



REUNION

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



Volume 17 No. 1 OF THE CHURCH OF MAN WITH GOD September, 2007

~ SPIRITUAL VALUE Vs. MATERIAL VALUE, The Loss of a true friend as opposed to the loss of material goods ~

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

If a man sow in the flesh he will reap in the flesh; if he sow in the spirit he will reap in the spirit. What is reaped in the flesh will spoil, become corrupt, and quickly become unusable. But what is reaped in

(Continued **LOSS OF FRIEND** on page 18)



YOUR SENSES SHOULD BE A BLESSING

Your eyes should be blessed for they see God's works; your ears for they hear His creation, your touch for it grasps all that was made all of which was made for good to you; your nostrils for they smell and thereby notify you of both that which is for your benefit and that which can harm you; your tongue for it advises you that you may distinguish that which is healthful and that which is harmful.

But too often our senses are used in perverse ways; to pursue the perverse; to perverse God's intent.

Eyes seek out that which is not for them to see. They seek out forbidden pleasures. They seek out the weak that advantage may be taken of them. They seek to satiate the mind with images of reality that the mind may be delighted without having to fulfill the obligations which accompany that fulfillment.

(Continued **SENSES** on page 9)

WHY SOME MOTHERS CRY WHEN THEIR SONS DIE

How do we compare the reaction of a mother of today to the murder of her son with the reaction of the widow of Naim to the death of her son?

It is most likely the widow of Naim cried at the death of her son for love of him, for loss of one loved with the love of a mother.

(Continued **CRY** on page 19)

“YOU WON'T GO TO HELL FOR EATING THAT HOT DOG ON FRIDAY”, HE SAID But he is wrong.

“You won't go to Hell for eating that hot dog on Friday,” the stout middle aged man said to the Priest as they both waited for the automobile repair service representative to return to the counter.

(Continued **HOT DOG** on page 9)

GRATITUDE

When we feel gratitude towards someone for some good which they have done for us, or for assisting us in some manner, the measure of gratitude is usually correlated to the difficulties we were experiencing. The effort and inconvenience to the one who assisted us also is a factor in the measure of gratitude we feel.

If you are carrying a package out of a store, and someone opens the door for you, your gratitude will be of the pleasant polite social situation type. If the person who opens the door for you is on crutches, your gratitude will be greater for the person who assisted you

(Continued **GRATITUDE** on page 12)

GOD IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

One of the multitude of activities which is common to God the Father, Jesus Christ God and Man, and God the Holy Spirit, is service to creation, and especially service to mankind. God not only seems to be, but actually is, continually giving us help at all levels and in ways too numerous to list. If you can think of a situation in which a person can be, there will be a corresponding mercy given by God. It may be that the person receiving the mercy will not recognize it as being a mercy, or as being a gift, especially if the mercy from God does not remove

(Continued **SERVICE** on page 17)

POSTAGE INCREASE

The recent United States Postal Service regulations changes have increased the cost of mailing each copy of REUNION from eighty four cents to one dollar and fourteen cents. This will have an effect on the circulation of our publication.

REUNION is sent via first class mail so that we do not have to be concerned about content meeting bulk rate or non profit institution mailing regulations. This is the only means of insuring the government has no control over the content of REUNION.

Circulation is via two distinct methods: regular mail, and the InterNet.

(Continued **POSTAGE** on page 8)

PUBLICATION NOTICE

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The sole purpose of this publication is to comply with the teachings and instructions of Jesus Christ, second person of the Trinity God, and to further His kingdom.

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We try to publish between four and twelve issues per year, and to print publish each electronically published issue, but do not guarantee to so do due to staffing and finances.

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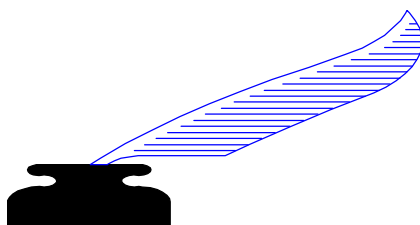
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+ Paul, S.S.B.,
 Publisher .

+ The Basilians - The Basilian Fathers +

LETTERS

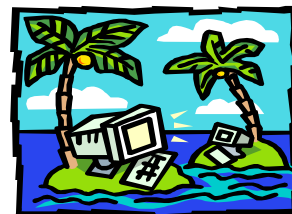
(The Editors reserve the right to reject any submissions, and to edit as necessary. Letters must be typed, single space, signed, and include the sender's name address, and day and evening telephone numbers - If your typed letter is accompanied by an ASCII DOS Text copy on a floppy, we will thank you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

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> You have to register with the system before you can use it, and it is best to send e-mail to set a "chat schedule".

**Current Active Mailing Lists
 Originating From BasilNet ReuNet
 HIOC BBS
 The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil - The Basilian Fathers**

Each ML (Mailing List) 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 or SysOp 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

(Continued WEB on page 3)

If you wish to receive **REUNION** please see **** above, and fill in your name and address below and send to:
REUNION
 Holy Innocents Orthodox Church
 311 Hickory Avenue
 Harahan, Louisiana 70123

Name _____
 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, in Adobe (PDF) format. In some instances this is better than the paper print issue because the pictures often are in color. The ML does support discussion, and discussion is encouraged. It is mainly used by those who desire to receive the Newsletter but do not have access to the WWW (each issue is available on-line), and those to whom we can not send a free print copy.

We have initiated a simplified method of subscribing to our InterNet mailing lists.

Simply go to:
<http://www.reu.org>

Then, click on the link which reads **MAILING LISTS**. This will bring you to a page captioned:

**Current Active Mailing Lists
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Half-way down the page is a link entitled:

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This will bring you to a page entitled:

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CHURCH BBS
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Enter your e-mail address in the place provided, select the mailing list to which you wish to subscribe, click the **Subscribe** button, and an e-mail will be sent to you to confirm your desire to subscribe to the mailing list.

To confirm your subscription simply follow the instructions in the confirmation message (just click the reply command on your e-mail program without changing anything in the Subject line) and you are subscribed to the mailing list.

Most of the mailing lists then send out a welcome message.

Some of the mailing lists use the mailing list name as the sender's address. Some use the sender's name, and others use Fr. Paul, or father.paul@reu.org on behalf of whoever the one who originated the message. We will bring some consistency to this sometime in the future, probably.

To un-subscribe just follow the above procedure for subscribing and click on the unsubscribe button. A confirmation message will be sent to which you should reply to confirm the un-subscription.

Or you may subscribe by sending an e-mail to :

listserver@reu.org

In the message area put:

subscribe studies
subscribe sermons
subscribe prayers
subscribe bible-day
subscribe one-body
subscribe reu_pub

as appropriate. Send separate messages for each subscription.

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THE BASILIAN FATHERS

(The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil)

ALLOW NEITHER YOUR SOLITUDE NOR YOUR IMPERFECTIONS TO KEEP YOU FROM YOUR PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS Especially the Divine Liturgy

Having a congregation which relies on your presence every Sunday and on Great Feasts, is a great impetus to pray the Divine Liturgy. The larger the number in the congregation, the greater the incentive. Fortunately, even a few, or just one regular person in the congregation every Sunday is sufficient incentive for most Priests to pray Divine Liturgy on Sunday.

But for those Priest who have no congregation there can develop an attitude of, "Why bother?" or "Of what use am I?" or even "Forget it."

These Priests may have fallen into a form of despair, for they obviously have forgotten the extraordinary nature of the Divine Liturgy and confection therein of the Sacred Eucharist.

If they would but focus on this single ability which they and no others possess, to pray the Divine Liturgy and do all which that entails, perhaps they would find solace in the Divine Liturgy itself.

It is far better to pray the Divine Liturgy with no other living human present than it is to omit praying the Divine Liturgy. In praying the Divine Liturgy the Priest opens in the most complete and full manner possible, direct communications, contact, and all other forms of relationship, with God.

And the Priest is never alone when praying the Divine Liturgy even if no other living human is present. At every Divine Liturgy, as so aptly demon-

strated by Saint Feofil, all of Heaven, all of the citizens of Heaven, are present. It is therefore impossible to pray Divine Liturgy and to be alone.

Think of the Priest who before the Judgment Throne of God, is asked, "Why did you not pray Divine Liturgy?" and who answers, "Because I had no congregation." You know the response from the Throne will be, "I was there."

The best method of overcoming the form of despair sometimes associated with lack of a congregation or of a large congregation is to exercise those aspects of the Priesthood which one can exercise in such circumstances. And the one aspect which a Priest can always exercise is the Divine Liturgy.

Consciousness of one's imperfections also may cause a Priest to hesitate to exercise some of his Priestly functions. While no one should presume to comprehend dogma and theology unless one has studied these, and no one should "make up an answer on the wing" and should always have a firm footing in such matters if he is to teach such matters, the very basics of dogma and theology can be found in the actual liturgy of the Divine Liturgy - particularly the Creed.

The fact that a Priest is unworthy is a fact which applies to all Priests. If a Priest were to wait until he was worthy to pray Divine Liturgy, he would have to go to confession and receive absolution an instant prior to beginning the Divine Liturgy. Even then he would not be intrinsically worthy to pray the Divine Liturgy. God knows this, and allows for this, so that only a total lack of God's essence in the Priest - definite mortal sin - should cause a Priest to not pray Divine Liturgy.

Who better knows the spiritual needs of

mankind than one who shares those needs? Who then can better pray with fervency that those needs be met, and the most severe temptations overcome?

If you have not prayed Divine Liturgy in quite some time, do it now. No vestments? Put on something clean and decent. No altar? Kitchen table. No chalice? Glass from the cabinet. No paten? Plate next to the glasses in the cabinet. No spoon and lance? Kitchen drawer spoon and knife. No phospora or bread made from wheat, and no grape wine?

Grocery store: just do not use rye bread or cardboard box wine or grape juice - real bread and real

Think of the Priest who before the Judgment Throne of God, is asked, "Why did you not pray Divine Liturgy?" and who answers, "Because I had no congregation." You know the response from the Throne will be, "I was there."

wine. Can not find the Altar Book? Down load the pew one from our web site, and while you are at it copy the portions of the Divine Liturgy which change from our web site and use the Sunday of the current week. Need absolution? See a Priest immediately. You do not really want to die like that. No Priest? Telephone Archbishop Paul - over the telephone is unusual but much, much better than nothing. Wife and children ridicule you? You have some people for whom to pray.

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The Lord is sweet and righteous, therefore He will give a law to sinners in the way. V. He will guide the mild in judgment, He will teach the meek His ways. (Ps. 24:8-9) *[The Gradual from the Divine Liturgy of The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, as prayed on First Friday of the month.]*

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(Continued SSB NEWS on page 5)

(Continued SSB NEWS from page 4)

INCENSE OF THE OFFERING

At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Faithful (immediately following the Offertory Prayer) in the Gregorian Western Rite Divine Liturgy, is the blessing of the incense, the incensing of the bread and wine to be consecrated, and of the congregation.

The prayers are extremely meaningful and beautiful.

As he blesses the incense, the Priest prays:

At the intercession of blessed Michael the archangel, who stands at the right hand of the altar of incense, and of all His elect, may the Lord graciously bless + this incense, and accept its fragrant sweetness: through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Note we again use intercessory prayer, and rightfully so, as is both made obvious and explained in the prayer.

As he incenses the offering the Priest prays:

With Thy Own blessing, Lord, let this incense rise to Thee, and bring down upon us Thy mercy.

and then he incenses the Altar about the offerings, praying:

Let my prayer be directed as incense in thy sight; the lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: and a door round about my lips. Incline not my heart to evil words; to make excuses in sins with men that work iniquity: and I will not commu-

nicate with the choicest of them.

Obviously the Priest is preparing to engage in a very special activity. This is confirmed by his prayer:

May the Lord kindle within me the fire of His love, and the flame of undying charity. Amen.

And then, he prays a variant as he incenses the congregation, praying:

May the Lord kindle within you the fire of His love, and the flame of undying charity. Amen.

He includes the congregation as united with the offering as it is and as it is to be made. He includes the congregation in its imperfections, just as the bread and wine are not the perfection which they will become when the Eucharist is confectioned from them. But the congregation, and each individual member thereof, as a work to perfection in process (or in progress), is intended to be perfected, and seeks to be united with Perfection at this time, to be offered in union with Christ, the Perfection, to the Father.

It is then that the Priest offers the gifts of the people, praying:

Receive, O Lord, the material gifts of thy people, for the welfare of Thy Church. Accept them in honor of Thy glory.

He includes the people themselves as part of the material gifts which they offer. The congregation confirms the request that God receive the offering of the material gifts, and of the congregation, by praying:

Amen.

The matter of incensing should be con-

ducted with seriousness. It should never be considered as a "show time" exercise. Nor should it be conducted with military precision, as though it were a drill or parade march. Nor should it become a form of "liturgical dance" - what ever that is. It should be an intentional, thorough without overstatement, incensing of the materials, the Altar, the Clergy, and the congregation. In the incensing is shown the union of the elements and the people on the Altar, making them as a sweet odor to God. As the incense rises, so too does the offering: elements, people, and material things all united, rise.

It is not so much a matter of symbolism as it is a matter of the incense being the visible means of "doing" that which takes place unseeable by material human sight. The beginning of the sanctification of the people into an offering acceptable to God because of their union with Christ, and their actual ascension as that united offering to God the Father. That united offering being perfected at the confection of the Sacred Eucharist, carried on the hands of God's Holy Angel - His son - to the Father.

And as the bread and wine are begun to be offered with the offering not being made complete until they are changed in substance into the Sacred Body and Blood of Christ, so too in a similar manner are the Priest, Clergy, and congregation begun to be offered before their perfection, with the offering being perfected upon their perfection in eternity.

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CELEBRATE

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IDENTIFICATION CARD

A new Celebrate or ID card is issued each year to each member of The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil for several very good reasons.

Prime is, since each Celebrate, except for a very few, states it expires at a date cer-

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tain, the Celebrate itself allows the public and other Clergy to know whether or not the person identified in the Celebrate is authorized to perform the functions of his status.

It also makes it readily apparent to any other Basilian, whether or not the individual actually is a Basilian, and whether or not he is in good standing, be he Clergy or Oblate.

There are many individuals who attempt to "trade" on our good name. If such individuals are not Basilians, but have a Celebrate modeled on our Celebrate, that individual may be subject to criminal and civil prosecution. Since several lawyers are Clergy in The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil, such prosecution is a strong probability. This fact strongly influences individuals who would otherwise engage in fraud, to refrain from the more overt forms of fraud.

The Celebrate also is an acknowledgment between Bishop and Priest, and amongst Priest, of the ecclesiastical relationship between and amongst them.

Most importantly, the Celebrate is the written authorization to each Priest that he may exercise his Priestly authority and function.

Some of our Bishops in places outside m of The United States do not issue Celebrates. There are numerous reasons for this, all of which make sense in their individual settings. But in The United States and those other countries under a

Bishop in The United States, a Celebrate is issued to each member of the Clergy and to each Oblate.

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LOOKING FOR A NEW MOTHER HOUSE

We spent several weeks in August looking at properties in Southeast Texas, seeking that which may serve as a new Mother House to replace Saint Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church in Mississippi. The Woodville, Texas area is very interesting, but we apparently will have to use proceeds from the sale of Saint Mary Magdalene to supplement our current funds if we are to purchase even just a few acres with a house in that area.

The area jut outside of Tyler, Texas, is more affordable and will receive closer inspection in the future. But for the present we are also looking in the Lumberton, Mississippi area. which geographically is similar to the Woodville, Texas area.

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ST. MARY MAGDALENE NEWS
St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church
125 Hartsie Drive - 150 Angell Lane
Waveland, Mississippi 39576

St. Mary Magdalene was destroyed by

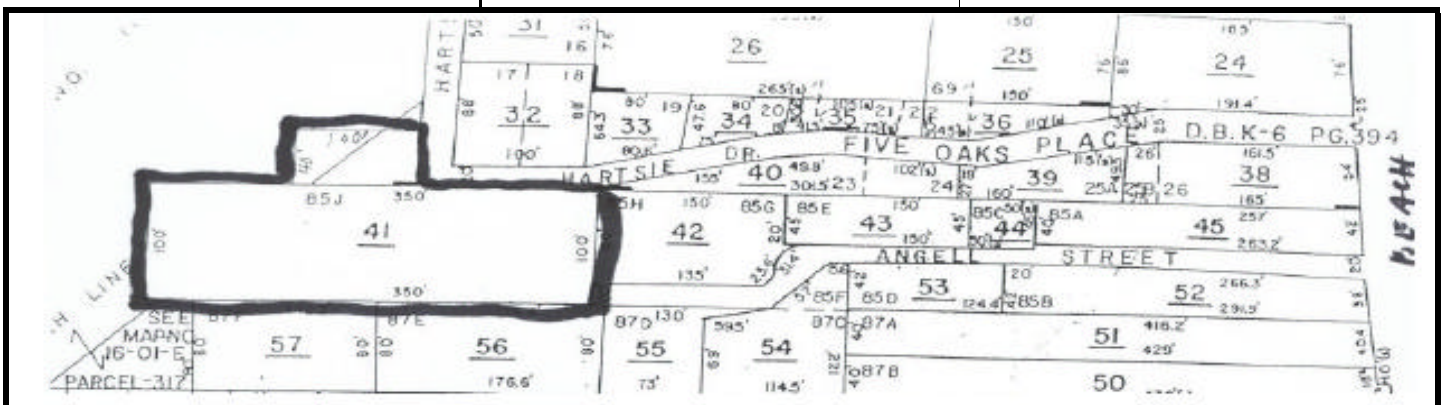
hurricane Katrina. There are no buildings or trees remaining on the property. A good natural setting is very important for maximum benefit to be derived from a spiritual retreat facility - the prime use of Saint Mary Magdalene was as a retreat house and our Mother House. That retreat house setting will require many years to re-establish at Saint Mary Magdalene.

We have therefore decided to sell the land, which is approximately one acre, composed of two adjacent lots, one being approximately 100 feet by 350 feet, the other being approximately 40 feet by 100 feet, situated approximately 550 feet from the beach of the Gulf of Mexico. (See the area outlined in bold in the above survey map. The survey map is not in true proportion due to the printing process.)

We have listed the property with Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty, (228) 467-0244, agent Bobby Compretta, (228) 216-7197, for \$99,000.00. Inquiries should be directed to the real estate company or agent.

We would have rebuilt if the forest on the property had not been destroyed. We hope to establish another retreat house upon sale of the property.

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$$E=MC^2$$

$E=MC^2$ is an important insight into reality, relatively speaking. E is energy. M is mass. C is the speed of light so C^2 is the squared speed of light. The mass is measured in kilograms, the speed of light is 299,792,458 m/s or to 300,000,000, and the energy is measured in Joules. The amount of energy produced by 2 kg of salt (roughly 4.4 pounds) would be $2 \times 300,000,000 \times 300,000,000 = 180,000,000,000,000,000$ if the Microsoft calculator which came with the computer with which this is being typed is correct. Since one Joule is roughly equal to the amount of energy released when one volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica is dropped on the floor, the energy which could be released from 2 kg of salt probably is a lot more than if all of the books ever, were dropped on the floor all at the same time. Incidentally, a random selection indicates a single volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica weighs 4.4 pounds.

What is really nifty though, is that the Newtonian gravitational effect or the force of gravity from the 4.4 pounds of salt is the same as the force of gravity from all the Joules of energy the 4.4 pounds of salt would produce.

So, lets say you measure the gravitational effect of 4.4 pounds of matter. Then you turn that matter into energy - if done instantaneously you have a nuclear explosion, if done slowly you are burning a log in the fireplace which does not interest us here. We are interested in the big bang stuff. The gravitational effect of the 180,000,000,000,000,000 Joules is exactly the same as the gravitational effect of the 4.4 pounds (or 2 kg).

That is not enough gravitational force to effect the flight of a flea, unless the flea were in a place of relative weightlessness. And even then the flea, despite its relative low mass, probably could escape the gravitational influence of the block of salt, or a volume of the

Encyclopedia Britannica. But the Joules of energy would vaporize the flea and everything around it for many miles (km).

Think of gravitational effect as attraction. The 4.4 lbs object and the massive amount of energy both have the same attraction. Yet one, the object, is considered to be plain and unimpressive, and the other, the energy, is considered dynamic and impressive. When the energy has passed all that is left at the point where it passed is its effect, but the energy continues to travel and effect, but it has its greatest focused gravitational attraction at the instant of its conversion from mass. The object maintains its usefulness for as long as it continues as mass - be it salt or a book, and maintains its gravitational attraction. Its location can be changed and therefore its gravitational attraction can be moved from one location to another while maintaining its strength.

Wow! Are matter and energy simply different forms of the same thing? If so, what is that thing? What about antimatter? We know it exists. Is there also something we should name antienergy? Do antimatter and antienergy have a gravitational effect; or perhaps an anti-gravitational effect?

Of what use is this? Is there an analogy? A spiritual application? A moral simile?

No, or perhaps, not necessarily.

This is a thought exercise.

Everything herein is factual.

And it is extremely interesting that the gravitational force of a volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica is the same as that of the energy of an atom bomb. It also is interesting that some would say the book is much more beneficial to mankind than the bomb, and that others would say the bomb has extremely useful peace time application while also serving to scare potential enemies into not killing those who wish to read the

book.

We as a civilization rarely engage in thought exercises, though they once were popular. They once were taught in school in many different forms. They once were used in social gatherings partially as entertainment and partially as stimulation and as a form of exploration.

But today many civilizations have mental stimuli directly applied as visual and auditory input thus stimulating the mental processes; but not invoking thought.

The frightening but true result is a society with the same mental activity as that used by a fish swimming in an aquarium, a five gallon aquarium.

We do not think this is exactly what God intended. But then, what do we know? Well, we know that the gravitational force exerted by . . .

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HUSBANDS FOR SALE!**(Humor)****We hope this is not copyright and thank Paul for sending it to us - Ed.**

A store that sells husbands has just opened in New York City, where a woman may go to choose a husband. Among the instructions at the entrance is a description of how the store operates.

You may visit the store ONLY ONCE!

There are six floors and the attributes of the men increase as the shopper ascends the flights. There is, however, a catch . . . you may choose any man from a particular floor, or you may choose to go up a floor, but you cannot go back down except to exit the building!

So, a woman goes to the Husband Store to find a husband.

On the first floor the sign on the door reads:
Floor 1 - These men have jobs and love the Lord.

The second floor sign reads:
Floor 2 - These men have jobs, love the Lord, and love kids.

The third floor sign reads:
Floor 3 - These men have jobs, love the Lord, love kids, and are extremely good looking.

"Wow," she thinks, but feels compelled to keep going.

She goes to the fourth floor and sign reads:
Floor 4 - These men have jobs, love the Lord, love kids, are drop- dead good looking and help with the housework.

"Oh, mercy me!" she exclaims, "I can hardly stand it!"
Still, she goes to the fifth floor and sign reads:

Floor 5 - These men have jobs, love the Lord, love kids, are drop- dead gorgeous, help with the housework, and

have a strong romantic streak.

She is so tempted to stay, but she goes to the sixth floor and the sign reads:

Floor 6 - You are visitor 4,363,012 to this floor. There are no men on this floor. This floor exists solely as proof that women are impossible to please. Thank you for shopping at the Husband Store. Watch your step as you exit the building, and have a nice day!

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AND A PUN OR TWO**thank you Roy**

A certain man was infatuated with a young woman, but was so timid he never had the courage to speak to her. In fact, he told his therapist that every time he got near her he felt like nothing more than a tiny pebble.

"Well," his therapist responded, "if you want to get the girl you'll just have to be a little boulder!"

Recently a guy in Paris nearly got away with stealing several paintings from the Louvre. However, after planning the crime, getting in and out past security, he was captured only 2 blocks away when his Econoline ran out of gas. When asked how he could mastermind such a crime and then make such an obvious error, he replied:

"I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."

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(Continued POSTAGE from page 1)

The InterNet method has two aspects:

Individuals can go to our web site:
<http://www.reu.org>
and read each issue on line or download each issue.

Individuals can also sign up for the InterNet mail list which sends out REUNION as it is published. This can be done by going to:
<http://reu.org/public/ml/ml.htm>
clicking on the link that reads: automatic subscription page and following the instructions.

Some regular mail circulation of REUNION is sent out from REUNION. There are also over a hundred individuals and organizations which mail out each issue at their own cost. Some of these individuals and organizations send out a few hundred copies of each issue and others send as many as one thousand or more. Each of these individuals and organizations bears the cost of printing and mailing, for which we are very thankful, for our limited funds would not allow such extensive circulation.

Thus it should be very easy to understand the postage rate increase will have an adverse effect on the number of issues we mail each year.

We normally publish no fewer than four issues each year, and as many as twelve. This year we have published an issue each month and will attempt to continue this for the remainder of the year.

Next year we intend to publish at least four issues, God willing, but there is a strong possibility we will be unable to publish more than four due to the cost of mailing.

Incidentally, we are in our seventeenth year of publication.

Christ's Peace,
+ Paul

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(Continued HOT DOG from page 1)

The former member of a Roman Catholic religious order was referring to the prohibition against eating meat on Fridays. This Church made law made it a mortal sin for Roman Catholics to intentionally eat meat on Fridays. As a Church made law it could be and was changed. But that does not mean it was an invalid law while in effect.

The Roman Catholic Church, just like the Orthodox Catholic Church (and all Orthodox Church jurisdictions) has the ability to make laws and regulations which bind their members under various penalties or rewards. These laws and regulations are just as binding as God's commandments. They are intended and designed to assist Christians in their following The Way taught by Christ.

The former brother was wrong. You will go to Hell for eating that hot dog on Friday, if you ate it while that Church made law was in effect, knowing it was Friday, and knowing it was something you were not supposed to do. Of course there were exceptions. If there was nothing else to eat and you had to eat, or were in some similar situation, the prohibition was suspended.

The former brother has done what many people do. He set himself as the arbitrator. He placed himself in a position God reserved for Himself and for His representatives under certain, select, circumstances. He decided he will pick and chose which of God's requirements he will follow and which he will reject - which he has the right to do in accordance with the free will God has given to him. But he also apparently expects God will honor his intentional rejection of certain of God's requirements for eternal salvation, and that eternal salvation will be granted to him anyway. In this he is wrong. While he has the ability and right to exercise his free will in a manner that is in opposition to God's desires, he will, absolutely will, be rewarded in accordance with his use of that free will. A reward is normally thought of as a positive thing, but it

need not so be.

In its simplest application, God's laws, His unchanging Dogma, are the minimum bench marks for acceptable attitude and behavior for eternal association with God. If one does not meet these minimum bench marks, but has generally attempted to meet them and has been somewhat successful in that attempt, it may be possible that one can be cleansed of his deficiencies and then enter into eternal union with God. But if one has consistently and intentionally disobeyed God's instructions, whether they be directly from God or through His Church, and has generally ignored God's desires, such a person probably will not be suitable material for cleansing, and will have no place to go upon death other than Hell.

But why abstain from meat on Fridays (and Wednesdays for most Orthodox)? The discipline of abstention is relatively easy to practice and the practice of that discipline can be applied to abstention from various temptations as well as the practice of various virtues. Meat also increases carnality, and abstention from meat lessens the strength of the carnal attractions. Weakened carnal attractions interfere less with spiritual attractions than strong carnal attractions, thus assisting the individual in seeking to attain and attaining spiritual strength. If there is suffering associated with abstention, that suffering can be associated with Christ's Passion, uniting the individual with Christ in a very special manner. For the true Christian, any form of union with Christ is desirable.

Always remember that when you die you are immediately attracted to that which you love the most. If it is God, you will go towards him. If it is yourself, you will not go towards God, and the only other place to go to is Hell.

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(Continued SENSES from page 1)

Ears seek information to be used for the advantage of the one listening to the detriment of others. They seek flattery, and the effects of the falsehoods uttered by the mouth.

Only a fool would consider the trappings of power in the halls of government or industry to be something of intrinsic value. The possessor will soon lie entombed with bacteria and insects consuming what is left of the shell which once strode those halls, while the essence which strode those halls meets Reality.

Only an idiot would consider an image of another person to be of the same value as the actual other person. And only a total fool would consider that actual other person to be of greater importance, value, or desirability, than the One Who made that other person.

With our senses we can distinguish the vapor from the reality which it imitates. But it requires use of our intellect to decide there is that which is greater than ourselves and greater than any other of our nature.

The senses are merely an aid to our intellect. Yet many consider pleasing the senses to be an acceptable goal.

Your senses should be a blessing, but they can only be a blessing if they are under the control of your intellect. Even then it is quite possible your senses can be used for intellectual foolishness; for pursuit of the temporary rather than pursuit of the permanent; or even for pursuit of that which permanent, permanently horrible.

Use your senses for that purpose for which they were created - for your eternal benefit. Smell the incense, hear the songs of praise and prayers to God as they come from your own lips and those of others, see the Sacred Eucharist as it is given to you by the Priest; smell the blossoms of heaven as you see the heavenly gates open to you and as you hear God say, "Well done My good and faithful servant."

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism

Q. 731. Why is the absolution from some sins reserved to the Patriarch or bishop?

A. The absolution from some sins is reserved to the Patriarch or bishop to deter or prevent, by this special restriction, persons from committing them, either on account of the greatness of the sin itself or on account of its evil consequences.

Q. 732. Can any priest absolve a person in danger of death from reserved sins without the permission of the bishop?

A. Any priest can absolve a person in danger of death from reserved sins without the permission of the bishop, because at the hour of death the Church removes these restrictions in order to save, if possible, the soul of the dying.

Q. 733. How do you know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism?

A. I know that the priest has the power of absolving from the sins committed after Baptism, because Jesus Christ granted that power to the priests of His Church when He said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Q. 734. How do we know that Our Lord, while on earth, had the power to forgive sins?

A. We know that Our Lord, while on earth, had the power to forgive sins:

1. Because He was always God, and;
2. Because He frequently did forgive sins and proved their forgiveness by miracles.

Since He had the power Himself, He could give it to His Apostles.

Q. 735. Was the power to forgive sins given to the apostles alone?

A. The power to forgive sins was not

given to the apostles alone, because it was not given for the benefit merely of those who lived at the time of the apostles, but for all who, having grievously sinned, after Baptism, should need forgiveness. Since, therefore, Baptism will be given till the end of time, and since the danger of sinning after it always remains the power to absolve from such sins must also remain in the Church till the end of time.

Q. 736. When was the Sacrament of Penance instituted?

A. The Sacrament of Penance was instituted after the resurrection of Our Lord, when He gave to His apostles the power to forgive sins, which He had promised to them before His death.

Q. 737. Are the enemies of our religion right when they say man cannot forgive sins?

A. The enemies of our religion are right when they say man cannot forgive sins if they mean that he cannot forgive them by his own power, but they are certainly wrong if they mean that he cannot forgive them even by the power of God, for man can do anything if God gives him the power. The priest does not forgive sins by his own power as man, but by the authority he receives as the minister of God.

Q. 738. How do the priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins?

A. The priests of the Church exercise the power of forgiving sins by hearing the confession of sins, and granting pardon for them as ministers of God and in His name.

Q. 739. How does the power to forgive sins imply the obligation of going to confession?

A. The power to forgive sins implies the obligation of going to confession because as sins are usually committed secretly, the priest could never know what sins to forgive and what not to forgive, unless the sins committed were made

known to him by the persons guilty of them.

Q. 740. Could God not forgive our sins if we confessed them to Himself in secret?

A. Certainly, God could forgive our sins if we confessed them to Himself in secret, but He has not promised to do so; whereas He has promised to pardon them if we confess them to His priests. Since He is free to pardon or not to pardon, He has the right to establish a Sacrament through which alone He will pardon.

Q. 741. What must we do to receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily?

A. To receive the Sacrament of Penance worthily we must do five things:

1. We must examine our conscience.
2. We must have sorrow for our sins.
3. We must make a firm resolution never more to offend God.
4. We must confess our sins to the priest.
5. We must accept the penance which the priest gives us.

Q. 742. What should we pray for in preparing for confession?

A. In preparing for confession we should pray to the Holy Ghost to give us light to know our sins and to understand their guilt; for grace to detest them; for courage to confess them and for strength to keep our resolutions.

Q. 743. What faults do many commit in preparing for confession?

A. In preparing for confession many commit the faults:

1. Of giving too much time to the examination of conscience and little or none in exciting themselves to true sorrow for the sins discovered;
2. Of trying to recall every trifling circumstance, instead of thinking of the means by which they will avoid their sins for the future.

Q. 744. What, then, is the most im-

(Continued CATECHISM on page 11)

CHILDREN'S PAGE

(Continued CATECHISM from page 10)

portant part of the preparation for confession?

A. The most important part of the preparation for confession is sincere sorrow for the sins committed and the firm determination to avoid them for the future.

Q. 745. What is the chief reason that our confessions do not always amend our way of living?

A. The chief reason that our confessions do not always amend our way of living is our want of real earnest preparation for them and the fact that we have not truly convinced ourselves of the need of amendment. We often confess our sins more from habit, necessity or fear than from a real desire of receiving grace and of being restored to the friendship of God.

Q. 746. What faults are to be avoided in making our confession?

A. In making our confession we are to avoid:

1. Telling useless details, the sins of others, or the name of any person;
2. Confessing sins we are not sure of having committed; exaggerating our sins or their number; multiplying the number of times a day by the number of days to get the exact number of habitual sins;
3. Giving a vague answer, such as "sometimes," when asked how often; waiting after each sin to be asked for the next;
4. Hesitating over sins through pretended modesty and thus delaying the priests and others; telling the exact words in each when we have committed several sins of the same kind, cursing, for example; and, lastly, leaving the confessional before the priest gives us a sign to go.

Q. 747. Is it wrong to go to confession out of your turn against the will of others waiting with you?

A. It is wrong to go to confession out of our turn against the will of others wait-

ing with us, because:

1. It causes disorder, quarreling and scandalous conduct in the Church;
2. It is unjust, makes others angry and lessens their good dispositions for confession;
3. It annoys and distracts the priest by the confusion and disorder it creates.
4. It is an act of theft, a sin of stealing a place in line, of stealing the time others are delayed and that theft can not be repaid for one can not give back time to one from whom it has been stolen, and the sin of creation of an occasion of sin for others in that others may become angry.

It is better to wait than go to confession in an excited and disorderly manner.

Q. 748. What should a penitent do who knows he cannot perform the penance given?

A. A penitent who knows he cannot perform the penance given should ask the priest for one that he can perform. When we forget the penance given we must ask for it again, for we cannot fulfill our duty by giving ourselves a penance. The penance must be performed at the time and in the manner the confessor directs.

Q. 749. What is the examination of conscience?

A. The examination of conscience is an earnest effort to recall to mind all the sins we have committed since our last worthy confession.

Q. 750. When is our confession worthy?

A. Our confession is worthy when we have done all that is required for a good confession, and when, through the absolution, our sins are really forgiven.

Q. 751. How can we make a good examination of conscience?

A. We can make a good examination of conscience by calling to memory the commandments of God, the precepts of the Church, the seven capital sins, and

the particular duties of our state in life, to find out the sins we have committed.

Q. 752. What should we do before beginning the examination of conscience?

A. Before beginning the examination of conscience we should pray to God to give us light to know our sins and grace to detest them.

LESSON EIGHTEENTH: On Contrition

Q. 753. What is contrition, or sorrow for sin?

A. Contrition, or sorrow for sin, is a hatred of sin and a true grief of the soul for having offended God, with a firm purpose of sinning no more.

Q. 754. Give an example of how we should hate and avoid sin.

A. We should hate and avoid sin as one hates and avoids a poison that almost caused his death. We may not grieve over the death of our soul as we do over the death of a friend, and yet our sorrow may be true; because the sorrow for sin comes more from our reason than from our feelings.

Q. 755. What kind of sorrow should we have for our sins?

A. The sorrow we should have for our sins should be interior, supernatural, universal, and sovereign.

Q. 756. What do you mean by saying that our sorrow should be interior?

A. When I say that our sorrow should be interior, I mean that it should come from the heart, and not merely from the lips.

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SHOULD THOSE WHO RECEIVE FREEBIES FROM OR THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT BE ALLOWED TO VOTE FOR THOSE WHO DOLE OUT THE FREEBIES AND THE FUNDING THEREOF?

This really is an extremely viable moral question.

Ignore any effect on the impetus of those who accumulate wealth, to accumulate wealth, when that which is accumulated is taxed to such an extent the accumulation no longer is an attractive proposition. Ignore any effect this in turn has on reinvestment of wealth in a manner which sustains current employment and creates new employment opportunities.

And forget what often is called "fairness" but which actually is envy.

The basic moral question, rephrased, is: should one group of people, which did not earn or acquire large sums of money but had the opportunity to earn large sums of money and chose not to so do, be allowed to use the police powers of the government to take money away from those who have worked very hard to and have earned money, so that the money can be used by the people who did not earn it? That is theft, is it not?

There is a moral obligation of all citizens of a country, to contribute to the well being of that country, and to support the government of that country in the moral pursuits of that government. But when government officials use taxation as a means of obtaining wealth so the government can give that wealth to those who made life choices which precluded earning of wealth, thereby purchasing the votes of the donees, then that particular government activity is immoral.

There are numerous instances and situations where individuals and groups intrinsically lack the ability to care for

themselves through congenital conditions, mishap, economic adversity, illness, government failure (e.g.: a school system which does not educate), and numerous other factors and conditions. These are proper subjects of governmental assistance.

But those who have the ability to earn a living do not have the right to have that living obtained from others through governmental action against those who actually do earn a living.

When those who do have the physical and mental ability and the opportunity to take care of themselves are given the opportunity to elect officials who will immorally use government power (not authority, but power) to take money from those who have righteously earned it so some of it can be redistributed to those who elected the officials, is this not a near occasion of sin for the electorate?

Does not such opportunity feed on and enhance envy, a sin? Does it not discourage self reliance and encourage a combination of sloth and theft - both of which are sins? It is important to remember to exclude those in undesired necessitous circumstances from this critique. But does not such opportunity encourage a false assessment of one's situation and its causes, such as to absolve one's self for responsibility - a form of lie or untruth, a sin?

Even if one does not vote for such a candidate, when such officials are elected and begin to dole out the fruits of their practices, will any of the citizenry refuse to participate because to participate is to partake of that which has been immorally obtained?

At its most basic level, such elections and practices are a temptation for those who desire a better life, to obtain that better life through taking the efforts of others without utilizing their own efforts - all the while masking the taking as the actions of another, the government.

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(Continued GRATITUDE from page 1)

was also in need of assistance. But if you are on crutches, your gratitude would be even greater.

In these situations we know how to express our gratitude. We say, "Thank you." We also may be reminded to assist others simply because someone has assisted us. If this happens, the good example expressed in the good deed of opening the door has been learned, extended into action, passed on, and serves as a good example to someone else - perhaps inducing them to also follow that good example.

An example of the opposite extreme is, when someone saves your life. If someone saves your life without their becoming endangered or suffering any adverse effect, you still will be extremely grateful. But if that person knowingly places their self in danger, or knowingly suffers an adverse effect, then your gratitude will be greater, and will include wonderment. You will wish to express your gratitude in some manner which is greater than a simple, "Thank you." But a simple, "Thank you," may be the only means of expressing your gratitude.

But even if a simple "Thank you" is the extent to which we can express our gratitude, if the person who saved our life died in the process, and knew they would die in the process, and saved our life anyway, we would at least be curious to know something about such a person.

When we think of what God has done for us, we may find it difficult to express our appreciation. It may overwhelm us. Perhaps some of the nine lepers were so overwhelmed with emotion that they were bewildered, and did not know how to express their thanks and appreciation. It is difficult to think that they were not appreciative and thankful for being cured. But perhaps they were. Perhaps they were so hard of heart that they looked on their cures with no emotion. Perhaps their leprosy had

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“engine power” to overcome the negative buoyancy just as engine power and aerodynamics overcome gravity? God made

COMMENTS ON SOME INDICATORS OF OUR TIMES

The Louisiana Democrat Party is prejudiced against Roman Catholics as shown by the last and current Louisiana Governor elections. This is a very important fact for Orthodox and should be important to every person who values their religion without regard to their religion. The prejudice against Roman Catholics was explicitly expressed in television advertisements against Republican governor candidate "Bobby" Jindal, a Roman Catholic. The advertisements attacked Mr. Jindal's Catholicism, and even attributed Mr. Jindal, remarks actually made by Calvin. The advertisements are only being run in Northern and Central Louisiana, and not run in the Southern and New Orleans areas which are heavily Roman Catholic. **The Louisiana Democrat Party also is racist.** In the runoff election for governor of Louisiana four years ago between Mr. Jindal and present governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, in the last weeks of the election campaign, Mrs. Blanco was asked to comment on Mr. Jindal. She responded it was nice to see persons of color running for state wide positions. Jindal, who is of Indian (as in India, the subcontinent) descent, is of a darker complexion than most Caucasian. The comment by Blanco could easily be construed as a signal to any white with any prejudice against non-whites, that Mr. Jindal is a Negro. In the current election the Louisiana Democrat Party consistently refers to Mr. Jindal as Piyush Jindal, "Piyush" being his given first name. In Louisiana politics it is customary to refer to a politician by his "nickname", but in Mr. Jindal' case the Democrat Party has chosen to attempt to make Mr. Jindal seem to be a Moslem - even though is one part of Louisiana it is campaigning against him decrying his Roman Catholicism. Also, in the last election, Blanco's advertisements stated Mr. Jindal would dismiss health care workers by the hundreds. But when Blanco was sworn

in, one of the first things she did was to dismiss hundreds of such workers.

SOMETHING ABOUT PAPER THAT YOU WILL NOT NOTICE unless you regularly purchase office or printing supplies. Recycled paper is promoted while non-recycled paper is not. **Recycled paper cost appreciably more than "fresh" paper.** When "fresh" paper on the store shelf runs out, even though there is much more in the store room, it is not replenished until the recycled paper of the same weight and size is gone from the shelf. Is this dictatorship by the environmentalists?

Wal-Mart vitamins and shirts: Ever wonder if the vitamins you purchase at Wal-Mart are made from ingredients obtained from China? If they are, were those ingredients manufactured by the same manufacturers who made the defective pet food, tires, sea food and fish, and other products which have recently been found to be defective? But then, it really is nice to be able to purchase relatively decent clothing at affordable prices.

Immigration is a form of people who are not family or not regular household members, living in your house: If you have invited someone to live in your house temporarily or permanently you will of necessity impose certain obligations and restrictions upon their activities while in your house and even while they are off your property. You will so do to ensure stability and peace within your walls. So too must it be with immigrants. An illegal immigrant correlates to neighbors coming uninvited into your home to live. Even if they do the housekeeping and maintenance, and make improvements, they do not have the right to live uninvited in your house. In so doing they have stolen your property, or at least a part of it while impinging on the whole. Since the uninvited and illegal squatters have violated your property rights, can you trust they will not violate even ore of your rights, even to the

extent of taking your life? No, you can not. If your neighbor's house is damaged they have the moral right to expect shelter assistance from someone but those who have the room to giver shelter also have the right to decline rendering such assistance. Such declination may be immoral, but it also may be a totally moral response, depending on the circumstances of the one declining and that one's reasons for declining. Therefore, when the leader of one country decries strict application of immigration laws by another country, the one complaining has no standing to complain. He is but attempting to impose his will on another without the right so to do. We do have the moral obligation to assist others and this does include those who wish to enter our country to economically better themselves. But we also have the right to regulate such immigration, the moral obligation to assess the effects such immigration will have on our own citizens, and the moral obligation to do what is morally right without regard as to what makes us feel good. Remember, what makes us feel good is not always morally proper or morally correct. Those who hold the belief that allowing illegal immigrants into our country will only have marginal negative effect have placed themselves in the position of deciding they have the right to impose a negative effect on fellow citizens so that they can feel good about assisting criminals to attain economic benefit at the economic cost of others. They do not have the moral right so to do.

Racists want members of their own race to be able to vote in more than one state, more than one city: Tens of thousands of people remain dislocated from New Orleans by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Approximately 19,000, of these have registered to vote in other states and therefore are being removed from the voter rolls in Louisiana. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund has filed federal suit against Louisiana in an attempt to stop these individuals from being removed from the Louisiana voter rolls, claiming

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Louisiana is acting in a racially discriminatory manner. In actuality the NAACP Legal Defense Fund is acting in a racially discriminatory manner, and immorally, because it seeks to allow Negroes to vote in more than one state, in more than one city, thus enabling these Negroes to vote for President more than once, to "stack the deck" in congressional elections and in state elections, giving them an advantage over those who are not Negroes and giving rights to Negroes not possessed by non-Negroes. Suppression of individuals and the rights of individuals or groups because of the race of the individuals or groups is immoral. Granting of rights or privileges because of race also is immoral, and equally abhorrent.

GAMBIT WEEKLY, the darling publication of the pseudo-sophisticated of New Orleans: In its August 28, 2007, Vol 28, No. 35 issue, shows the true substance of what passes for and perhaps is sophistication - prurient emptiness. The front page is a picture or sketch of a bikini clad torso - roughly shoulders to crotch - breasts hanging out of the bikini top, thumb on left hand pulling down the bikini bottom. The back page is an advertisement for clothing, the model an expressionless and apparently young teenage blond girl wearing a man's undershirt, no bra, and much too tight corduroy shorts. That establishes what is required to attract the sophisticated reader. Contents are a spattering of rather liberal opinion columns which pass for news articles (REUNION makes no claim to being a newspaper or a journal - its purpose is clearly stated in the banner and in the publication notice), and hundreds of advertisements most of which appeal to those who wish to be thought of as sophisticated and depict individuals in privileged settings - unless they individuals depicted are women who are generally depicted as having fabulous figures, various body parts falling out of their clothing, or covered with clothing which leaves nothing to the imagination. There are

endless lists of places to go and things to do and to see, which must be a handy means of advertising without seeming to advertise, or of seeking advertisement. There are also a few "normal" advertisements. Total 120 pages. Very little if any substance. Occasionally Gambit will publish a very timely and appropriate sketch or photo-composite commentary (often satirical) on current events. But most issues seem to be similar to this issue - very shallow and materialistic.

Journalistic illogic: Times-Picayune issue July 23, 2007, page B-1, picture caption states "The abandoned apartment building at 3020 Hessemer Ave. is in the middle of total renovation." Question: If it is abandoned, who is renovating it? Seems like it would be kind of risky to renovate an apartment complex one does not own - if it has been abandoned obviously the owner is not renovating it. Perhaps it is being renovated (from hurricane damage) by the owner and therefore is not abandoned.

While we are at it, HEALTHY: If you eat healthy food hopefully you restrict your consumption to plant food. Though sashimi (often mistakenly referred to as sushi - sushi merely means rice; sashimi is raw fish) may be an exception, most humans seem to have an aversion to their food wiggling down their gullet. To be healthy the thing must be alive. Food usually is dead, and therefore is not healthy. Food may be healthful, meaning it contributes to the good health of the consumer and may even assist the consumer in being or becoming healthy. But if your rib-eye or hamburger is healthy, it must be able to make a "moo" sound. If the turkey breast you are consuming is healthy, you will be picking feathers from between your teeth and gagging on turkey blood. Even savages rarely eat healthy food - they usually kill their food and cook it before eating. Lions, tigers, some bears, sharks, and hunting animals often eat healthy food, but usually during the process of eating their food dies and at

that instant is not longer healthy since it is dead. But that food may be healthful. Humans may find healthy food not be be very healthful due to parasites and other organisms which remain alive because the main course was not killed, prepared, and cooked.

Jumbo squid pray on California catch, is what the headline stated. Nice to know the squid are converting and becoming evangelicals. Do the squid use one or more of their eight arms for "laying on of hands" or do they restrict this practice to their two tentacles? Nice to know that members of the Kingdom Animalia, Phylum Mollusca, Class Cephalopoda, Order Teuthoidea, Families Loliginidae, Sepiolidae, and Architeuthidae have had a change of heart. Perhaps they could evangelize our politicians - while the politicians are healthy?.

Amnesty International, founded by a Roman Catholic, and once a bastion of pro-life action and thought, has adopted a pro-abortion position. It had to adopt because it killed its own offspring.

The NEA (teacher's union / association) is attempting to put itself out of business through two of its main policies. One policy is its support of abortion. The math is simple: kill twenty-five unborn children and the schools can close off one school room. Do this a few times and a school system can get rid of a teacher. Do it a few more times and an entire school can be closed and its teachers dismissed. The other policy is graduating everyone whether or not the graduates have learned anything, combined with use of substandard teaching practices and substandard text books so that the slow learners will not be unduly challenged and will not feel inferior to those students with average and above average learning abilities and desires. This will create a large population which does not value education, and which will be inclined to not demand their offspring (those which are not aborted) attend school or if they do attend, not demand that they learn, thus decreasing the demand for schools and for teachers.

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(Continued GRATITUDE from page 12)

calloused their emotions. But if their emotions were calloused, why did they ask Christ for mercy and to be cured? Or, perhaps they were following both the instructions Jesus had given them, and the Law given to Moses by God, and went directly to the priests to have their cure examined and confirmed.

The one who did return and thank Jesus was a Samaritan, and as such, he did not completely follow the Law of Moses. Perhaps his laxness in following the Law of Moses induced him to return and thank Jesus before proceeding back to the priests to have his cure examined and confirmed.

But we never hear of the other nine lepers returning to thank Jesus. While we often wonder why the nine lepers did not thank Jesus, do we ever think about how we thank God, and especially Jesus, for being created, for being human, for being made in the image and likeness of God, for having redemption placed in our hands, for having the door to salvation opened to us, for having the means to spiritual life and spiritual rebirth made available to us? Do we thank God?

Do we try to learn a little more about God? Do we try to become a little more like Jesus?

As when someone opens the door for us, do we open the door to Christ for someone else in some manner? Perhaps by trying to become a living good example?

At one time in the not too far distant past, actually just twenty years ago, we probably could accurately say that the majority of people would do these things. But today it seems we have more people who are like the nine lepers than we do have people who are like the Samaritan.

The Samaritans were despised by the Jews because the Samaritans keep the Law of Moses imperfectly and because they were not Jews or pure blood Jews.

But when we are introduced to Samaritans by Jesus, in every instance their imperfect following of the Law of Moses results in perfect following the Spirit of the Two Great Commandments.

Our gratitude to God for all of the wonderful things he has done for us must come from our hearts, from our souls, from our intellect fed from our emotions.

If we but think about the goodness of God, we can easily become more inclined to follow His lead, to do as He has done, and to become more holy in the process, simply because it seems to be what to do. Simply because we are following the Spirit which is the foundation of the law.

Ref: Gal. 3:16-22; Luke 17:11-19

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some physical malady or adverse situation. But the mercy will be there non-the-less.

God really wants us to accept His help. There is not one of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity Who ever is unavailable or unwilling to assist us. Each of Them being God Individually, and God The Blessed Trinity, constantly offers us assistance in every situation, in every instance of our individual and collective lives. This is true not just for difficult situations, but in all situations. Whether you are taking a nap, or attempting to survive an aeroplane crash, God is there offering you exactly what you need. And we accept much of what God offers as though it were instinctive on our part. In many situations we actually accept God's offer of help without realizing He has made the offer, and without realizing we have accepted the offer.

When we think of God helping us, we often think of situations similar to that of the ten lepers. Some drastic situation, or some situation which at the time seems drastic.

But we only occasionally think of the most important situation, and of the most important help God both offers and gives to us.

One of God's gifts designed to help us is His law. The Ten Commandments, and the Two Great Commandments, apply to every human being. The Law of Moses, which God gave to Moses for the Jews, is a combination of moral law, and legal and social principles, all based in the Commandments. They were designed not only to make every day living a workable situation, but also are designed to lead us on the path which ends in eternal salvation.

Jesus Christ, the God Man, added to these instructions by living the type of life He wishes us to live, or at least to emulate. He taught us the Beatitudes, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of

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Mercy, and helped us to comprehend the reality that following the spirit of the law is more important than strict adherence to the letter of the law if one is following the letter of the law for its own sake. For instance, the letter of the law states: "Thou shalt not kill." But if you beat a defenseless innocent child almost to death without killing the child, then you have followed the letter of the law, but not the spirit, and you have a severe moral problem.

If we are having trouble sleeping, do we ask God to help us sleep? It is not too trivial, for nothing is too trivial. So ask God to help you sleep if you are having problems sleeping, but also thank Him for having helped you all through the day, and ask Him to help you resolve any moral problems which may be part of the reason you are having problems getting to sleep.

If you are in an aeroplane which is about to crash, asking God to help you obviously is not trivial. But while you are asking Him to help you, ask Him to help you live and be whole if it is His will, and do not bargain with Him. Do not say, "If you get me through this I promise I will . . . do whatever." But do ask Him that if you survive, that He will more strongly assist you in becoming what He wants you to be, and assist you in accepting His help in becoming what He wants you to be.

Ask His forgiveness for all the transgressions you can remember and all those you can not remember.

And ask Him to help all those in the aeroplane and on the ground and anywhere else, who may be adversely effected by the aeroplane crashing. Ask that those who are about to die will accept the grace He is offering them which will induce them to ask His forgiveness in a manner which is perfect contrition.

It is not likely that you will often have the opportunity or need to ask God to help you get to sleep, or to save you in

an aeroplane crash.

But there are numerous daily situations in between these extremes where you do have need of God's assistance to establish and maintain a good and beneficial status, both materially and morally. And all the people you know, and all the people you do not know, have that same need.

So ask God for this for yourself, and for everyone else, and for everyone who ever was, and everyone who ever will be. For a prayer so extensive to be answered you will need help. A great amount of help. Who should you turn to for this help? Why, God Himself.

If you pray for such extensive mercy during the Divine Liturgy, and join your prayers with those of the Divine Liturgy, and do this often, you will have a great positive effect even though you may not be able to perceive it.

But at the very least, every day pray to God that He will more strongly assist you and all those about whom you care, and think about those for whom you care while you are praying.

You only need a few minutes every day and it will be time well spent.

Ref: Gal. 3:16-22; Luke 17:11-19

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(Continued **LOSS OF FRIEND** from page 1)

the spirit remains pure and is everlasting.

Which burden is more difficult to bear: loss of a thing, or loss of a true friend. Compare misplacing a thing to having a true friend move far away making it impossible to communicate with the friend. Which loss is greater? Which loss effects you more severely? Compare the loss of all of your worldly possessions and wealth, with the permanent loss of your most dear friend, perhaps your spouse. Which loss is greater; which loss hurts the most?

Many people prefer their material wealth and desire to increase that material wealth, much more than they desire the personal relationship of friendship. When they lose even a small measure of their material wealth, their "things", they are much more despondent than when they lose the person they consider their best friend. The loss of a penny's worth of goods can be for some people more tragic than the loss of all of their friends and family.

They do not have even one person whom they value more than their material things.

This is a horrible misplacement of value which may well have eternally tragic consequences.

While prudence dictates one be reasonably concerned regarding maintaining their material possessions, particularly the necessities of life, eternal prudence dictates one never value the material over the spiritual. Friendship, true friendship, is a spiritual relationship, a spiritual thing, a matter of spiritual life. It is one of the many indicators of how strongly one values the spiritual. It is quite possible that on first thought a person can think they have no real, true, strong friends; that a person can think they only have acquaintances. But that person can still value true friendship, even though they

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can not name one real, true, friend - unless they think and realize their best friend, their most true, faithful, and devoted friend, is God. Which means they have three such friends: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are our perfect friends, for their friendship is perfect.

Our other most devoted and true friends can from time to time hurt us. Usually this happens through mistakes, either theirs or ours. And we and they feel terrible when this happens. Sometimes neither we nor our friends know how to repair the damage. Often neither seems to know what the problem is, or why there is a problem. Such situations are best handled by ignoring the breach, by attempting to maintain the friendship while internally exploring the situation which seems to have concurred with the breach in an attempt to avoid repeating what ever error caused the breach in the first place.

But our perfect friends, the three persons of the Blessed Trinity, never hurt us. Whenever there is a breach in our friendship with God, we are always the cause of that breach.

In the beauty of the Divine friendship there is always the Divine desire that we reestablish that friendship; a continuing openness to us. We really need but say, "Hi God," (it behoves us to so do somewhat shyly, and ashamedly, for we are the one who displaced the friendship, but we can so do with confidence as well). When we say, "Hi Lord," God is there ready to hug us with friendship.

In the friendship which exists between each of us and God, there is never the need for God to seek forgiveness; but there often is the need for us to seek forgiveness, which is readily given sacramentally. But the need to seek forgiveness only arises when we sin.

In our human to human friendships, there may seem to be the need to seek forgiveness one from the other, from

time to time. But forgiveness only needs to be sought when it is forgiveness for sin. Most of the time one friend does not sin against another, but merely has made a mistake which adversely effects the friend. Amends can often be made with a simple, caring, expression, which expresses the true internal feelings - but then, amends really do not need to be made between true friends. Amends seem to simply exist of the friendship, because the friendship is spiritually created.

The friendship of God is such that Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be tortured and killed so that we could attain salvation. It is such that God the Father not only allowed, but actually sent His only begotten Son to perform this act of Love. And it continues with the continual presence of God the Holy Spirit as our guide, protector, strength, and provider of all that we need, until the end of ages.

Those who value the spiritual world all have friends who are gone, and who we would bring back, as it were, from the dead, if we could. And we have friends for whom we would risk or give our life if we had the realization that we had to make a decision which would place our life in jeopardy for their benefit. There is a peace based in love in this contemplation, a peace which is never experienced by those who value the material over the spiritual.

Ref: Gal. 5:25-26; 6:1-10; Luke 7:11-16



+ *Paul, S.S.B.*

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In some instances of today the sorrow is the same.

But in many of the murders of today it is not.

It is anguish that the drug dealer who supplied her with some of her worldly means will no longer be there to supply her with her luxuries.

The infamous words, "My boy was a good boy. They didn't have to kill him," constantly scream their way into our ears when the "good boy" was killed while murdering someone, robbing someone, or inflicting some other evil upon another of God's children.

Why was he robbing, dealing drugs, murdering? Some times a parent can teach nothing but goodness by their own thoughts, actions, and words, and still their child will become evil. But when a child is born out of wedlock to a mother who taught him how to use the system, government and government programs, social programs, how to use and abuse others, it should not surprise the mother if her son is killed as the result of his crimes.

When a mother has sexual relations with any one who "comes along", or enters into unmarried relations with several men in succession, or at the same time, she does not teach her children family stability and responsibility. She teaches her children that she and they are nothing more than animals hunting in the concrete jungle. And children learn the lessons their parents teach; they learn them very well.

As she anguishes over the loss of her source of drugs and ready money, perhaps somewhere in her mind is the bud, the beginning of the concept, that she did not teach her son about God. Perhaps she has a glimmer of thought that says: you did not teach him to be good; you taught him to be bad; you taught him to abuse society, family, and ac-

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quaintances - one can not say friends for neither she nor her dead son has any friends.

Perhaps she has the thought her son is going to hell, and she will follow. Perhaps. Hopefully, she has such a thought. If she does, perhaps, just perhaps, she will make an attempt to avoid hell. But that would require a complete change of life style.

Some of these mothers will deny this applies to them. After all, they go to church regularly. Why do they go to church, and what do they do when they are at church? Do they go to church to show off their finery, to make drug contacts, to get a free meal or other hand-out, or find another man to replace the one that just escaped from them? Do they actually worship God, or do they mainly just try to get something from God?

It is impossible to force anyone to follow the Godly path. It must be a choice. But it is difficult to present that path as a choice when for the past fifty years women have been watching daytime soap operas which present a life style of infidelity, grasping for material things, betrayal of relationships, friendships, and obligations, partially for the sake of personal gain, and partially as a life style. It is difficult to present spirituality as the proper focus of life when daytime television game shows and women's talk shows constantly present every material product which can be conceived as being the only desirable things; as being the goals which will solve all problems. And current afternoon and evening television programs are no better.

Television is only part of the problem. But it has taught current mothers and their mothers to be materialistic to an extent beyond what they would have been without television. This materialism they have passed on to their children as they neglect the religious education of their children. After all, when a child is born out of wedlock, what value

does wedlock have for the mother? What value does it have for the child, especially when the child has sibling after sibling born out of wedlock with different fathers? If the basic system established by God for human reproduction, education, protection, and rearing of children has been discarded by the mother, everything else established by God is held to be of no value as well.

The Church and individuals who value God's morality must oppose private and public systems which assist and encourage people to lead immoral lives. We must assist those who can not assist themselves, but only to the extent necessary, and where possible, such assistance must be tied to and conditioned on extensive effort on the part of those who receive the assistance.

And yes, morality must be a requisite aspect of that assistance. Follow this line of thought: No morality, no assistance. No assistance, crime increases. Criminals are arrested, put in jail, and made to work in jail otherwise they do not eat and if they do not eat they do die, and crime decreases one way or the other. Hard. Yes. But if you can work and do not work in the real world you starve to death, and the real world was designed by God.

Only as we require mothers to live more moral lives, and to teach their children morality, and require their children to lead moral lives, only then will we slowly hear, less and less often, "My boy was a good boy." Perhaps we will hear, "My boy *is* a good boy, thank God."

Ref: Gal. 5:25-26; 6:1-10; Luke 7:11-16

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GOD'S GRACE CAN BE VOID

We possess our abilities by the Grace of God, which is different from possessing God's Grace.

We really do not want God's Grace in us to be void.

Before being Baptized we are deaf and dumb. We can neither sense *spiritual* good nor can we produce spiritual good. We can sense *natural* good and we can produce natural good, which is temporary because it applies to that which is temporary for it applies to this world. It may lead us to intellectually approach acknowledgment of the spiritual world, but it will be an acknowledgment of an incorrect spiritual world - one which does not exist - because our senses are not attuned to the real spiritual world and our intellect is not schooled in the true spiritual world.

Without God's Grace we are spiritually deaf and dumb. God's Grace is usually first received in Baptism although in a few rare occasions, mainly in the early days of the Church, it has been received through reception of the Holy Spirit prior to Baptism. And we must also remember that the inspiration to learn of Christ and to study The Way taught by Christ, as well as the inspiration to become a member of the True Church and to be Baptized, are under the inspirational Grace of the Holy Spirit. It is with God's Grace that our spiritual senses are activated and we can produce spiritual good.

What if the man who was deaf and dumb, instead of praising God when he was cured, had begun telling dirty stories, or told lies about people he knew - perhaps to gain something, or to hurt them, or just because he desired so to do -, or started cursing those who had treated him shabbily when he could neither speak nor hear?

Then he would have abused God's gift,

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and while he could hear and speak, the gifts of speech and of hearing would have been void for while he could exercise the gifts, he would not have been exercising them properly.

This is an example of a very important concept, that concept being: **We possess our abilities by the Grace of God, which is different from possessing God's Grace.**

In the Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost there is a prayer: *pour forth Thy mercy upon us, to take away from us those things which our conscience feareth, and to add that which our prayer presumeth not to ask.*

The prayer asks that God remove spiritual dangers from us: from our inclinations, and from our presence. It also asks that what ever is not just necessary for our salvation, but that all things which will assist in our salvation in any manner, be added to to our prayers for help in attaining eternal salvation, especially those things for which we have made no request.

But if we do not act on that help from God, then that help is void in us.

Ref: 1 Cor. 15:1-10; Mark 7:31-37

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HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA; AND GOOD AND EVIL

On the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Forerunner (the Baptist), we mark the anniversary of hurricane Katrina, and a few days later the anniversary of hurricane Rita.

All of those who have been effected by these hurricanes have been given a most wonderful gift from God: the gift of life. The gift was given before the hurricanes struck, and to that gift God added the gift of the virtue of Faith. Those who lived through the storms and those who died as a result of the storms accepted the gift of life, but not all of them had accepted the gift of Faith. And some of those who survived lost the gift of Faith by abandoning it because the storms traumatized them.

For those who lost the gift of Faith, this abandonment is terrible, for God had opened their ears so they could spiritually hear, opened their mouths so they spiritually speak, and opened their eyes so they could spiritually see. Now they can still spiritually see and hear, but they chose not to so do, and refuse to open their mouths in prayer and praise of God.

There are others who abandoned the gift of Faith long before the hurricanes struck, and others who rejected it long before the storms.

Many of those who abandoned Faith seem to be acquiring what ever they can because they feel they can not rely on God. But God desires these people to look at Job, who was very holy and suffered terribly, losing every worldly thing, but not his Faith, and not his Hope, and not his Charity. His Faith was in God, his Hope in the eternal salvation promised by God to those who follow Him, and his Charity was true love of God which embraced all of God's creation.

God desires they look at Saint John the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ, and

cousin to Jesus Christ who is God. Saint John was the son of a Priest, and as such could have lived a life of luxury. But he accepted the spiritual world, not to the abandonment of this world, but to the fulfillment of this temporary world in the fullness of the permanent spiritual world of God. He knew his beheading was simply the door opening to eternal happiness. God's grace was not void in him. Rather, it bore full fruit even in this life, for his senses were opened to the good spiritual world and he spoke, acted, and thought in accordance with God's desires.

If those who have abandoned Faith will grasp hold of it again, they will find that while the material losses they have suffered, and the uncertainties of this world are troublesome, still, the spiritual world of Good remains. They will find they can continue to realistically Hope in a good eternal reward for following Christ. And they will discover this fantastic Divine Love, Charity, will flood over them from God, in this world and in the next world.

Some people who did not have Faith actually acquired it as a result of the hurricanes.

But for the most part, it seems that those who did not have Faith before the storms, continue to not have Faith after the storms.

Some of these people quietly go about their lives as much as possible just as they did before the hurricanes.

But others of these continue to go about grasping everything they can, just as they did before the storm. They rob people by shoddy construction work, steal from the public coffers especially stealing the government and private assistance which has and continues to be made available to the victims of the storms. Racist politicians and people who have become rich by using racial hatred and bigotry continue to do what they have done in the past.

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All of this is very puzzling because if anything should have been learned as a result of the hurricanes, it is that this world does not last; that no creature is reliable; that only God is reliable. People are creatures and creatures make mistakes. Some people have no regard for others and do what ever they want to do without considering the bad effects their actions have on others. And some people do things because what they do will have a bad effect on someone.

It is understandable that people make mistakes.

But it is impossible to comprehend people doing what ever they want to do without regard to the evil their actions inflict on others. Not after everyone has seen the horrible effects shoddy workmanship on the levees, and careless treatment of the swamps and marshes, have had on hundreds of thousands of people.

And regarding those who continue to do evil upon the public, it is as though they do it because of the evil they can inflict upon the public.

If those who have abandoned their Faith will just realize that many of the evils which have befallen them have occurred because evil people caused them to happen, or caused the effects to be much more severe, perhaps they will return to the true Faith.

And if the populace is ever to have honest politicians, the public must accept the fact that there are many people who are evil because they wish to be evil. That evil people do evil, produce evil, live in and for evil, and that evil harms people.

Evil does not have to look ugly. It can appear to be very beautiful, handsome, be delightful in humor and the social graces, and even give to charities and help other people. But it does these things for evil purposes. A good example of this is The Gates Foundation, to which Warren Buffet is to give more

than \$44 billion. Since 1998 the Gates Foundation has given over \$36 million to the Planned Parenthood abortion mills, and for the purpose of persuading teenagers to have abortions, to lobby the United Nations for pro abortion programs, to establish abortion centers in developing nations, South America, and Eastern Europe, as well as the USA and Canada (Ref: *Choose Life July/Aug 2006*). Through his foundation Bill Gates has also given much smaller amounts to assist the public school systems in the area afflicted by the hurricanes.

Evil never sleeps. It always is seeking new ways to do evil, while improving its old ways of doing evil. Those of good will must not just be on the look out for evil, not just defend against evil, but must attack evil; for the only successful defense is to attack.

If you have two people on your side and the enemy is ten thousand strong, if you attempt to secure a defensive position, you will be over run. But if you attack and attack very carefully, with a studied plan, you can wear away and eventually defeat your opponent. Evil has learned this lesson, and is using it in the terrorist attacks against the free world. If the free world has no moral backbone; if it is not willing to say, "Evil stops here and must be pushed back," and then do it, then there is not sufficient moral backbone to defeat that evil.

It is tiring to be constantly at war, such as the war on terrorism. It is just as tiring to be constantly at war against the other forms of evil such as corruption in government, evil in drug use and drug dealers, and protecting one's self against those who would take advantage of others.

But when we comprehend what is the goal we seek, that it is eternal happiness with God in heaven, we can understand that it is worth a life time of battle.

Ref: 1 Cor. 15:1-10; Mark 7:31-37

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MATERIALISM'S DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE ON THE FAMILY

"And the multitude feared . . . seeing that God had given such power to men."

The focus of the people who witnessed the miraculous cure was on the power Our Saviour exhibited in curing someone who was so ill. Their focus was not on that power being proof of His having forgiven the sins of that same man.

This is an example of the most overt form of the oldest conflict, that between Good which is of God alone, and evil, which is the only product of those who oppose God. This conflict takes its most common form in the opposition between those who focus on pursuit of the spiritual and moral life which God espouses, and those who focus on pursuit of material things and the practice of materialism, which always is in opposition to God.

One of the most horrible expressions of materialism is in the undesirable forms of relationships which often exist between older and younger adult relatives: between parents and their adult children and adult grandchildren; between aunts and uncles and their adult nephews and nieces.

Some adult children look upon their living adult ancestors as persons who are to be cherished, and even protected and assisted if necessary, always with love and affection. These adult children have rejected materialism, at least as regards their parents and grandparents.

Other adult children perceive their parents and grandparents as a treasury from which material benefits are to be obtained. Some others perceive them as a burden. And some others perceive them as an obstacle. And some others perceive them as oppressors.

From time to time all of these perceptions may exist and may be valid and

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accurate, but one of them will be the main and most consistent perception. One of them will be the main attitude.

The Godlike attitude is that our living adult ancestors are persons who are to be cherished, and as necessary, protected and assisted, always with love and affection. Even if the parents and grandparents are and always have been oppressors, they should be so cherished, even while acknowledging and taking appropriate measures to protect one's self from their oppression.

But those who perceive their living ancestors only as a treasury from which material benefits are to be obtained, who do not also cherish them in a Godlike manner; these individuals have bypassed a spiritual life in Christ Jesus, and have embraced the materialism which leads to eternal damnation.

As always, prayer is the key which unlocks the door to this self-imposed prison.

Do you have a consistent time during the course of each day during which you always pray? If you do not, then establish such a time. If you are one of the ancestors who should have the expectation of being cherish, but are not, and especially if you are cherished, establish this time of prayer. If possible, establish it during a time when your descendants are present. If you are an adult child who is the care-giver for your parents or grandparents, you should also establish this prayer time, especially if the ancestor for whom you give care is obnoxious or otherwise difficult.

Make the prayer time at a convenient time and pray in a convenient place that is common to the household. Be consistent with the time and place, so that it becomes an established matter in your mind and in the minds of the members of the household. Pray in a manner which does not interfere with others in the household, but which does allow them to join in with you should they desire. Keep it short, simple, and without

histrionics - do not emulate the television and radio Protestant preachers who pace about and say J_E_E_S_S_S_U_S_S, or who yell and scream while jumping up and down like chimpanzees in a zoo.

Ideal prayers are The Rule Of The Mother Of God, The Rosary, The Chapel Of Divine Mercy, and other, similar, easy to learn, ritual or liturgical prayers, which can be prayed from memory.

It is always best to begin and end each day with prayer, but these prayers are often personal prayers, such as a morning offering prayer which offers the entire day to God with intentions for the one praying and that person's family and friends. Prayers before sleep often also are the private type of prayer, in sorrow for one's sins during that day, seeking help to overcome those sins, and for one's self, family, and friends.

If it is possible, one of the best times for prayer is at 3:00 O'Clock PM, which is when Christ died. If your favorite game show, soap opera, or celebrity show, comes on TV at that time, all the better - stop watching the TV and pray instead. It will be of greater benefit. But if there is someone in the household whom you wish to induce to pray with you, who watches TV at that time, them sit there with them and pray quietly, or find another time.

In whatever the situation you find yourself, remember to assess the situation and the persons involved in that situation. Determine the positive factors and negative factors. Assess what will help to strengthen the positive factors only by using Godlike means; and enjoy the contemplation of those positive factors and those means while you are implementing those means. Assess what will modify the undesirable factors into desirable ones, or remove them or minimize their negative effect if modification does not seem possible, again only by using Godlike means; but do not dwell on the wrongs committed against you or by you to any extent greater than is necessary for modification or removal

of them; and implement those Godlike means.

And always remember to pray, and to actually pray.

Ref: 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Mat. 9:1-8

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INTERCESSORY PRAYER

There are many who call themselves Christians, who proclaim they are like the official who asked Our Saviour to heal his son; that they pray directly to God and have no need to pray to the Saints or to the Ever Virgin Mother Mary.

These same people have organized prayer lines and prayer committees. A person can contact a member of the prayer committee and that member and other members will pray with the person requesting the prayers.

But none of these people will pray to the Saints, to the Virgin Mary, or to the Angels who serve God. When they refuse to pray to the Virgin Mary, and the Saints, and the Angels, because they pray directly to God, they show their lack of Faith, because Faith includes knowledge and comprehension, and these people surely lack knowledge and comprehension.

Every prayer to the Ever Virgin Mary, and to the Saints, and to the Angels, is a combination prayer; that they will use the authority given to them by God to assist the one praying, and that they will join in praying to God for the intentions of the one praying.

This is known as intercessory prayer.

In refusing to engage in intercessory prayer, these foolish people are refusing the services of millions of Saints and Angels who are already in heaven; who already have a special relationship with God; who have become united with God. Instead, these people rely exclusively on the assistance of people who may go to hell.

They are foolish.

When you pray, be wise: pray to God; pray to each person of the Blessed Trinity; and pray to the Saints and Angels, and especially the Ever Virgin Mother Mary, requesting their assistance in all manners within their powers, authori-

ties, and abilities.

Jesus said: where two or more of you are gathered in My Name, there also am I. He also said, whatsoever you ask the Father in My Name, it will be granted unto you.

It is therefore obvious that the most potent form of prayer is communal prayer.

If you are alone, who do you have to pray with you?

Your Guardian Angel is always with you. All the Heavenly Angels are aware of you and what your are doing. And all the Saints in Heaven are also aware of you and what you are doing.

Those who ignore the Mother of God, the Angels, and the Saints, because they can pray directly to God, are stubborn and ignorant. The Devil hopes they will never change.

In many ways life is a constant battle against evil, against the Devil. Who do you wish to have with you on the battlefield: a bunch of raw recruits, or an army of veterans?

Ref: Eph. 5:15-21; John 4:46-53

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OBTAINING FAITH

God has not revealed to us the how and the why of His presenting the gift of Faith to us. We know He does not withhold it from anyone. We know that in not withholding it from anyone, He presents it to everyone, in some form or another. We know that presentation is correlated with each person's circumstances in a manner which is in accordance with Divine Justice.

Does God make His presentation of the gift of Faith a stronger presentation for those who are by their character, more disposed to accept that gift? Probably not. What is more likely is that: those who are more upright of character than others, are more inclined to accept that gift of Faith; those who for what ever reasons are more inclined to believe there is a God and to acknowledge the Justice of God, are more inclined to accept the gift of faith, than are others; those who are inclined to acknowledge their own sinfulness, are also inclined to accept the gift of Faith, more than are those who ignore or otherwise do not fully and readily acknowledge their own sinfulness.

No matter how God presents the gift of Faith to any person, its acceptance is dependent on that person, and not on God or God's form and manner of presentation of the gift of Faith.

A person who historically seeks their own benefit, especially without concern for others, will be less likely to accept Faith, than one who has concern for others. But just because a person has concern for others does not mean he will accept the gift of Faith. Nor will a selfish person reject the gift of Faith.

A person who shows wisdom by seeking to learn about God, not because they seek to obtain an advantage, but simply for the sake of knowing about the One to whom they owe their existence, will be more inclined to accept Faith, than one who does not seek knowledge about God, or who seeks knowledge about

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(Continued OBTAINING from page 24)

God for the sake of obtaining an advantage.

We must each do our best to enhance the prospects of those who do not have true Faith, by doing our best to live as examples of those who have true Faith, and thereby become examples for those who do not have true Faith. Those who have true Faith must at least attempt to live it in every aspect of their lives; and indeed, true Faith will prompt one who is possessed by it, to live in accordance with it.

Ref: Eph. 5:15-21; John 4:46-53

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THE DEAD ARE MORE ALIVE THAN THE LIVING SO PRAY FOR THEM

One of the many horrors of heretics and those who protest against the true Church and Christ's dogma, and who substitute their own beliefs for those which God has taught us, is their lack of attention to the dead.

Ecclesiasticus (36:18) contains this payer: "**Reward them that patiently wait for thee, that thy prophets may be found faithful: and hear the prayers of thy servants.**" This prayer is not just for the living; it is for all the faithful. And who waits more patiently for Our Saviour than those who have died but, not being condemned to eternal damnation, have not yet entered into union with God? No one.

While the reality of Purgatory and of Limbo are not our subject, a brief comment on them may be helpful. The Apostle tells us he will receive his crown after a brief period of purification. To what other than Purgatory could he be referring? Nothing. In the Book of Machabees (**2 Mach. 12:43-46**) we are told that Judas Machabees sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, for he knew that those who had died with godliness had great grace laid up in store for them. And what about those who die without being Baptized? God, being perfectly just, can not condemn to Hell those who have done no wrong yet die without being Baptized, nor can they enter into eternal union with Him until something else happens - hence Limbo. It is impossible to imagine that all the millions of babies who have been murdered through abortion are condemned to Hell after having been ripped apart in a horrible torture death; and it would be unjust for a Pagan who has never had the opportunity to know God but who has lived as moral a life as is possible without knowing Christ, would be condemned to Hell despite having lived a moral life, just because he never had the opportunity to know Christ.

This tragic neglect of the dead extends not just to those in Purgatory and in Limbo, but also to those who are in Heaven.

In Heaven, one continually increases in capacity to receive God and is continually filled to that capacity, which continues to increase. It is as though those in Heaven are like a drinking glass which continually increases in size and is continually filled to the top and continually increases in size and is filled, never ending in instantaneous increase in capacity and in being instantaneously filled. Our prayers for those in Heaven increase this capacity and filling. And those in Heaven show their appreciation for our prayers by assisting us.

For those in Limbo, our prayers render assistance in the completion of what ever it is that must be done before they can enter into full and proper union with God in Heaven. It may well be that they are given knowledge of God and of all that is associated with Heaven and with Hell, and that they must make a choice as to how they will spend their eternity. We think that it is an easy choice, for who in his right mind would chose eternal damnation over eternal happiness - yet we must remember that Satan and his followers chose eternal damnation over eternal happiness, because they refused to serve, because they refused God's commands, because they wanted to do what they waned and not what what God wanted. Our prayers assist those in Limbo to make the right choice, to accept God's truth, desires, and will, and to be eternally happy.

The most tragic, however, are those in Purgatory, for they can do nothing to assist themselves.

Purgatory is a place of purification To become purified, and to be purified, one must be aware of what is happening, one must experience, one must know, for this is not purification of tainted water, or of a sick body, where the purification can take place mechanically with

(Continued THE DEAD on page 26)

(Continued **THE DEAD** from page 25)

the addition of various filters and chemicals. Purgatory purification is purification of the spirit, of the soul, of the essence of the person, and requires individualized application to each person. It is not a matter of "presto chango" you are now holy. It is removal of all that is not fit to be in God's house, and of fully establishing all that is necessary form one to be in God's house.

We do not know what this process is, but we do know that no one in Purgatory can assist themselves, for they are not a complete human, lacking their physical bodies. We do not know who other than those in this life can assist those in Purgatory, but we do know that we can. Imagine those who are in Purgatory, whose families and friends do not believe in Purgatory. Who is there to pray for them, and by those prayers, assist them in completing the purification process and leaving Purgatory, and thereby attaining Heaven? No one except us.

Who will pray for us if we go to Purgatory, especially when all of our families and friends are dead? Those whom we assist in getting out of Purgatory will be deeply grateful to us for our help, and will assist us in getting out of Purgatory.

So, for the sake of common decency, and out of your own self interest, pray for the dead.

Ref: Lesson 1 Cor. 1:4-8; Gospel Mat. 9:1-8; 2 Machabees 12:43-46; Ecclus. 36:18

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IMITATION OF CHRIST By Thomas a Kempis

BOOK THREE

The Forty-Second Chapter

Peace is Not to Be Placed in Men

The Voice of Christ

My child, if you place your peace in any creature because of your own feeling or for the sake of his company, you will be unsettled and entangled. But if you have recourse to the ever-living and abiding Truth, you will not grieve if a friend should die or forsake you. Your love for your friend should be grounded in Me, and for My sake you should love whoever seems to be good and is very dear to you in this life. Without Me friendship has no strength and cannot endure. Love which I do not bind is neither true nor pure.

You ought, therefore, to be so dead to such human affections as to wish as far as lies within you to be without the fellowship of men. Man draws nearer to God in proportion as he withdraws farther from all earthly comfort. And he ascends higher to God as he descends lower into himself and grows more vile in his own eyes. He who attributes any good to himself hinders God's grace from coming into his heart, for the grace of the Holy Spirit seeks always the humble heart.

If you knew how to annihilate yourself completely and empty yourself of all created love, then I should overflow in you with great grace. When you look to creatures, the sight of the Creator is taken from you. Learn, therefore, to conquer yourself in all things for the sake of your Maker. Then will you be able to attain to divine knowledge. But anything, no matter how small, that is loved and regarded inordinately keeps you back from the highest good and corrupts the soul.

The Forty-Third Chapter

Beware Vain and Worldly Knowledge

The Voice of Christ

My child, do not let the fine-sounding and subtle words of men deceive you. For the kingdom of heaven consists not in talk but in virtue. Attend, rather, to My words which enkindle the heart and enlighten the mind, which excite contrition and abound in manifold consolations. Never read them for the purpose of appearing more learned or more wise. Apply yourself to mortifying your vices, for this will benefit you more than your understanding of many difficult questions.

Though you shall have read and learned many things, it will always be necessary for you to return to this one principle: I am He who teaches man knowledge, and to the little ones I give a clearer understanding than can be taught by man. He to whom I speak will soon be wise and his soul will profit. But woe to those who inquire of men about many curious things, and care very little about the way they serve Me.

The time will come when Christ, the Teacher of teachers, the Lord of angels, will appear to hear the lessons of all -- that is, to examine the conscience of everyone. Then He will search Jerusalem with lamps and the hidden things of darkness will be brought to light and the arguings of men's tongues be silenced.

I am He Who in one moment so enlightens the humble mind that it comprehends more of eternal truth than could be learned by ten years in the schools. I teach without noise of words or clash of opinions, without ambition for honor or confusion of argument.

I am He Who teaches man to despise earthly possessions and to loathe present things, to ask after the eternal, to hunger for heaven, to fly honors and to bear with scandals, to place all hope in Me, to desire nothing apart from Me, and to love Me ardently above all things. For a certain man by loving Me

intimately learned divine truths and spoke wonders. He profited more by leaving all things than by studying subtle questions.

To some I speak of common things, to others of special matters. To some I appear with sweetness in signs and figures, and to others I appear in great light and reveal mysteries. The voice of books is but a single voice, yet it does not teach all men alike, because I within them am the Teacher and the Truth, the Examiner of hearts, the Understander of thoughts, the Promoter of acts, distributing to each as I see fit.

The Forty-Fourth Chapter

Do Not Be Concerned About Outward Things

The Voice of Christ

My child, there are many matters of which it is well for you to be ignorant, and to consider yourself as one who is dead upon the earth and to whom the whole world is crucified. There are many things, too, which it is well to pass by with a deaf ear, thinking, instead, of what is more to your peace. It is more profitable to turn away from things which displease you and to leave to every man his own opinion than to take part in quarrelsome talk. If you stand well with God and look to His judgment, you will more easily bear being worsted.

The Disciple

To what have we come, Lord? Behold, we bewail a temporal loss. We labor and fret for a small gain, while loss of the soul is forgotten and scarcely ever returns to mind. That which is of little or no value claims our attention, whereas that which is of highest necessity is neglected -- all because man gives himself wholly to outward things. And unless he withdraws himself quickly, he willingly lies immersed in externals.

The Forty-Fifth Chapter

All Men Are Not to Be Believed, for It Is Easy to Err in Speech

The Disciple

Grant me help in my needs, O Lord, for the aid of man is useless. How often have I failed to find faithfulness in places where I thought I possessed it! And how many times I have found it where I least expected it! Vain, therefore, is hope in men, but the salvation of the just is in You, O God. Blessed be Your name, O Lord my God, in everything that befalls us.

We are weak and unstable, quickly deceived and changed. Who is the man that is able to guard himself with such caution and care as not sometimes to fall into deception or perplexity? He who confides in You, O Lord, and seeks You with a simple heart does not fall so easily. And if some trouble should come upon him, no matter how entangled in it he may be, he will be more quickly delivered and comforted by You. For You will not forsake him who trusts in You to the very end.

Rare is the friend who remains faithful through all his friend's distress. But You, Lord, and You alone, are entirely faithful in all things; other than You, there is none so faithful.

Oh, how wise is that holy soul[38] who said: "My mind is firmly settled and founded in Christ." If that were true of me, human fear would not so easily cause me anxiety, nor would the darts of words disturb. But who can foresee all things and provide against all evils? And if things foreseen have often hurt, can those which are unlooked for do otherwise than wound us gravely? Why, indeed, have I not provided better for my wretched self? Why, too, have I so easily kept faith in others? We are but men, however, nothing more than weak men, although we are thought by many to be, and are called, angels.

In whom shall I put my faith, Lord?

In whom but You? You are the truth which does not deceive and cannot be deceived. Every man, on the other hand, is a liar, weak, unstable, and likely to err, especially in words, so that one ought not to be too quick to believe even that which seems, on the face of it, to sound true. How wise was Your warning to beware of men; that a man's enemies are those of his own household; that we should not believe if anyone says: "Behold he is here, or behold he is there."

I have been taught to my own cost, and I hope it has given me greater caution, not greater folly. "Beware," they say, "beware and keep to yourself what I tell you!" Then while I keep silent, believing that the matter is secret, he who asks me to be silent cannot remain silent himself, but immediately betrays both me and himself, and goes his way. From tales of this kind and from such careless men protect me, O Lord, lest I fall into their hands and into their ways. Put in my mouth words that are true and steadfast and keep far from me the crafty tongue, because what I am not willing to suffer I ought by all means to shun.

Oh, how good and how peaceful it is to be silent about others, not to believe without discrimination all that is said, not easily to report it further, to reveal oneself to few, always to seek You as the discernor of hearts, and not to be blown away by every wind of words, but to wish that all things, within and beyond us, be done according to the pleasure of Thy will.

How conducive it is for the keeping of heavenly grace to fly the gaze of men, not to seek abroad things which seem to cause admiration, but to follow with utmost diligence those which give fervor and amendment of life! How many have been harmed by having their virtue known and praised too hastily! And how truly profitable it has been when grace remained hidden during this frail life, which is all temptation and warfare!

[38] St. Agatha.

The Forty-Sixth Chapter

Trust in God Against Slander

The Voice of Christ

My child, stand firm and trust in Me. For what are words but words? They fly through the air but hurt not a stone. If you are guilty, consider how you would gladly amend. If you are not conscious of any fault, think that you wish to bear this for the sake of God. It is little enough for you occasionally to endure words, since you are not yet strong enough to bear hard blows.

And why do such small matters pierce you to the heart, unless because you are still carnal and pay more heed to men than you ought? You do not wish to be reproved for your faults and you seek shelter in excuses because you are afraid of being despised. But look into yourself more thoroughly and you will learn that the world is still alive in you, in a vain desire to please men. For when you shrink from being abased and confounded for your failings, it is plain indeed that you are not truly humble or truly dead to the world, and that the world is not crucified in you.

Listen to My word, and you will not value ten thousand words of men. Behold, if every malicious thing that could possibly be invented were uttered against you, what harm could it do if you ignored it all and gave it no more thought than you would a blade of grass? Could it so much as pluck one hair from your head?

He who does not keep his heart within him, and who does not have God before his eyes is easily moved by a word of disparagement. He who trusts in Me, on the other hand, and who has no desire to stand by his own judgment, will be free from the fear of men. For I am the judge and discernor of all secrets. I know how all things happen. I know who causes injury and who suffers it.

From Me that word proceeded, and with My permission it happened, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed. I shall judge the guilty and the innocent; but I have wished beforehand to try them both by secret judgment.

The testimony of man is often deceiving, but My judgment is true -- it will stand and not be overthrown. It is hidden from many and made known to but a few. Yet it is never mistaken and cannot be mistaken even though it does not seem right in the eyes of the unwise.

To Me, therefore, you ought to come in every decision, not depending on your own judgment. For the just man will not be disturbed, no matter what may befall him from God. Even if an unjust charge be made against him he will not be much troubled. Neither will he exult vainly if through others he is justly acquitted. He considers that it is I Who search the hearts and inmost thoughts of men, that I do not judge according to the face of things or human appearances. For what the judgment of men considers praiseworthy is often worthy of blame in My sight.

The Disciple

O Lord God, just Judge, strong and patient, You Who know the weakness and depravity of men, be my strength and all my confidence, for my own conscience is not sufficient for me. You know what I do not know, and, therefore, I ought to humble myself whenever I am accused and bear it meekly. Forgive me, then, in Your mercy for my every failure in this regard, and give me once more the grace of greater endurance. Better to me is Your abundant mercy in obtaining pardon than the justice which I imagine in defending the secrets of my conscience. And though I am not conscious to myself of any fault, yet I cannot thereby justify myself, because without Your mercy no man living will be justified in Your sight.

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THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

CHAPTER III

3. Let me now lay bare in the sight of God the twenty-ninth year of my age. There had just come to Carthage a certain bishop of the Manicheans, Faustus by name, a great snare of the devil; and many were entangled by him through the charm of his eloquence. Now, even though I found this eloquence admirable, I was beginning to distinguish the charm of words from the truth of things, which I was eager to learn. Nor did I consider the dish as much as I did the kind of meat that their famous Faustus served up to me in it. His fame had run before him, as one very skilled in an honorable learning and pre-eminently skilled in the liberal arts.

And as I had already read and stored up in memory many of the injunctions of the philosophers, I began to compare some of their doctrines with the tedious fables of the Manicheans; and it struck me that the probability was on the side of the philosophers, whose power reached far enough to enable them to form a fair judgment of the world, even though they had not discovered the sovereign Lord of it all. For thou art great, O Lord, and thou hast respect unto the lowly, but the proud thou knowest afar off.[123] Thou drawest near to none but the contrite in heart, and canst not be found by the proud, even if in their inquisitive skill they may number the stars and the sands, and map out the constellations, and trace the courses of the planets.

4. For it is by the mind and the intelligence which thou gavest them that they investigate these things. They have discovered much; and have foretold, many years in advance, the day, the hour, and the extent of the eclipses of those luminaries, the sun and the moon. Their calculations did not fail, and it came to pass as they predicted. And they wrote down the rules they had discovered, so that to this day they may be read and from them may be calculated in what year and month and day and hour of the day, and at what quarter

of its light, either the moon or the sun will be eclipsed, and it will come to pass just as predicted. And men who are ignorant in these matters marvel and are amazed; and those who understand them exult and are exalted. Both, by an impious pride, withdraw from thee and forsake thy light. They foretell an eclipse of the sun before it happens, but they do not see their own eclipse which is even now occurring. For they do not ask, as religious men should, what is the source of the intelligence by which they investigate these matters. Moreover, when they discover that thou didst make them, they do not give themselves up to thee that thou mightest preserve what thou hast made. Nor do they offer, as sacrifice to thee, what they have made of themselves. For they do not slaughter their own pride -- as they do the sacrificial fowls -- nor their own curiosities by which, like the fishes of the sea, they wander through the unknown paths of the deep. Nor do they curb their own extravagances as they do those of "the beasts of the field,"[124] so that thou, O Lord, "a consuming fire,"[125] mayest burn up their mortal cares and renew them unto immortality.

5. They do not know the way which is thy word, by which thou didst create all the things that are and also the men who measure them, and the senses by which they perceive what they measure, and the intelligence whereby they discern the patterns of measure. Thus they know not that thy wisdom is not a matter of measure.[126] But the Only Begotten hath been "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification"[127] and hath been numbered among us and paid tribute to Caesar.[128] And they do not know this "Way" by which they could descend from themselves to him in order to ascend through him to him. They did not know this "Way," and so they fancied themselves exalted to the stars and the shining heavens. And lo, they fell upon the earth, and "their foolish heart was darkened." [129] They saw many true things about the creature but they do not seek with true piety for the Truth, the Architect of Creation, and hence they do not find him. Or, if they do find

him, and know that he is God, they do not glorify him as God; neither are they thankful but become vain in their imagination, and say that they themselves are wise, and attribute to themselves what is thine. At the same time, with the most perverse blindness, they wish to attribute to thee their own quality -- so that they load their lies on thee who art the Truth, "changing the glory of the incorruptible God for an image of corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." [130] "They exchanged thy truth for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." [131]

6. Yet I remembered many a true saying of the philosophers about the creation, and I saw the confirmation of their calculations in the orderly sequence of seasons and in the visible evidence of the stars. And I compared this with the doctrines of Mani, who in his voluminous folly wrote many books on these subjects. But I could not discover there any account, of either the solstices or the equinoxes, or the eclipses of the sun and moon, or anything of the sort that I had learned in the books of secular philosophy. But still I was ordered to believe, even where the ideas did not correspond with -- even when they contradicted -- the rational theories established by mathematics and my own eyes, but were very different.

CHAPTER IV

7. Yet, O Lord God of Truth, is any man pleasing to thee because he knows these things? No, for surely that man is unhappy who knows these things and does not know thee. And that man is happy who knows thee, even though he does not know these things. He who knows both thee and these things is not the more blessed for his learning, for thou only art his blessing, if knowing thee as God he glorifies thee and gives thanks and does not become vain in his thoughts.

For just as that man who knows how to possess a tree, and give thanks to thee for the use of it -- although he may not know how many feet high it is or how

wide it spreads -- is better than the man who can measure it and count all its branches, but neither owns it nor knows or loves its Creator: just so is a faithful man who possesses the world's wealth as though he had nothing, and possesses all things through his union through thee, whom all things serve, even though he does not know the circlings of the Great Bear. Just so it is foolish to doubt that this faithful man may truly be better than the one who can measure the heavens and number the stars and weigh the elements, but who is forgetful of thee "who hast set in order all things in number, weight, and measure." [132]

CHAPTER V

8. And who ordered this Mani to write about these things, knowledge of which is not necessary to piety? For thou hast said to man, "Behold, godliness is wisdom" [133] -- and of this he might have been ignorant, however perfectly he may have known these other things. Yet, since he did not know even these other things, and most impudently dared to teach them, it is clear that he had no knowledge of piety. For, even when we have a knowledge of this worldly lore, it is folly to make a profession of it, when piety comes from confession to thee. From piety, therefore, Mani had gone astray, and all his show of learning only enabled the truly learned to perceive, from his ignorance of what they knew, how little he was to be trusted to make plain these more really difficult matters. For he did not aim to be lightly esteemed, but went around trying to persuade men that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter and Enricher of thy faithful ones, was personally resident in him with full authority. And, therefore, when he was detected in manifest errors about the sky, the stars, the movements of the sun and moon, even though these things do not relate to religious doctrine, the impious presumption of the man became clearly evident; for he not only taught things about which he was ignorant but also perverted them, and this with pride so foolish and mad that he sought to claim that his own utterances were as if they

had been those of a divine person.

9. When I hear of a Christian brother, ignorant of these things, or in error concerning them, I can tolerate his uninformed opinion; and I do not see that any lack of knowledge as to the form or nature of this material creation can do him much harm, as long as he does not hold a belief in anything which is unworthy of thee, O Lord, the Creator of all. But if he thinks that his secular knowledge pertains to the essence of the doctrine of piety, or ventures to assert dogmatic opinions in matters in which he is ignorant -- there lies the injury. And yet even a weakness such as this, in the infancy of our faith, is tolerated by our Mother Charity until the new man can grow up "unto a perfect man," and not be "carried away with every wind of doctrine." [134]

But Mani had presumed to be at once the teacher, author, guide, and leader of all whom he could persuade to believe this, so that all who followed him believed that they were following not an ordinary man but thy Holy Spirit. And who would not judge that such great madness, when it once stood convicted of false teaching, should then be abhorred and utterly rejected? But I had not yet clearly decided whether the alternation of day and night, and of longer and shorter days and nights, and the eclipses of sun and moon, and whatever else I read about in other books could be explained consistently with his theories. If they could have been so explained, there would still have remained a doubt in my mind whether the theories were right or wrong. Yet I was prepared, on the strength of his reputed godliness, to rest my faith on his authority.

CHAPTER VI

10. For almost the whole of the nine years that I listened with unsettled mind to the Manichean teaching I had been looking forward with unbounded eagerness to the arrival of this Faustus. For all the other members of the sect that I happened to meet, when they were unable to answer the questions I raised, always referred me to his coming. They

promised that, in discussion with him, these and even greater difficulties, if I had them, would be quite easily and amply cleared away. When at last he did come, I found him to be a man of pleasant speech, who spoke of the very same things they themselves did, although more fluently and in a more agreeable style. But what profit was there to me in the elegance of my cupbearer, since he could not offer me the more precious draught for which I thirsted? My ears had already had their fill of such stuff, and now it did not seem any better because it was better expressed nor more true because it was dressed up in rhetoric; nor could I think the man's soul necessarily wise because his face was comely and his language eloquent. But they who extolled him to me were not competent judges. They thought him able and wise because his eloquence delighted them. At the same time I realized that there is another kind of man who is suspicious even of truth itself, if it is expressed in smooth and flowing language. But thou, O my God, hadst already taught me in wonderful and marvelous ways, and therefore I believed -- because it is true -- that thou didst teach me and that beside thee there is no other teacher of truth, wherever truth shines forth. Already I had learned from thee that because a thing is eloquently expressed it should not be taken to be as necessarily true; nor because it is uttered with stammering lips should it be supposed false. Nor, again, is it necessarily true because rudely uttered, nor untrue because the language is brilliant. Wisdom and folly both are like meats that are wholesome and unwholesome, and courtly or simple words are like town-made or rustic vessels -- both kinds of food may be served in either kind of dish.

11. That eagerness, therefore, with which I had so long awaited this man, was in truth delighted with his action and feeling in a disputation, and with the fluent and apt words with which he clothed his ideas. I was delighted, therefore, and I joined with others -- and even exceeded them -- in exalting and praising him. Yet it was a source of annoyance to me that, in his lecture

room, I was not allowed to introduce and raise any of those questions that troubled me, in a familiar exchange of discussion with him. As soon as I found an opportunity for this, and gained his ear at a time when it was not inconvenient for him to enter into a discussion with me and my friends, I laid before him some of my doubts. I discovered at once that he knew nothing of the liberal arts except grammar, and that only in an ordinary way. He had, however, read some of Tully's orations, a very few books of Seneca, and some of the poets, and such few books of his own sect as were written in good Latin. With this meager learning and his daily practice in speaking, he had acquired a sort of eloquence which proved the more delightful and enticing because it was under the direction of a ready wit and a sort of native grace. Was this not even as I now recall it, O Lord my God, Judge of my conscience? My heart and my memory are laid open before thee, who wast even then guiding me by the secret impulse of thy providence and wast setting my shameful errors before my face so that I might see and hate them.

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race to be able to vote in more than one state, more than one city: page 15

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While we are at it, HEALTHY: If you eat healthy food hopefully you restrict your consumption to plant food. page 16

Jumbo squid pray on California catch, is what the headline stated. Nice to know the squid are converting and becoming evangelicals. page 16

Amnesty International, founded by a Roman Catholic, and once a bastion of pro-life action and thought, has adopted a pro-abortion position. It had to adopt because it killed its own offspring. page 16

The NEA (teacher's union / association) is attempting to put itself out of business through two of its main policies. One policy is its support of abortion. page 16

GOD'S GRACE CAN BE VOID We possess our abilities by the Grace of God, which is different from possessing God's Grace. page 20

HURRICANES KATRINA AND RITA; AND GOOD AND EVIL On the feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Forerunner (the Baptist), we mark the anniversary of hurricane Katrina, and a few days later the anniversary of hurricane Rita. All of those who have been effected by these hurricanes have been given a most wonderful gift from God: page 21

MATERIALISM'S DESTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE ON THE FAMILY "And the multitude feared . . . seeing

that God had given such power to men." The focus of the people who witnessed the miraculous cure was on the power Our Saviour exhibited in curing someone who was so ill. Their focus was not on that power being proof of His having forgiven the sins of that same man. This is an example of the most overt form of the oldest conflict, that between Good which is of God alone, and evil, which is the only product of those who oppose God. page 22

INTERCESSORY PRAYER There are many who call themselves Christians, who proclaim they are like the official who asked Our Saviour to heal his son; that they pray directly to God and have no need to pray to the Saints or to the Ever Virgin Mother Mary. These same people have organized prayer lines and prayer committees. page 24

OBTAINING FAITH God has not revealed to us the how and the why of His presenting the gift of Faith to us. We know He does not withhold it from anyone. We know that in not withholding it from anyone, He presents it to everyone, in some form or another. We know that presentation is correlated with each person's circumstances in a manner which is in accordance with Divine Justice. page 24

THE DEAD ARE MORE ALIVE THAN THE LIVING SO PRAY FOR THEM One of the many horrors of heretics and those who protest against the true Church and Christ's dogma, and who substitute their own beliefs for those which God has taught us, is their lack of attention to the dead. page 25

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“YOU WON’T GO TO HELL FOR EATING THAT HOT DOG ON FRIDAY”, HE SAID But he is wrong. page 1

GOD IN SERVICE TO OTHERS One of the multitude of activities which is common to God the Father, Jesus Christ God and Man, and God the Holy Spirit, is service to creation, and especially service to mankind. page 1

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ALLOW NEITHER YOUR SOLITUDE NOR YOUR IMPERFECTIONS TO KEEP YOU FROM YOUR PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS Especially the Divine Liturgy Having a congregation which relies on your presence every Sunday and on Great Feasts, is a great impetus to pray the Divine Liturgy. page 4

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Those unwilling to serve will have their place of service filled by others, who will, in time, become the masters of those who would not serve. Be it God or country, willing honorable service in the only insurer of personal freedom, while failure to so do insures enslavement. Service does not so much entail surrender as it does standing shoulder to shoulder under the leadership of the most wise, of the most strong, and of the most just.

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