued KEMPIS on page 26)*

(Continued **KEMPIS** from page 25)

and trust in My mercy. When you think you are far from Me, then often I am very near you. When you judge that almost all is lost, then very often you are in the way of gaining great merit.

All is not lost when things go contrary to your wishes. You ought not judge according to present feelings, nor give in to any trouble whenever it comes, or take it as though all hope of escape were lost. And do not consider yourself forsaken if I send some temporary hardship, or withdraw the consolation you desire. For this is the way to the kingdom of heaven, and without doubt it is better for you and the rest of My servants to be tried in adversities than to have all things as you wish. I know your secret thoughts, and I know that it is profitable for your salvation to be left sometimes in despondency lest perhaps you be puffed up by success and fancy yourself to be what you are not.

What I have given, I can take away and restore when it pleases Me. What I give remains Mine, and thus when I take it away I take nothing that is yours, for every good gift and every perfect gift is Mine.

If I send you trouble and adversity, do not fret or let your heart be downcast. I can raise you quickly up again and turn all your sorrow into joy. I am no less just and worthy of great praise when I deal with you in this way.

If you think aright and view things in their true light, you should never be so dejected and saddened by adversity, but rather rejoice and give thanks, considering it a matter of special joy that I afflict you with sorrow and do not spare you. "As the Father hath loved Me, so also I love you," I said to My disciples, and I certainly did not send them out to temporal joys but rather to great struggles, not to honors but to contempt, not to idleness, but to labors, not to rest but to bring forth much fruit in patience. Do you, My child, remember these words.

The Thirty-First Chapter

To Find the Creator, Forsake All Creatures

The Disciple

O Lord, I am in sore need still of greater grace if I am to arrive at the point where no man and no created thing can be an obstacle to me. For as long as anything holds me back, I cannot freely fly to You. He that said "Oh that I had wings like a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest!"<sup>[35]</sup> desired to fly freely to You. Who is more at rest than he who aims at nothing but God? And who more free than the man who desires nothing on earth?

It is well, then, to pass over all creation, perfectly to abandon self, and to see in ecstasy of mind that You, the Creator of all, have no likeness among all Your creatures, and that unless a man be freed from all creatures, he cannot attend freely to the Divine. The reason why so few contemplative persons are found, is that so few know how to separate themselves entirely from what is transitory and created.

For this, indeed, great grace is needed, grace that will raise the soul and lift it up above itself. Unless a man be elevated in spirit, free from all creatures, and completely united to God, all his knowledge and possessions are of little moment. He who considers anything great except the one, immense, eternal good will long be little and lie groveling on the earth. Whatever is not God is nothing and must be accounted as nothing.

There is great difference between the wisdom of an enlightened and devout man and the learning of a well-read and brilliant scholar, for the knowledge which flows down from divine sources is much nobler than that laboriously acquired by human industry.

Many there are who desire contemplation, but who do not care to do the things which contemplation requires. It is also a great obstacle to be satisfied

with externals and sensible things, and to have so little of perfect mortification. I know not what it is, or by what spirit we are led, or to what we pretend -- we who wish to be called spiritual -- that we spend so much labor and even more anxiety on things that are transitory and mean, while we seldom or never advert with full consciousness to our interior concerns.

Alas, after very little recollection we falter, not weighing our deeds by strict examination. We pay no attention to where our affections lie, nor do we deplore the fact that our actions are impure.

Remember that because all flesh had corrupted its course, the great deluge followed. Since, then, our interior affection is corrupt, it must be that the action which follows from it, the index as it were of our lack of inward strength, is also corrupt. Out of a pure heart come the fruits of a good life.

People are wont to ask how much a man has done, but they think little of the virtue with which he acts. They ask: Is he strong? rich? handsome? a good writer? a good singer? or a good worker? They say little, however, about how poor he is in spirit, how patient and meek, how devout and spiritual. Nature looks to his outward appearance; grace turns to his inward being. The one often errs, the other trusts in God and is not deceived.

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[35] Ps. 54:7.

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## THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

### BOOK THREE CHAPTER XII

21. Meanwhile, thou gavest her yet another answer, as I remember -- for I pass over many things, hastening on to those things which more strongly impel me to confess to thee -- and many things I have simply forgotten. But thou gavest her then another answer, by a priest of thine, a certain bishop reared in thy Church and well versed in thy books. When that woman had begged him to agree to have some discussion with me, to refute my errors, to help me to unlearn evil and to learn the good[81] -- for it was his habit to do this when he found people ready to receive it -- he refused, very prudently, as I afterward realized. For he answered that I was still unteachable, being inflated with the novelty of that heresy, and that I had already perplexed divers inexperienced persons with vexatious questions, as she herself had told him. "But let him alone for a time," he said, "only pray God for him. He will of his own accord, by reading, come to discover what an error it is and how great its impiety is." He went on to tell her at the same time how he himself, as a boy, had been given over to the Manicheans by his misguided mother and not only had read but had even copied out almost all their books. Yet he had come to see, without external argument or proof from anyone else, how much that sect was to be shunned -- and had shunned it. When he had said this she was not satisfied, but repeated more earnestly her entreaties, and shed copious tears, still beseeching him to see and talk with me. Finally the bishop, a little vexed at her importunity, exclaimed, "Go your way; as you live, it cannot be that the son of these tears should perish." As she often told me afterward, she accepted this answer as though it were a voice from heaven.

### BOOK FOUR

This is the story of his years among the Manicheans. It includes the account of his teaching at Tagaste, his taking a

mistress, the attractions of astrology, the poignant loss of a friend which leads to a searching analysis of grief and transience. He reports on his first book, *De pulchro et apto*, and his introduction to Aristotle's *Categories* and other books of philosophy and theology, which he mastered with great ease and little profit.

### CHAPTER I

1. During this period of nine years, from my nineteenth year to my twenty-eighth, I went astray and led others astray. I was deceived and deceived others, in varied lustful projects -- sometimes publicly, by the teaching of what men style "the liberal arts"; sometimes secretly, under the false guise of religion. In the one, I was proud of myself; in the other, superstitious; in all, vain! In my public life I was striving after the emptiness of popular fame, going so far as to seek theatrical applause, entering poetic contests, striving for the straw garlands and the vanity of theatricals and intemperate desires. In my private life I was seeking to be purged from these corruptions of ours by carrying food to those who were called "elect" and "holy," which, in the laboratory of their stomachs, they should make into angels and gods for us, and by them we might be set free. These projects I followed out and practiced with my friends, who were both deceived with me and by me. Let the proud laugh at me, and those who have not yet been savingly cast down and stricken by thee, O my God. Nevertheless, I would confess to thee my shame to thy glory. Bear with me, I beseech thee, and give me the grace to retrace in my present memory the devious ways of my past errors and thus be able to "offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving." [82] For what am I to myself without thee but a guide to my own downfall? Or what am I, even at the best, but one suckled on thy milk and feeding on thee, O Food that never perishes? [83] What indeed is any man, seeing that he is but a man? Therefore, let the strong and the mighty laugh at us, but let us who are "poor and needy" [84] confess to thee.

### CHAPTER II

2. During those years I taught the art of rhetoric. Conquered by the desire for gain, I offered for sale speaking skills with which to conquer others. And yet, O Lord, thou knowest that I really preferred to have honest scholars (or what were esteemed as such) and, without tricks of speech, I taught these scholars the tricks of speech -- not to be used against the life of the innocent, but sometimes to save the life of a guilty man. And thou, O God, didst see me from afar, stumbling on that slippery path and sending out some flashes of fidelity amid much smoke -- guiding those who loved vanity and sought after lying, [85] being myself their companion.

In those years I had a mistress, to whom I was not joined in lawful marriage. She was a woman I had discovered in my wayward passion, void as it was of understanding, yet she was the only one; and I remained faithful to her and with her I discovered, by my own experience, what a great difference there is between the restraint of the marriage bond contracted with a view to having children and the compact of a lustful love, where children are born against the parents' will -- although once they are born they compel our love.

3. I remember too that, when I decided to compete for a theatrical prize, some magician -- I do not remember him now -- asked me what I would give him to be certain to win. But I detested and abominated such filthy mysteries, [86] and answered "that, even if the garland was of imperishable gold, I would still not permit a fly to be killed to win it for me." For he would have slain certain living creatures in his sacrifices, and by those honors would have invited the devils to help me. This evil thing I refused, but not out of a pure love of thee, O God of my heart, for I knew not how to love thee because I knew not how to conceive of anything beyond corporeal splendors. And does

*(Continued CONFESSIONS on page 28)*

(Continued **CONFESSIONS** from page 27)

not a soul, sighing after such idle fictions, commit fornication against thee, trust in false things, and "feed on the winds"[87]? But still I would not have sacrifices offered to devils on my behalf, though I was myself still offering them sacrifices of a sort by my own [Manichean] superstition. For what else is it "to feed on the winds" but to feed on the devils, that is, in our wanderings to become their sport and mockery?

### CHAPTER III

4. And yet, without scruple, I consulted those other impostors, whom they call "astrologers" [mathematicos], because they used no sacrifices and invoked the aid of no spirit for their divinations. Still, true Christian piety must necessarily reject and condemn their art.

It is good to confess to thee and to say, "Have mercy on me; heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee"[88] -- not to abuse thy goodness as a license to sin, but to remember the words of the Lord, "Behold, you are made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall you."[89] All this wholesome advice [the astrologers] labor to destroy when they say, "The cause of your sin is inevitably fixed in the heavens," and, "This is the doing of Venus, or of Saturn, or of Mars" -- all this in order that a man, who is only flesh and blood and proud corruption, may regard himself as blameless, while the Creator and Ordainer of heaven and the stars must bear the blame of our ills and misfortunes. But who is this Creator but thou, our God, the sweetness and wellspring of righteousness, who renderest to every man according to his works and despisest not "a broken and a contrite heart"[90]?

5. There was at that time a wise man, very skillful and quite famous in medicine.[91] He was proconsul then, and with his own hand he placed on my distempered head the crown I had won in a rhetorical contest. He did not do this as a physician, however; and for

this distemper "only thou canst heal who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble."[92] But didst thou fail me in that old man, or forbear from healing my soul? Actually when I became better acquainted with him, I used to listen, rapt and eager, to his words; for, though he spoke in simple language, his conversation was replete with vivacity, life, and earnestness. He recognized from my own talk that I was given to books of the horoscope-casters, but he, in a kind and fatherly way, advised me to throw them away and not to spend idly on these vanities care and labor that might otherwise go into useful things. He said that he himself in his earlier years had studied the astrologers' art with a view to gaining his living by it as a profession. Since he had already understood Hippocrates, he was fully qualified to understand this too. Yet, he had given it up and followed medicine for the simple reason that he had discovered astrology to be utterly false and, as a man of honest character, he was unwilling to gain his living by beguiling people. "But you," he said, "have the profession of rhetoric to support yourself by, so that you are following this delusion in free will and not necessity. All the more, therefore, you ought to believe me, since I worked at it to learn the art perfectly because I wished to gain my living by it." When I asked him to account for the fact that many true things are foretold by astrology, he answered me, reasonably enough, that the force of chance, diffused through the whole order of nature, brought these things about. For when a man, by accident, opens the leaves of some poet (who sang and intended something far different) a verse oftentimes turns out to be wondrously apposite to the reader's present business. "It is not to be wondered at," he continued, "if out of the human mind, by some higher instinct which does not know what goes on within itself, an answer should be arrived at, by chance and not art, which would fit both the business and the action of the inquirer."

6. And thus truly, either by him or through him, thou wast looking after

me. And thou didst fix all this in my memory so that afterward I might search it out for myself.

But at that time, neither the proconsul nor my most dear Nebridius -- a splendid youth and most circumspect, who scoffed at the whole business of divination -- could persuade me to give it up, for the authority of the astrological authors influenced me more than they did. And, thus far, I had come upon no certain proof -- such as I sought -- by which it could be shown without doubt that what had been truly foretold by those consulted came from accident or chance, and not from the art of the stargazers.

### CHAPTER IV

7. In those years, when I first began to teach rhetoric in my native town, I had gained a very dear friend, about my own age, who was associated with me in the same studies. Like myself, he was just rising up into the flower of youth. He had grown up with me from childhood and we had been both school fellows and playmates. But he was not then my friend, nor indeed ever became my friend, in the true sense of the term; for there is no true friendship save between those thou dost bind together and who cleave to thee by that love which is "shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us."[93] Still, it was a sweet friendship, being ripened by the zeal of common studies. Moreover, I had turned him away from the true faith -- which he had not soundly and thoroughly mastered as a youth -- and turned him toward those superstitious and harmful fables which my mother mourned in me. With me this man went wandering off in error and my soul could not exist without him. But behold thou wast close behind thy fugitives -- at once a God of vengeance and a Fountain of mercies, who dost turn us to thyself by ways that make us marvel. Thus, thou didst take that man out of this life when he had scarcely completed one whole year of friendship with me, sweeter to me than all the sweetness of my life thus far.

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8. Who can show forth all thy praise[94] for that which he has experienced in himself alone? What was it that thou didst do at that time, O my God; how unsearchable are the depths of thy judgments! For when, sore sick of a fever, he long lay unconscious in a death sweat and everyone despaired of his recovery, he was baptized without his knowledge. And I myself cared little, at the time, presuming that his soul would retain what it had taken from me rather than what was done to his unconscious body. It turned out, however, far differently, for he was revived and restored. Immediately, as soon as I could talk to him -- and I did this as soon as he was able, for I never left him and we hung on each other overmuch -- I tried to jest with him, supposing that he also would jest in return about that baptism which he had received when his mind and senses were inactive, but which he had since learned that he had received. But he recoiled from me, as if I were his enemy, and, with a remarkable and unexpected freedom, he admonished me that, if I desired to continue as his friend, I must cease to say such things. Confounded and confused, I concealed my feelings till he should get well and his health recover enough to allow me to deal with him as I wished. But he was snatched away from my madness, that with thee he might be preserved for my consolation. A few days after, during my absence, the fever returned and he died.

9. My heart was utterly darkened by this sorrow and everywhere I looked I saw death. My native place was a torture room to me and my father's house a strange unhappiness. And all the things I had done with him -- now that he was gone -- became a frightful torment. My eyes sought him everywhere, but they did not see him; and I hated all places because he was not in them, because they could not say to me, "Look, he is coming," as they did when he was alive and absent. I became a hard riddle to myself, and I asked my soul why she was so downcast and why this disquieted me so sorely.[95] But she did not

know how to answer me. And if I said, "Hope thou in God,"[96] she very properly disobeyed me, because that dearest friend she had lost was as an actual man, both truer and better than the imagined deity she was ordered to put her hope in. Nothing but tears were sweet to me and they took my friend's place in my heart's desire.

#### CHAPTER V

10. But now, O Lord, these things are past and time has healed my wound. Let me learn from thee, who art Truth, and put the ear of my heart to thy mouth, that thou mayest tell me why weeping should be so sweet to the unhappy. Hast thou -- though omnipresent -- dismissed our miseries from thy concern? Thou abidest in thyself while we are disquieted with trial after trial. Yet unless we wept in thy ears, there would be no hope for us remaining. How does it happen that such sweet fruit is plucked from the bitterness of life, from groans, tears, sighs, and lamentations? Is it the hope that thou wilt hear us that sweetens it? This is true in the case of prayer, for in a prayer there is a desire to approach thee. But is it also the case in grief for a lost love, and in the kind of sorrow that had then overwhelmed me? For I had neither a hope of his coming back to life, nor in all my tears did I seek this. I simply grieved and wept, for I was miserable and had lost my joy. Or is weeping a bitter thing that gives us pleasure because of our aversion to the things we once enjoyed and this only as long as we loathe them?

#### CHAPTER VI

11. But why do I speak of these things? Now is not the time to ask such questions, but rather to confess to thee. I was wretched; and every soul is wretched that is fettered in the friendship of mortal things -- it is torn to pieces when it loses them, and then realizes the misery which it had even before it lost them. Thus it was at that time with me. I wept most bitterly, and found a rest in bitterness. I was wretched, and yet that wretched life I still held dearer than my friend. For

though I would willingly have changed it, I was still more unwilling to lose it than to have lost him. Indeed, I doubt whether I was willing to lose it, even for him -- as they tell (unless it be fiction) of the friendship of Orestes and Pylades[97]; they would have gladly died for one another, or both together, because not to love together was worse than death to them. But a strange kind of feeling had come over me, quite different from this, for now it was wearisome to live and a fearful thing to die. I suppose that the more I loved him the more I hated and feared, as the most cruel enemy, that death which had robbed me of him. I even imagined that it would suddenly annihilate all men, since it had had such a power over him. This is the way I remember it was with me.

Look into my heart, O God! Behold and look deep within me, for I remember it well, O my Hope who cleansest me from the uncleanness of such affections, directing my eyes toward thee and plucking my feet out of the snare. And I marveled that other mortals went on living since he whom I had loved as if he would never die was now dead. And I marveled all the more that I, who had been a second self to him, could go on living when he was dead. Someone spoke rightly of his friend as being "his soul's other half"[98] -- for I felt that my soul and his soul were but one soul in two bodies. Consequently, my life was now a horror to me because I did not want to live as a half self. But it may have been that I was afraid to die, lest he should then die wholly whom I had so greatly loved.

#### CHAPTER VII

12. O madness that knows not how to love men as they should be loved! O foolish man that I was then, enduring with so much rebellion the lot of every man! Thus I fretted, sighed, wept, tormented myself, and took neither rest nor counsel, for I was dragging around my torn and bloody soul. It was impatient of my dragging it around, and yet I could not find a place to lay it down. Not in pleasant groves, nor in sport or

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song, nor in fragrant bowers, nor in magnificent banquetings, nor in the pleasures of the bed or the couch; not even in books or poetry did it find rest. All things looked gloomy, even the very light itself. Whatsoever was not what he was, was now repulsive and hateful, except my groans and tears, for in those alone I found a little rest. But when my soul left off weeping, a heavy burden of misery weighed me down. It should have been raised up to thee, O Lord, for thee to lighten and to lift. This I knew, but I was neither willing nor able to do; especially since, in my thoughts of thee, thou wast not thyself but only an empty fantasm. Thus my error was my god. If I tried to cast off my burden on this fantasm, that it might find rest there, it sank through the vacuum and came rushing down again upon me. Thus I remained to myself an unhappy lodging where I could neither stay nor leave. For where could my heart fly from my heart? Where could I fly from my own self? Where would I not follow myself? And yet I did flee from my native place so that my eyes would look for him less in a place where they were not accustomed to see him. Thus I left the town of Tagaste and returned to Carthage.

#### CHAPTER VIII

13. Time never lapses, nor does it glide at leisure through our sense perceptions. It does strange things in the mind. Lo, time came and went from day to day, and by coming and going it brought to my mind other ideas and remembrances, and little by little they patched me up again with earlier kinds of pleasure and my sorrow yielded a bit to them. But yet there followed after this sorrow, not other sorrows just like it, but the causes of other sorrows. For why had that first sorrow so easily penetrated to the quick except that I had poured out my soul onto the dust, by loving a man as if he would never die who nevertheless had to die? What revived and refreshed me, more than anything else, was the consolation of other friends, with whom I went on loving the things I loved instead of thee. This was a monstrous fable and a tedious lie

which was corrupting my soul with its "itching ears"[99] by its adulterous rubbing. And that fable would not die to me as often as one of my friends died. And there were other things in our companionship that took strong hold of my mind: to discourse and jest with him; to indulge in courteous exchanges; to read pleasant books together; to trifle together; to be earnest together; to differ at times without ill-humor, as a man might do with himself, and even through these infrequent dissensions to find zest in our more frequent agreements; sometimes teaching, sometimes being taught; longing for someone absent with impatience and welcoming the homecomer with joy. These and similar tokens of friendship, which spring spontaneously from the hearts of those who love and are loved in return -- in countenance, tongue, eyes, and a thousand ingratiating gestures -- were all so much fuel to melt our souls together, and out of the many made us one.

#### CHAPTER IX

14. This is what we love in our friends, and we love it so much that a man's conscience accuses itself if he does not love one who loves him, or respond in love to love, seeking nothing from the other but the evidences of his love. This is the source of our moaning when one dies -- the gloom of sorrow, the steeping of the heart in tears, all sweetness turned to bitterness -- and the feeling of death in the living, because of the loss of the life of the dying.

Blessed is he who loves thee, and who loves his friend in thee, and his enemy also, for thy sake; for he alone loses none dear to him, if all are dear in Him who cannot be lost. And who is this but our God: the God that created heaven and earth, and filled them because he created them by filling them up? None loses thee but he who leaves thee; and he who leaves thee, where does he go, or where can he flee but from thee well-pleased to thee offended? For where does he not find thy law fulfilled in his own punishment? "Thy law is the truth"[100] and thou art Truth.

#### CHAPTER X

15. "Turn us again, O Lord God of Hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved." [101] For wherever the soul of man turns itself, unless toward thee, it is enmeshed in sorrows, even though it is surrounded by beautiful things outside thee and outside itself. For lovely things would simply not be unless they were from thee. They come to be and they pass away, and by coming they begin to be, and they grow toward perfection. Then, when perfect, they begin to wax old and perish, and, if all do not wax old, still all perish. Therefore, when they rise and grow toward being, the more rapidly they grow to maturity, so also the more rapidly they hasten back toward nonbeing. This is the way of things. This is the lot thou hast given them, because they are part of things which do not all exist at the same time, but by passing away and succeeding each other they all make up the universe, of which they are all parts. For example, our speech is accomplished by sounds which signify meanings, but a meaning is not complete unless one word passes away, when it has sounded its part, so that the next may follow after it. Let my soul praise thee, in all these things, O God, the Creator of all; but let not my soul be stuck to these things by the glue of love, through the senses of the body. For they go where they were meant to go, that they may exist no longer. And they rend the soul with pestilent desires because she longs to be and yet loves to rest secure in the created things she loves. But in these things there is no resting place to be found. They do not abide. They flee away; and who is he who can follow them with his physical senses? Or who can grasp them, even when they are present? For our physical sense is slow because it is a physical sense and bears its own limitations in itself. The physical sense is quite sufficient for what it was made to do; but it is not sufficient to stay things from running their courses from the beginning appointed to the end appointed. For in thy word, by which they were created, they hear their appointed bound: "From there -- to here!"

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*In your life, if you ask yourself but one question, let that question be, "Do you think you did the right thing?"*

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