

CONTENTS**TOPIC/TITLE** **Page**

~ ANALOGY OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION ~ *From Metropolitan Archbishop Paul, S.S.B. To the flock entrusted into my care:* When Christ Jesus, God, Son of God, Son of Man, died, He went to the gates of the land of the dead. He burst open those gates which had prevented the dead from entering Heaven and eternal union with God. He burst them open with the cross made of wood. page 1

HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE? We know we must prepare to meet Christ, not just as we celebrate Christmas and Epiphany, not just at the time of our death, but all throughout our lives. How do we make these preparations? We make those preparations by studying the rule book, following at least its main instructions, and utilizing the assistance system contained in those instructions.

We also must, absolutely **MUST**, attain an understanding and comprehension of what those instructions are designed to accomplish, how those instructions are designed to effect the accomplishments, and why the accomplishments are desired. Included in those main instructions **AND** within those instructions, the assistance system, are: page 1

ATONEMENT AND REPARATION FOR SIN ~ QUIBBLING ABOUT PURGATORY? Do we have to make reparation and atonement for our sins? Is there a place or a state of existence generally understood to be Purgatory? These may be interesting questions, but they are totally irrelevant questions. They are irrelevant because just as a person who has true sorrow for the damage he has caused will attempt to repair that damage, so too will a sinner who has true sorrow for his sins attempt to correct the wrongs he has committed page 1

HOW MANY OF US CAN, ARE WILLING TO, HAVE EVER SAID THEY WOULD, OR DONE: GOD'S WILL WITHOUT HESITATION

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word. (Luke 1:38) You are a girl, a maiden of between fourteen and sixteen years. page 1

MONOTHEISM IS NOT EVEN THE BEGINNING OF A BASIS FOR COMMONALITY (*We have attempted to write a comprehensive article on this topic, but, perhaps it has been best expressed in a speech by Archbishop Christodoulos of The Church of Greece, Address to the Conference organised by the Synodal Committee on European Issues, entitled "Islam: the extent of the problematics"*) page 1

PUBLICATION NOTICE page 2

LETTERS (none) page 2

WORLD WIDE WEB: page 2

THE BASILIAN FATHERS (The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil) THE ANGELUS A sometimes forgot-

(Continued CONTENTS on page 31)

Sometimes when one prays one is distracted and asks God to help one's mind to focus on God and the praying. In a sense, that is the same as engaging in a conversation with someone, breaking off in mid sentence and saying something to someone else, then asking the one with whom you were conversing to assist you in continuing the conversation and also to stop you from breaking off the conversation and saying something to someone else. Is that asking God to help you to be polite with God? What ever it is, it does appear to be prudent.

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



Volume 18 No. 1 OF THE CHURCH OF MAN WITH GOD February, 2008 A.D.

~ ANALOGY OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION ~

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

When Christ Jesus, God, Son of God, Son of Man, died, He went to the gates of the land of the dead. He burst open those gates which had prevented the dead from entering Heaven and eternal union with God. He burst them open with the cross made of wood.

(Continued PASCHA on page 24)



HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE?

We know we must prepare to meet Christ, not just as we celebrate Christmas and Epiphany, not just at the time of our death, but all throughout our lives. How do we make these preparations?

We make those preparations by studying the rule book, following at least its main instructions, and utilizing the assistance system contained in those instructions. We also must, absolutely **MUST**, attain an understanding and comprehension of what those instructions are designed to accomplish, how those instructions are designed to effect the accomplishments, and why the accomplishments are desired.

Included in those main instructions **AND** within those instructions, the assistance system, are: The Two Great Commandments, The Ten Commandments, The Corporal Works of Mercy, The Spiritual Works of Mercy, and the Seven Sacraments. The assistance system works best when there is a comprehension of the chief sources of sin, which are: Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, and Sloth, commonly called capital sins or the seven deadly sins. (Gossip is sometimes called the

(Continued PREPARE on page 8)

ATONEMENT AND REPARATION FOR SIN ~ QUIBBLING ABOUT PURGATORY?

Do we have to make reparation and atonement for our sins? Is there a place or a state of existence generally understood to be Purgatory?

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(Continued IS THERE on page 23)

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Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word. (Luke 1:38)

You are a girl, a maiden of between fourteen and sixteen years. You were brought up in an agricultural time so even though your father is a man of importance, and even though you were literally brought up in the Temple where every person in your country travels to worship even from great

(Continued BE IT DONE on page 16)

MONOTHEISM IS NOT EVEN THE BEGINNING OF A BASIS FOR COMMONALITY

(*We have attempted to write a comprehensive article on this topic, but, perhaps it has been best expressed in a speech by Archbishop Christodoulos of The Church of Greece, which we have reproduced below - credits appear at the end.*)

Address to the Conference organised by the Synodal Committee on European Issues, entitled "Islam: the extent of the problematics", by Archbishop Christodoulos 12/5/2007

Holy Monastery of Penteli, Attica

At first, I would like to thank you all for your participation in this Conference, the topic of which constitutes one of the most acute problems of European society.

The issue of Islam is not susceptible of emotionally loaded analyses. It has many aspects, and it makes me sad to note that it is often treated inappropriately. In some cases, the rhetoric of bureaucracy prevails, mistaking the multicultural destruction of European identity for humanism; in other cases, there is an excess of hatred against Muslims and, in particular, against Arabs, channeled either into the laboratories of racist ideologies or into workshops that seek after an aggravation of the relations between Europe and the Islamic world.

I am convinced that we ought to explore this great issue certainly without harbouring antipathies or phobias but also without falling victims to wishful thinking, mistaking our own wishes for reality. Our discussions must be conducted

(Continued MONOTHEISM on page 22)

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+ Paul, S.S.B.,
Publisher

+ The Basilians - The Basilian Fathers +

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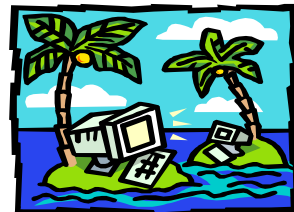
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The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil - The Basilian Fathers

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)

(Continued CONTENTS from page 32)

ten prayer page 4

THE BASILIAN FATHERS (The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil) ST. MARY MAGDALENE ORTHODOX CHURCH page 6

OUR FICKLE HEARTS In many ways we are just like the Jews of the time of Christ. We greet Christ with joy, knowing that because of Him we can escape the eternal unhappiness of Hell, just as the Jews knew Christ was the source of their salvation. Then we discover we have to do things which conform to belief and Faith; believe things in addition to belief that He is God. We have to believe in goodness, in The Way Christ taught, and we have to DO those things He taught. We have to make Him our focus of life, instead of our own desires, and we have to make HIS desires OUR desires. We have to change from being selfish to being like Christ, and we must WANT to do these things. page7

CHILDREN'S PAGE The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism Q. 848 - Q. 874 page 10

PRODUCTS page 13 - 14

PASCHAL SHAME If the New Testament is carefully examined you will discover the Apostles and Evangelists focused on the shame of Our Lord's passion and death more than they focused on His suffering. Life was difficult, life was hard, even for the wealthy. Pain and suffering were part of every day life. Torture and death, not just at the hands of those in authority, but at the hands of the "common people" was an aspect of life with which one had to contend. One might not be able to avoid oppression, but shame was something which one could usually avoid. The shame of death by crucifixion was one of the most notable of shames. page 17

WHAT DID THE OTHER GUYS THINK? We know Saint Thomas doubted Our Lord had risen from the

dead until he personally saw Jesus. But what about The chief priest and his ensemble, the Pharisees, Pontius Pilate and the civil authorities? page 17

WHO IS JESUS? WHAT IS JESUS? Who is Jesus Christ? What is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the Soldier who keeps the enemy at bay so some of us can put flowers in our hair and dance around like dope fairies protesting the war. He is the soldier who sheds His blood so some of us can march like SS Storm Troopers protesting His fighting to keep us free so some of us can spit on Him when He returns from the battle front to recover from His wounds. Jesus established the difference between having sex and making love. page 18

JOSEPH AND PATRICK - GOOD FATHERS, SONS, BROTHERS What does a good father do? He loves his children, cares for them, and takes care of them to the best of his ability. What does a good son and brother do? . . . Neither should there be surprise that Christ's step-father or foster father, Saint Joseph, does much the same for us. Not as sacrificial victim, offering, and saviour, but as the strong, gentle, firm, loving protector and patron of every family, of every community page 19

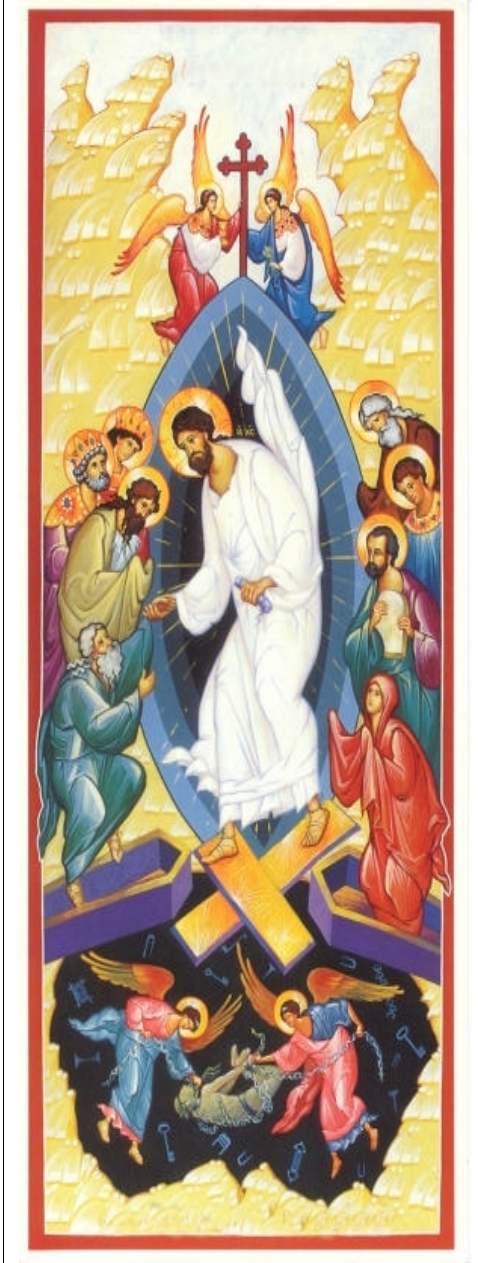
COMMENTS ON SOME INDICATORS OF OUR TIMES LETTERMAN - 1; DR. PHIL - 0 page 20

WAGES OF SIN AND OF TRYING TO DO A GOOD JOB Some people are uncomfortable being admonished about sin. They are foolish, for sin is the only thing which can keep one from heaven and eternal union with God. Sin is not just lusting after someone or some thing, or robbing a bank, or things like that. If one does not have Faith, and has had the opportunity to have Faith, that is a sin. page 21

IMITATION OF CHRIST By Thomas a Kempis BOOK THREE The Fifty-Eighth Chapter page 24

THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE BOOK SIX (Cont'd)

CHAPTER VI page 28



(Continued AUGUSTINE from page 29)

and, without Alypius seeing him, got in as far as the leaden bars which protected the silversmith shop and began to hack away at the lead gratings. But when the noise of the hatchet was heard the silversmiths below began to call to each other in whispers and sent men to arrest whomsoever they should find. The thief heard their voices and ran away, leaving his hatchet because he was afraid to be caught with it. Now Alypius, who had not seen him come in, got a glimpse of him as he went out and noticed that he went off in great haste. Being curious to know the reasons, he went up to the place, where he found the hatchet, and stood wondering and pondering when, behold, those that were sent caught him alone, holding the hatchet which had made the noise which had startled them and brought them there. They seized him and dragged him away, gathering the tenants of the market place about them and boasting that they had caught a notorious thief. Thereupon he was led away to appear before the judge.

15. But this is as far as his lesson was to go. For immediately, O Lord, thou didst come to the rescue of his innocence, of which thou wast the sole witness. As he was being led off to prison or punishment, they were met by the master builder who had charge of the public buildings. The captors were especially glad to meet him because he had more than once suspected them of stealing the goods that had been lost out of the market place. Now, at last, they thought they could convince him who it was that had committed the thefts. But the custodian had often met Alypius at the house of a certain senator, whose receptions he used to attend. He recognized him at once and, taking his hand, led him apart from the throng, inquired the cause of all the trouble, and learned what had occurred. He then commanded all the rabble still around -- and very uproarious and full of threatenings they were -- to come along with him, and they came to the house of the young man who had committed the deed. There, before the door, was a slave boy

so young that he was not restrained from telling the whole story by fear of harming his master. And he had followed his master to the market place. Alypius recognized him, and whispered to the architect, who showed the boy the hatchet and asked whose it was. "Ours," he answered directly. And, being further questioned, he disclosed the whole affair. Thus the guilt was shifted to that household and the rabble, who had begun to triumph over Alypius, were shamed. And so he went away home, this man who was to be the future steward of thy Word and judge of so many causes in thy Church -- a wiser and more experienced man.

CHAPTER X

16. I found him at Rome, and he was bound to me with the strongest possible ties, and he went with me to Milan, in order that he might not be separated from me, and also that he might obtain some law practice, for which he had qualified with a view to pleasing his parents more than himself. He had already sat three times as assessor, showing an integrity that seemed strange to many others, though he thought them strange who could prefer gold to integrity. His character had also been tested, not only by the bait of covetousness, but by the spur of fear. At Rome he was assessor to the secretary of the Italian Treasury. There was at that time a very powerful senator to whose favors many were indebted, and of whom many stood in fear. In his usual high-handed way he demanded to have a favor granted him that was forbidden by the laws. This Alypius resisted. A bribe was promised, but he scorned it with all his heart. Threats were employed, but he trampled them underfoot -- so that all men marveled at so rare a spirit, which neither coveted the friendship nor feared the enmity of a man at once so powerful and so widely known for his great resources of helping his friends and doing harm to his enemies. Even the official whose counselor Alypius was -- although he was unwilling that the favor should be granted -- would not openly refuse the request, but

passed the responsibility on to Alypius, alleging that he would not permit him to give his assent. And the truth was that even if the judge had agreed, Alypius would have simply left the court.

There was one matter, however, which appealed to his love of learning, in which he was very nearly led astray. He found out that he might have books copied for himself at praetorian rates [i.e., at public expense]. But his sense of justice prevailed, and he changed his mind for the better, thinking that the rule that forbade him was still more profitable than the privilege that his office would have allowed him. These are little things, but "he that is faithful in a little matter is faithful also in a great one." [164] Nor can that possibly be void which was uttered by the mouth of Thy truth: "If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" [165] Such a man was Alypius, who clung to me at that time and who wavered in his purpose, just as I did, as to what course of life to follow.

17. Nebridius also had come to Milan for no other reason than that he might live with me in a most ardent search after truth and wisdom. He had left his native place near Carthage -- and Carthage itself, where he usually lived -- leaving behind his fine family estate, his house, and his mother, who would not follow him. Like me, he sighed; like me, he wavered; an ardent seeker after the true life and a most acute analyst of the most abstruse questions. So there were three begging mouths, sighing out their wants one to the other, and waiting upon thee, that thou mightest give them their meat in due season. [166] And in all the vexations with which thy mercy followed our worldly pursuits, we sought for the reason why we suffered so -- and all was darkness! We turned away groaning and exclaiming, "How long shall these things be?" And this we often asked, yet for all our asking we did not relinquish them; for as yet we had not discovered anything certain which, when we gave those others up, we might grasp in their stead.

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(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.

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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.

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THE BASILIAN FATHERS

(The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil)

THE ANGELUS

A sometimes forgotten prayer

The Angelus is a very short, but very intense prayer. It is prayed morning and evening (usually at six O'Clock) and at Noon, except during Paschal Time when the Regina Coeli (Caeli) is prayed.

This simple prayer may become a pillar of strength for each member of the flock with which God has entrusted you. That is, if it is prayed with comprehension, and not simply as a remembered string of words.

Consider each verse, and the significance of each Hail Mary following each verse.

THE ANGELUS

[Prayed at morning (6) - Noon - evening (6) except during Pascha]

V: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary

R: And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R: Holy Mary, Mother of God: Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V: Behold, the handmaid of the Lord.

R: Be it done unto me according to thy word.

V: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R: Holy Mary, Mother of God: Pray

for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V: And the Word was made flesh (Genuflect)

R: And dwelt among us. (Arise)

V: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R: Holy Mary, Mother of God: Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,

R: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V: Let us pray.

All: Pour forth, we beseech the, O Lord, thy grace unto our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, thy Son, was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Consider the first verse:

V: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary

R: And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

This is an implicit, complete declaration of Faith containing an intent and knowledge which has required volumes and centuries and then produced only the most bare of preface to the impossible to write main work.

It is followed by the Hail Mary - the Angelic Salutation combined with the salutation of Elizabeth - and its plea for intercessory prayer.

Consider well the Hail Mary:

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among

women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God: Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The caliber of fool who ignores, avoids, or even condemns this prayer, saying they pray directly to God, is beyond the ability of science to measure. For the fool is denying an excerpt from the very Bible they proclaim is supreme. And the fools are invalidating their own requests that others pray with and for them, by denying the viability of requesting the Mother of God also pray for them.

What was the result of the Angelic Salutation and Saint Gabriel's brief explanation of God's request?

The result was Mary's immediate response:

V: Behold, the handmaid of the Lord.

R: Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Whereupon she *did* conceive by the Holy Ghost.

And we again pray the Hail Mary, but now we more readily emphasize, more fully acknowledge, and perhaps comprehend somewhat better, this Mary is uniquely full of Grace, she *is* blessed among women, and indeed blessed is the fruit of her womb. And because of these truths we beg her to pray for us now and to pray for us at the time of our death, for we wish to be with her and her Son for all eternity and she can be of significant assistance in attaining the desire.

What happened when she conceived by the Holy Ghost?

What happened was:

V: And the Word was made flesh

R: And dwelt among us.

The Word of God, the eternal begotten Son of God, became flesh, became hu-

(Continued SSB NEWS on page 5)

(Continued AUGUSTINE from page 28)

him who was one day to be numbered among thy sons, a chief minister of thy sacrament.[162] And in order that his amendment might plainly be attributed to thee, thou broughtest it about through me while I knew nothing of it.

One day, when I was sitting in my accustomed place with my scholars before me, he came in, greeted me, sat himself down, and fixed his attention on the subject I was then discussing. It so happened that I had a passage in hand and, while I was interpreting it, a simile occurred to me, taken from the gladiatorial games. It struck me as relevant to make more pleasant and plain the point I wanted to convey by adding a biting gibe at those whom that madness had enthralled. Thou knowest, O our God, that I had no thought at that time of curing Alypius of that plague. But he took it to himself and thought that I would not have said it but for his sake. And what any other man would have taken as an occasion of offense against me, this worthy young man took as a reason for being offended at himself, and for loving me the more fervently. Thou hast said it long ago and written in thy Book, "Rebuke a wise man, and he will love you." [163] Now I had not rebuked him; but thou who canst make use of everything, both witting and unwitting, and in the order which thou thyself knowest to be best -- and that order is right -- thou madest my heart and tongue into burning coals with which thou mightest cauterize and cure the hopeful mind thus languishing. Let him be silent in thy praise who does not meditate on thy mercy, which rises up in my inmost parts to confess to thee. For after that speech Alypius rushed up out of that deep pit into which he had willfully plunged and in which he had been blinded by its miserable pleasures. And he roused his mind with a resolve to moderation. When he had done this, all the filth of the gladiatorial pleasures dropped away from him, and he went to them no more. Then he also prevailed upon his reluctant father to let him be my pupil. And, at the son's urging, the father at last consented. Thus Alypius

began again to hear my lectures and became involved with me in the same superstition, loving in the Manicheans that outward display of ascetic discipline which he believed was true and unfeigned. It was, however, a senseless and seducing continence, which ensnared precious souls who were not able as yet to reach the height of true virtue, and who were easily beguiled with the veneer of what was only a shadowy and feigned virtue.

CHAPTER VIII

13. He had gone on to Rome before me to study law -- which was the worldly way which his parents were forever urging him to pursue -- and there he was carried away again with an incredible passion for the gladiatorial shows. For, although he had been utterly opposed to such spectacles and detested them, one day he met by chance a company of his acquaintances and fellow students returning from dinner; and, with a friendly violence, they drew him, resisting and objecting vehemently, into the amphitheater, on a day of those cruel and murderous shows. He protested to them: "Though you drag my body to that place and set me down there, you cannot force me to give my mind or lend my eyes to these shows. Thus I will be absent while present, and so overcome both you and them." When they heard this, they dragged him on in, probably interested to see whether he could do as he said. When they got to the arena, and had taken what seats they could get, the whole place became a tumult of inhuman frenzy. But Alypius kept his eyes closed and forbade his mind to roam abroad after such wickedness. Would that he had shut his ears also! For when one of the combatants fell in the fight, a mighty cry from the whole audience stirred him so strongly that, overcome by curiosity and still prepared (as he thought) to despise and rise superior to it no matter what it was, he opened his eyes and was struck with a deeper wound in his soul than the victim whom he desired to see had been in his body. Thus he fell more miserably than the one whose fall had raised that

mighty clamor which had entered through his ears and unlocked his eyes to make way for the wounding and beating down of his soul, which was more audacious than truly valiant -- also it was weaker because it presumed on its own strength when it ought to have depended on Thee. For, as soon as he saw the blood, he drank in with it a savage temper, and he did not turn away, but fixed his eyes on the bloody pastime, unwittingly drinking in the madness -- delighted with the wicked contest and drunk with blood lust. He was now no longer the same man who came in, but was one of the mob he came into, a true companion of those who had brought him thither. Why need I say more? He looked, he shouted, he was excited, and he took away with him the madness that would stimulate him to come again: not only with those who first enticed him, but even without them; indeed, dragging in others besides. And yet from all this, with a most powerful and most merciful hand, thou didst pluck him and taught him not to rest his confidence in himself but in thee -- but not till long after.

CHAPTER IX

14. But this was all being stored up in his memory as medicine for the future. So also was that other incident when he was still studying under me at Carthage and was meditating at noonday in the market place on what he had to recite -- as scholars usually have to do for practice -- and thou didst allow him to be arrested by the police officers in the market place as a thief. I believe, O my God, that thou didst allow this for no other reason than that this man who was in the future to prove so great should now begin to learn that, in making just decisions, a man should not readily be condemned by other men with reckless credulity.

For as he was walking up and down alone before the judgment seat with his tablets and pen, lo, a young man -- another one of the scholars, who was the real thief -- secretly brought a hatchet

(Continued AUGUSTINE on page 30)

THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

BOOK SIX (Cont'd)

CHAPTER VI

9. I was still eagerly aspiring to honors, money, and matrimony; and thou didst mock me. In pursuit of these ambitions I endured the most bitter hardships, in which thou wast being the more gracious the less thou wouldst allow anything that was not thee to grow sweet to me. Look into my heart, O Lord, whose prompting it is that I should recall all this, and confess it to thee. Now let my soul cleave to thee, now that thou hast freed her from that fast-sticking glue of death.

How wretched she was! And thou didst irritate her sore wound so that she might forsake all else and turn to thee -- who art above all and without whom all things would be nothing at all -- so that she should be converted and healed. How wretched I was at that time, and how thou didst deal with me so as to make me aware of my wretchedness, I recall from the incident of the day on which I was preparing to recite a panegyric on the emperor. In it I was to deliver many a lie, and the lying was to be applauded by those who knew I was lying. My heart was agitated with this sense of guilt and it seethed with the fever of my uneasiness. For, while walking along one of the streets of Milan, I saw a poor beggar -- with what I believe was a full belly -- joking and hilarious. And I sighed and spoke to the friends around me of the many sorrows that flowed from our madness, because in spite of all our exertions -- such as those I was then laboring in, dragging the burden of my unhappiness under the spur of ambition, and, by dragging it, increasing it at the same time -- still and all we aimed only to attain that very happiness which this beggar had reached before us; and there was a grim chance that we should never attain it! For what he had obtained through a few coins, got by his begging, I was still scheming for by many a wretched and

tortuous turning -- namely, the joy of a passing felicity. He had not, indeed, gained true joy, but, at the same time, with all my ambitions, I was seeking one still more untrue. Anyhow, he was now joyous and I was anxious. He was free from care, and I was full of alarms. Now, if anyone should inquire of me whether I should prefer to be merry or anxious, I would reply, "Merry." Again, if I had been asked whether I should prefer to be as he was or as I myself then was, I would have chosen to be myself; though I was beset with cares and alarms. But would not this have been a false choice? Was the contrast valid? Actually, I ought not to prefer myself to him because I happened to be more learned than he was; for I got no great pleasure from my learning, but sought, rather, to please men by its exhibition -- and this not to instruct, but only to please. Thus thou didst break my bones with the rod of thy correction.

10. Let my soul take its leave of those who say: "It makes a difference as to the object from which a man derives his joy. The beggar rejoiced in drunkenness; you longed to rejoice in glory." What glory, O Lord? The kind that is not in thee, for, just as his was no true joy, so was mine no true glory; but it turned my head all the more. He would get over his drunkenness that same night, but I had slept with mine many a night and risen again with it, and was to sleep again and rise again with it, I know not how many times. It does indeed make a difference as to the object from which a man's joy is gained. I know this is so, and I know that the joy of a faithful hope is incomparably beyond such vanity. Yet, at the same time, this beggar was beyond me, for he truly was the happier man -- not only because he was thoroughly steeped in his mirth while I was torn to pieces with my cares, but because he had gotten his wine by giving good wishes to the passers-by while I was following after the ambition of my pride by lying. Much to this effect I said to my good companions, and I saw how readily they reacted pretty much as I did. Thus I found that it went ill with me; and I

fretted, and doubled that very ill. And if any prosperity smiled upon me, I loathed to seize it, for almost before I could grasp it, it would fly away.

CHAPTER VII

11. Those of us who were living like friends together used to bemoan our lot in our common talk; but I discussed it with Alypius and Nebridius more especially and in very familiar terms. Alypius had been born in the same town as I; his parents were of the highest rank there, but he was a bit younger than I. He had studied under me when I first taught in our town, and then afterward at Carthage. He esteemed me highly because I appeared to him good and learned, and I esteemed him for his in-born love of virtue, which was uncommonly marked in a man so young. But in the whirlpool of Carthaginian fashion -- where frivolous spectacles are hotly followed -- he had been inveigled into the madness of the gladiatorial games. While he was miserably tossed about in this fad, I was teaching rhetoric there in a public school. At that time he was not attending my classes because of some ill feeling that had arisen between me and his father. I then came to discover how fatally he doted upon the circus, and I was deeply grieved, for he seemed likely to cast away his very great promise -- if, indeed, he had not already done so. Yet I had no means of advising him, or any way of reclaiming him through restraint, either by the kindness of a friend or by the authority of a teacher. For I imagined that his feelings toward me were the same as his father's. But this turned out not to be the case. Indeed, disregarding his father's will in the matter, he began to be friendly and to visit my lecture room, to listen for a while and then depart.

12. But it slipped my memory to try to deal with his problem, to prevent him from ruining his excellent mind in his blind and headstrong passion for frivolous sport. But thou, O Lord, who holdest the helm of all that thou hast created,[161] thou hadst not forgotten

(Continued AUGUSTINE on page 29)

(Continued SSB NEWS from page 4)

man, while remaining fully and completely Divine. And He dwelt amongst us. He lived with us, like us, was one of us as well as God.

What does the Hail Mary tell us now?

It tells us this is the unique woman, just as her Son is the unique Man. It informs us it is reasonable, more than reasonable, it is valid to expect meaningful assistance from this woman who has been the gate through which all power, authority, truth, reality, through which ALL has come to us her fellow creatures. And so we ask for that assistance, for one must ask if one desires to expect to receive.

Therefore, in the very next verse, we both ask for that assistance, and give the reason why we ask for that assistance, when we pray:

V: Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,
R: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Then we petition God the Father, identifying ourselves as true Christians, having in our lineage received notice from Angels that the Saviour was conceived in flesh in one with His Divinity and born, suffered, died, and rose from the dead, asking through that same Jesus Christ God that the Father pour His very essence into our hearts, into our essence, that we may become one with God.

V: Let us pray.

All: Pour forth, we beseech the, O Lord, thy grace unto our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, thy Son, was made known by the message of an Angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection, through the same Christ, our Lord, Amen.

In light of the Angelus, the Regina Caeli becomes a jewel emanating its own light which pierces and exposes all to ultimate clarity.

REGINA CAELI (QUEEN OF HEAVEN)

V. O' Queen of heaven rejoice! alleluia:

R. For He whom thou didst deserve to bear, alleluia,

V. Hath arisen as he said, alleluia.

R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray: O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The first verse:

V. O' Queen of heaven rejoice! alleluia:

Why?

R. For He whom thou didst deserve to bear, alleluia,
V. Hath arisen as he said, alleluia.

And in that resurrection is the validation of every claim and promise her Son, Jesus Christ God, made.

It that validation it makes sense that the thoughtful and prudent person would ask of her:

R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.

We, at least, if not those others who call themselves Christians but who have abandoned and shunned you, **we** are not fools. **WE** ask you to pray for **us** to God: to He Who is the Father of His eternally begotten and your Son; to He

Who is your only Son; to He Who overshadowed you and made the Word incarnate.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

R. Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.

That for which every aspect of creation, every created entity whether or not sentient, has waited and anticipated, is now here and not allegedly here but proven here.

Let us pray: O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; grant, we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of His Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Yes, we pray directly to You God. We have also learned some truths which were readily apparent. Amongst them is the truth of Your love for the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary. A love unique. A love far beyond that which You have for any other creature. We therefore request You induce her to intercede for us with You. We make this request for we desire the joys of everlasting life and know that her intercession has the ability to overcome even our own foolishness, our own failings and failures, our own sins - so that You God will overwhelm even our own self centered perverseness and we will seek You.

If your purpose is to attain eternal salvation for those with whom you have been entrusted by God, then use this prayer. Even if you pray Divine Liturgy alone, you do have a flock which has been entrusted to you. It is composed first of every person you have ever met, know, and will meet; and then of every person in the world, those who have gone ahead, those here, and those yet to come.

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(Continued SSB NEWS on page 6)

(Continued SSB NEWS from page 5)

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

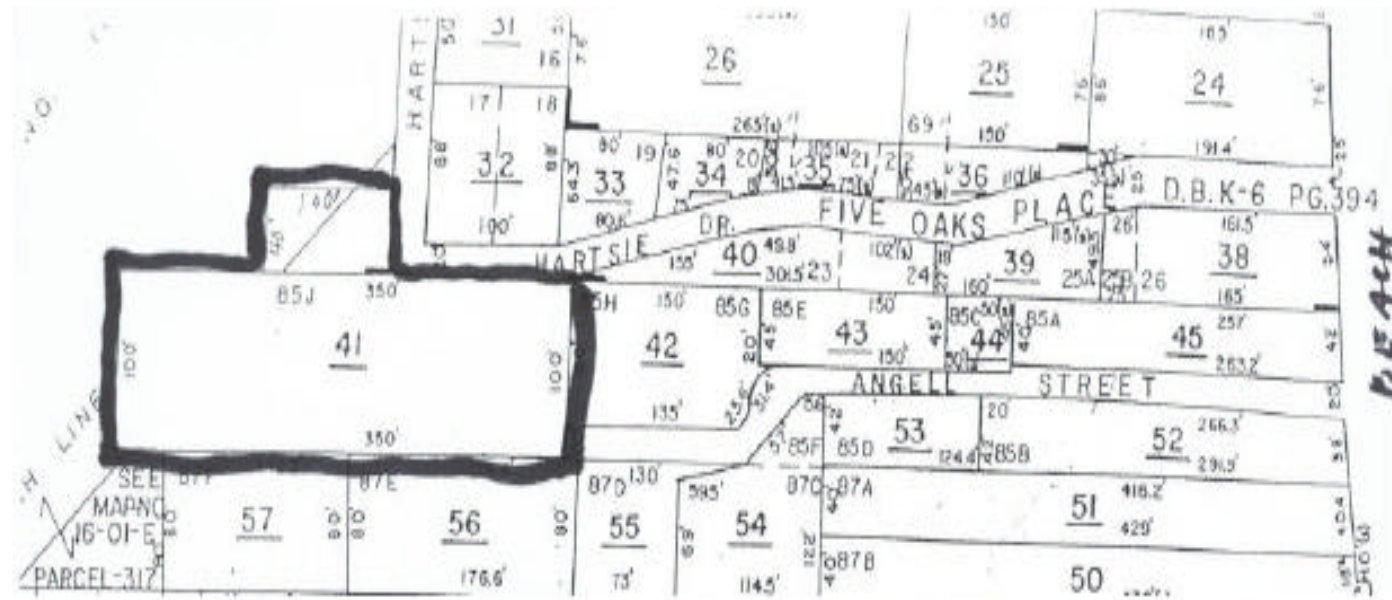
St. Mary Magdalene was destroyed by hurricane Katrina. There are no buildings or trees remaining on the property. A good natural setting is very important for maximum benefit to be derived from a spiritual retreat facility - the prime use of Saint Mary Magdalene was as a retreat house and our Mother 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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God's coffee is better than mine.

(Continued KEMPIS from page 26)

with a feast of eight days. He offered a thousand victims in Your honor and solemnly bore the Ark of the Covenant with trumpeting and jubilation to the place prepared for it; and I, unhappy and poorest of men, how shall I lead You into my house, I who scarcely can spend a half-hour devoutly -- would that I could spend even that as I ought!

O my God, how hard these men tried to please You! Alas, how little is all that I do! How short the time I spend in preparing for Communion! I am seldom wholly recollected, and very seldom, indeed, entirely free from distraction. Yet surely in the presence of Your life-giving Godhead no unbecoming thought should arise and no creature possess my heart, for I am about to receive as my guest, not an angel, but the very Lord of angels.

Very great, too, is the difference between the Ark of the Covenant with its treasures and Your most pure Body with its ineffable virtues, between these sacrifices of the law which were but figures of things to come and the true offering of Your Body which was the fulfillment of all ancient sacrifices.

Why, then, do I not long more ardently for Your adorable presence? Why do I not prepare myself with greater care to receive Your sacred gifts, since those holy patriarchs and prophets of old, as well as kings and princes with all their people, have shown such affectionate devotion for the worship of God?

The most devout King David danced before the ark of God with all his strength as he recalled the benefits once bestowed upon his fathers. He made musical instruments of many kinds. He composed psalms and ordered them sung with joy. He himself often played upon the harp when moved by the grace of the Holy Ghost. He taught the people of Israel to praise God with all their hearts and to raise their voices every day to bless and glorify Him. If such great devotion flourished in those days

and such ceremony in praise of God before the Ark of the Covenant, what great devotion ought not I and all Christian people now show in the presence of this Sacrament; what reverence in receiving the most excellent Body of Christ!

Many people travel far to honor the relics of the saints, marveling at their wonderful deeds and at the building of magnificent shrines. They gaze upon and kiss the sacred relics encased in silk and gold; and behold, You are here present before me on the altar, my God, Saint of saints, Creator of men, and Lord of angels!

Often in looking at such things, men are moved by curiosity, by the novelty of the unseen, and they bear away little fruit for the amendment of their lives, especially when they go from place to place lightly and without true contrition. But here in the Sacrament of the altar You are wholly present, my God, the man Christ Jesus, whence is obtained the full realization of eternal salvation, as often as You are worthily and devoutly received. To this, indeed, we are not drawn by levity, or curiosity, or sensuality, but by firm faith, devout hope, and sincere love.

O God, hidden Creator of the world, how wonderfully You deal with us! How sweetly and graciously You dispose of things with Your elect to whom You offer Yourself to be received in this Sacrament! This, indeed, surpasses all understanding. This in a special manner attracts the hearts of the devout and inflames their love. Your truly faithful servants, who give their whole life to amendment, often receive in Holy Communion the great grace of devotion and love of virtue.

Oh, the wonderful and hidden grace of this Sacrament which only the faithful of Christ understand, which unbelievers and slaves of sin cannot experience! In it spiritual grace is conferred, lost virtue restored, and the beauty, marred by sin, repaired. At times, indeed, its grace is so great that, from the

fullness of the devotion, not only the mind but also the frail body feels filled with greater strength.

Nevertheless, our neglect and coldness is much to be deplored and pitied, when we are not moved to receive with greater fervor Christ in Whom is the hope and merit of all who will be saved. He is our sanctification and redemption. He is our consolation in this life and the eternal joy of the blessed in heaven. This being true, it is lamentable that many pay so little heed to the salutary Mystery which fills the heavens with joy and maintains the whole universe in being.

Oh, the blindness and the hardness of the heart of man that does not show more regard for so wonderful a gift, but rather falls into carelessness from its daily use! If this most holy Sacrament were celebrated in only one place and consecrated by only one priest in the whole world, with what great desire, do you think, would men be attracted to that place, to that priest of God, in order to witness the celebration of the divine Mysteries! But now there are many priests and Mass is offered in many places, that God's grace and love for men may appear the more clearly as the Sacred Communion is spread more widely through the world.

Thanks be to You, Jesus, everlasting Good Shepherd, Who have seen fit to feed us poor exiled people with Your precious Body and Blood, and to invite us with words from Your own lips to partake of these sacred Mysteries: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

[48] Matt. 11:28.

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(Continued **KEMPIS** from page 25)

are my confidence. You are my consoler, most faithful in every need.

All seek their own interests. You, however, place my salvation and my profit first, and turn all things to my good. Even though exposing me to various temptations and hardships, You Who are accustomed to prove Your loved ones in a thousand ways, order all this for my good. You ought not to be loved or praised less in this trial than if You had filled me with heavenly consolations.

In You, therefore, O Lord God, I place all my hope and my refuge. On You I cast all my troubles and anguish, because whatever I have outside of You I find to be weak and unstable. It will not serve me to have many friends, nor will powerful helpers be able to assist me, nor prudent advisers to give useful answers, nor the books of learned men to console, nor any precious substance to win my freedom, nor any place, secret and beautiful though it be, to shelter me, if You Yourself do not assist, comfort, console, instruct, and guard me. For all things which seem to be for our peace and happiness are nothing when You are absent, and truly confer no happiness.

You, indeed, are the fountain of all good, the height of life, the depth of all that can be spoken. To trust in You above all things is the strongest comfort of Your servants.

My God, the Father of mercies, to You I look, in You I trust. Bless and sanctify my soul with heavenly benediction, so that it may become Your holy dwelling and the seat of Your eternal glory. And in this temple of Your dignity let nothing be found that might offend Your majesty. In Your great goodness, and in the multitude of Your mercies, look upon me and listen to the prayer of Your poor servant exiled from You in the region of the shadow of death. Protect and preserve the soul of Your poor servant among the many dangers of this corruptible life, and di-

rect him by Your accompanying grace, through the ways of peace, to the land of everlasting light.

BOOK FOUR

AN INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

The Voice of Christ

Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you.[43] The bread which I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world.[44] Take you and eat: this is My Body, which shall be delivered for you. Do this for the commemoration of Me.[45] He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him.[46] The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.[47]

[43] Matt. 11:28.

[44] John 6:52.

[45] 1 Cor. 11:24.

[46] John 6:57.

[47] John 6:64.

The First Chapter

The Great Reverence With Which We Should Receive Christ

The Disciple

These are all Your words, O Christ, eternal Truth, though they were not all spoken at one time nor written together in one place. And because they are Yours and true, I must accept them all with faith and gratitude. They are Yours and You have spoken them; they are mine also because You have spoken them for my salvation. Gladly I accept them from Your lips that they may be the more deeply impressed in my heart.

Words of such tenderness, so full of sweetness and love, encourage me; but my sins frighten me and an unclean conscience thunders at me when approaching such great mysteries as these. The sweetness of Your words invites

me, but the multitude of my vices oppresses me.

You command me to approach You confidently if I wish to have part with You, and to receive the food of immortality if I desire to obtain life and glory everlasting.

"Come to me," You say, "all you that labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you." [48]

Oh, how sweet and kind to the ear of the sinner is the word by which You, my Lord God, invite the poor and needy to receive Your most holy Body! Who am I, Lord, that I should presume to approach You? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain You, and yet You say: "Come, all of you, to Me."

What means this most gracious honor and this friendly invitation? How shall I dare to come, I who am conscious of no good on which to presume? How shall I lead You into my house, I who have so often offended in Your most kindly sight? Angels and archangels revere You, the holy and the just fear You, and You say: "Come to Me: all of you!" If You, Lord, had not said it, who would have believed it to be true? And if You had not commanded, who would dare approach?

Behold, Noah, a just man, worked a hundred years building the ark that he and a few others might be saved; how, then, can I prepare myself in one hour to receive with reverence the Maker of the world?

Moses, Your great servant and special friend, made an ark of incorruptible wood which he covered with purest gold wherein to place the tables of Your law; shall I, a creature of corruption, dare so easily to receive You, the Maker of law and the Giver of life?

Solomon, the wisest of the kings of Israel, spent seven years building a magnificent temple in praise of Your name, and celebrated its dedication

(Continued **KEMPIS** on page 27)

OUR FICKLE HEARTS

In many ways we are just like the Jews of the time of Christ. We greet Christ with joy, knowing that because of Him we can escape the eternal unhappiness of Hell, just as the Jews knew Christ was the source of their salvation.

Then we discover we have to do things which conform to belief and Faith; believe things in addition to belief that He is God. We have to believe in goodness, in The Way Christ taught, and we have to **DO** those things He taught. We have to make Him our focus of life, instead of our own desires, and we have to make **HIS** desires **OUR** desires. We have to change from being selfish to being like Christ, and we must **WANT** to do these things.

For some persons these things appear to be relatively easy. But for most of us, though we wish to do them, the doing of them is not easy. We continually do not meet the goals. We continually fail. But if we keep trying, keep attempting to follow Christ, eventually we will **IF** we use the special gifts called Sacraments which Christ established for us.

But if we do not continually attempt to follow Christ's teachings, or do not use the Sacraments, we will have little probability of success.

Then we will be just like those who decide to not follow Christ for what ever reasons they may have. We will spend all eternity in a situation we have created for ourselves, but it will be in a world God created for those who reject God. It will not be Heaven.

Knowing what is holy and what is not is usually very easy. Doing what is holy (doing Godly deeds) and avoiding what is not holy can only be easy if we seek God's love just as we would seek the love of someone to whom we wish to be happily married. And if we regularly receive the sacraments.

If we attempted to please God using the same energy we use to please those with

whom we wish to have any type of friendship or relationship, we would all be saints, in union with God in the Eternal Now, long before we died. But we do not attempt to please God using the same effort we use to please other humans; and we do not use the same effort mainly because we do not know God as well as we think we know other people whom we do attempt to please.

Usually, when we attempt to please another person, we are attracted to the wrapper, their outward appearances, or some quality which they exhibit. Rarely are we attracted to the real, full, total person. It is only when we observe what that person does, how they react in different situations, how they treat us and others, that we are able to know the inner, real person.

With God we do not have an outward person to observe, an outward person to whom we can be attracted, a spoken word or gesture here and there which we can observe and which interests us.

This is a disadvantage to a certain extent. But we can turn this apparent disadvantage into an advantage, because we can observe what God has done, what He has promised, the fact that He keeps His promises, the benefits of what He has taught us to do; and of wanting, desiring, and doing what He recommends and requires. We can know these things without the distraction of God's physical image, and thus we can more readily know the real persona of God to the extent any creature can know the unknowable. Actually, in observing the Energies of God we are able to know God better than we are able to know our fellow creatures be they human or spirit.

Let us join the crowds in welcoming the Son of God made man. Let us follow His teachings and be happy in following them because we know the goodness with which they are taught. And though we seem to constantly fail in becoming good and holy, let us realize it is a process which is ongoing. Just as each person evolves into a more mature

person in daily living, meeting repressibilities, and enjoyment of life, so too can each person evolve into a more mature acquisition of holiness, of living a holy life, and of enjoyment in becoming and being holy.

You do not fully enjoy the things of this world unless you work to obtain them. So too will you not enjoy the benefits of holiness unless you work to obtain holiness. Just as you will often fail in your quest to obtain material happiness, but eventually do obtain some measure of material happiness if you keep seeking it; so too will you often fail in your quest to obtain holiness, but eventually will obtain some measure of holiness if you keep seeking it.

But always remember that seeking God without regular reception of the sacraments is like seeking water on the sun - your chances of success will be minimal.

Phili 2:5-11; The Passion

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(Continued **PREPARE** from page 1)
eighth deadly sin, for obvious reasons.) When we understand these sins, God's assistance system assists us to avoid and to overcome these sins.

We must also understand and practice the four moral virtues which we actually are able to acquire through application of innate character traits which God has made common in all humans, as a part of human nature. These moral virtues are: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. We must also pray that we be given the Divine Virtues, also known as the infused theological virtues because they are gifts from God, namely: Faith, Hope and Charity. Once acquired the Divine Virtues must be exercised so-as-to become strengthened.

And we should understand that the Beatitudes actually are promises of the rewards which await those who attempt with some measure of success to follow The Way taught by Christ, the Beatitudes being: 1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; 2. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land; 3. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; 4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled; 5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; 6. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God; 7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God; 8. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

First, look closely at the Ten Commandments: 1st. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath,

We also must, absolutely MUST, attain an understanding and comprehension of what those instructions are designed to accomplish, how those instructions are designed to effect the accomplishments, and why the accomplishments are desired.

nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them. (Condensed: *I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no strange gods before Me.*) 2nd. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. 3rd. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day. 4th. Honor thy father and thy mother. 5th. Thou shalt not kill. 6th. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 7th. Thou shalt not steal. 8th. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 9th. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. 10th. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Application of The Ten Commandments is not restricted to the strict administration of the words which constitute each Commandment. Application is made in the spirit of each Commandment **individually and collectively.**

I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me.

Obviously worshiping anything other than the real, true God, is forbidden. It is applicable to anything whether it be something which really exists or something imaginary or a representation of something real or imaginary other than the one, real, true God. Many people are so concerned with power, money, respect and acclaim, sex, their own physical appearance or image, reputation, legacy and how history will treat them, so-as-to actually make these concerns more important in their lives than they make God. Such concerns thus become gods which are placed before or ahead of the true God in importance.

When teenagers attain of state of over exuberance when they see a celebrity - especially musicians - they commit a form of idolatry.

God because He is God must be wor-

shipped and ***anyone who neglects to worship God*** or who places anything in a position of importance anywhere near to the importance God must command ***has committed a form of idolatry.***

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Reference to God must only be made in matters of importance. When a play, movie, or television show has a "Valley Girl" say, "Oh my God!" the name of the Lord has been "taken in vain," it has been used improperly. When someone takes an oath in court and then lies, that individual has taken the name of the Lord in vain, even if the oath has not been, "so help me God". When someone utters a curse using God in the curse, such as saying, "God damn it!" the name of the Lord has been taken in vain. Reference to God should always be made in a respectful manner and only when it is actually, really, and truly intended and meant.

God must also be given credit for that which He does, such as when a soldier survives a battle, or an individual is cured from a disease for which there is no real cure, or for the beauty of your carefully tended garden or crops, and for the forest, mountains, plains, seas, the sky and stars, and all of creation.

Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

This is not just a requirement to be present in church or if that is impossible, to think about God for a few minutes or say a few prayers on Sunday. It is a two main faceted instruction: first, to worship God in a manner more thorough, full, and complete than on other days; second, to rest from the toils and cares which are associated with our material well being, with our work, in a manner exemplified by God's resting on the seventh day of His making all of creation.

We will not discuss the right of the Church to change the Sabbath from Sat-

(Continued **PREPARE** on page 9)

(Continued **KEMPIS** from page 24)
made all the saints. I gave them grace: I brought them to glory. I know the merits of each of them. I came before them in the blessings of My sweetness. I knew My beloved ones before the ages. I chose them out of the world -- they did not choose Me. I called them by grace, I drew them on by mercy. I led them safely through various temptations. I poured into them glorious consolations. I gave them perseverance and I crowned their patience. I know the first and the last. I embrace them all with love inestimable. I am to be praised in all My saints. I am to be blessed above all things, and honored in each of those whom I have exalted and predestined so gloriously without any previous merits of their own.

He who despises one of the least of mine, therefore, does no honor to the greatest, for both the small and the great I made. And he who disparages one of the saints disparages Me also and all others in the kingdom of heaven. They are all one through the bond of charity. They have the same thought and the same will, and they mutually love one another; but, what is a much greater thing, they love Me more than themselves or their own merits. Rapt above themselves, and drawn beyond love of self, they are entirely absorbed in love of Me, in Whom they rest. There is nothing that can draw them away or depress them, for they who are filled with eternal truth burn with the fire of unquenchable love.

Therefore, let carnal and sensual men, who know only how to love their own selfish joys, forbear to dispute about the state of God's saints. Such men take away and add according to their own inclinations and not as it pleases the Eternal Truth. In many this is sheer ignorance, especially in those who are but little enlightened and can rarely love anyone with a purely spiritual love. They are still strongly drawn by natural affection and human friendship to one person or another, and on their behavior in such things here below are based their imaginings of heavenly

things. But there is an incomparable distance between the things which the imperfect imagine and those which enlightened men contemplate through revelation from above.

Be careful, then, My child, of treating matters beyond your knowledge out of curiosity. Let it rather be your business and aim to be found, even though the least, in the kingdom of God. For though one were to know who is more holy than another, or who is greater in the kingdom of heaven, of what value would this knowledge be to him unless out of it he should humble himself before Me and should rise up in greater praise of My name?

The man who thinks of the greatness of his own sins and the littleness of his virtues, and of the distance between himself and the perfection of the saints, acts much more acceptably to God than the one who argues about who is greater or who is less. It is better to invoke the saints with devout prayers and tears, and with a humble mind to beg their glorious aid, than to search with vain inquisitiveness into their secrets.

The saints are well and perfectly contented if men know how to content themselves and cease their useless discussions. They do not glory in their own merits, for they attribute no good to themselves but all to Me, because out of My infinite charity I gave all to them. They are filled with such love of God and with such overflowing joy, that no glory is wanting to them and they can lack no happiness. All the saints are so much higher in glory as they are more humble in themselves; nearer to Me, and more beloved by Me. Therefore, you find it written that they cast their crowns before God, and fell down upon their faces before the Lamb, and adored Him Who lives forever.

Many ask who is the greater in the kingdom of heaven when they do not know whether they themselves shall be worthy of being numbered among its least. It is a great thing to be even the least in heaven where all are great be-

cause all shall be called, and shall be, the children of God. The least shall be as a thousand, and the sinner of a hundred years shall die. For when the disciples asked who should be greater in the kingdom of heaven they heard this response: "Unless you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." [42]

Woe to those, therefore, who disdain to humble themselves willingly with the little children, for the low gate of the heavenly kingdom will not permit them to enter. Woe also to the rich who have their consolations here, for when the poor enter into God's kingdom, they will stand outside lamenting. Rejoice, you humble, and exult, you poor, for the kingdom of God is yours, if only you walk in the truth.

[40] Ps. 118:137.

[41] Ps. 18:10.

[42] Matt. 18:3, 4.

The Fifty-Ninth Chapter

All Hope and Trust Are to Be Fixed In
God Alone

The Disciple

What, Lord, is the trust which I have in this life, or what is my greatest comfort among all the things that appear under heaven? Is it not You, O Lord, my God, Whose mercies are without number? Where have I ever fared well but for You? Or how could things go badly when You were present? I had rather be poor for Your sake than rich without You. I prefer rather to wander on the earth with You than to possess heaven without You. Where You are there is heaven, and where You are not are death and hell. You are my desire and therefore I must cry after You and sigh and pray. In none can I fully trust to help me in my necessities, but in You alone, my God. You are my hope. You

(Continued **KEMPIS** on page 26)

(Continued **PASCHA** from page 1)

He, the fruit of the cross made of wood, burst open the gates which had been fashioned and closed upon mankind by Adam's taking and eating the fruit of the tree in the Garden of Eden. The fruit of a tree imprisoned mankind, and the fruit of the tree freed mankind.

The Creator became the creature. The Creator of mankind became The Son of Man so that mankind could become one with Him, one with God.

The Creator did not wish man to return to Eden but enter into a better place, into Heavenly Paradise in His Father's house.

The souls of mankind lost Divine Life in the Garden of Eden. But the souls of mankind had Divine Life placed within their grasps by the betrayal and Passion of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemani, and His death in the Garden of Golgotha.

In the Garden of Eden, the new life of Eve was fashioned from a rib from Adam's side as he slept. In the Garden of Golgotha, as Christ slept in death, new life for mankind flowed from the Blood of His sword pierced side.

The first man and woman were cast out of the Garden of Eden by the same Heavenly sword which cast Satan and his followers out of Heaven. And a sword made by human hands opened the very gates of Heaven to all mankind as it pierced the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Then God, the Son of God, proved that He, the Son of Man, was truly the Son of God, with the resurrection of His Earthly body.

His resurrected Body was not an animated corpse. It was not an animated puppet just as your body is not an animated puppet. It was an is as it was before His death, a complete and total human being of body, spirit and soul, just as you are. But it was and is different, for it was and is glorified,

giving the example and promise of what will be for those who truly follow Him.

With His resurrection He proved the validity of all that He had taught. With it He confirmed the reality of the Holy Eucharist which He had confectioned and instituted, and the reality all of the other Sacraments.

This in part is what on Pascha (Easter) we celebrate, commemorate, and acknowledge as truth.



+ *Paul, S.S.B.*

1 Cor. 5:7-8; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; Mat 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-7



IMITATION OF CHRIST By Thomas a Kempis

BOOK THREE

The Fifty-Eighth Chapter

High Matters and the Hidden Judgments of God
Are Not to Be Scrutinized

The Voice of Christ

My child, beware of discussing high matters and God's hidden judgments -- why this person is so forsaken and why that one is favored with so great a grace, or why one man is so afflicted and another so highly exalted. Such things are beyond all human understanding and no reason or disputation can fathom the judgments of God.

When the enemy puts such suggestions in your mind, therefore, or when some curious persons raise questions about them, answer with the prophet: "Thou art just, O Lord, and righteous are Thy judgments";[40] and this: "The judgments of the Lord are true and wholly righteous." [41] My judgments are to be feared, not discussed, because they are incomprehensible to the understanding of men.

In like manner, do not inquire or dispute about the merits of the saints, as to which is more holy, or which shall be greater in the kingdom of heaven. Such things often breed strife and useless contentions. They nourish pride and vainglory, whence arise envy and quarrels, when one proudly tries to exalt one saint and the other another. A desire to know and pry into such matters brings forth no fruit. On the contrary, it displeases the saints, because I am the God, not of dissension, but of peace -- of that peace which consists in true humility rather than in self-exaltation.

Some are drawn by the ardor of their love with greater affection to these saints or to those, but this affection is human and not divine. I am He who

(Continued **KEMPIS** on page 25)

(Continued **PREPARE** from page 8)

urday, the seventh day, to Sunday, the Eighth Day, the day of the Resurrection of the Lord other than to say it is well within the authority granted by God under the Power of the Keys. We are concerned with application of the Commandment in a manner which fosters preparation to meet Christ.

The worship of God should be, as fully as possible, in accordance with what God has instructed. Under the Old Covenant worship of God was detailed in the Law of Moses with explicit ceremonial instructions and explicit instructions for different circumstances. Atonement for sins of the priests required one procedure, and atonement for the sins of the people required another. Ransom of the first born child required specific sacrifice and ceremonies.

Under the New Covenant the focus is on the Holy Sacrifice of the Cross in the Divine Liturgy and the reception of the Sacred Body and Blood of Christ as food and drink for the soul, spirit, and body. One must prepare for this and pray during the Divine Liturgy, and carry the effects of full participation with them for as long a period of time as possible. Anything which interferes with this is to be avoided as a matter of simple common sense - which obviously is sorely lacking in today's society.

The Sabbath is also kept holy by both abstaining from the toils by which we live and by resting from those toils. A carpenter should put his hammer down and allow his muscles to rest. A scribe should close ink well and lay down his pen, or turn off his word processor, and allow his mind to be refreshed - preferably with contemplation of God and the wonders which He has made. No one should force another to work.

The rest concept of this Commandment presents more difficulties than all of the other aspect of all of the other Commandments combined.

There are certain occupations which are

so necessary for the well-being of individuals and society, that they must be in service even on the Sabbath. Medical practitioners, police and firemen, and others of similar professions must be available.

But most occupations are not of that level of necessity.

If you go to the grocery store to purchase milk for your children, you are forcing the store clerk to work, but if you do not purchase the milk your children will be in need. You should have purchased the milk the day before - but what if you did and the milk you purchased was bad?

You go to a restaurant for lunch, causing the cook and waitresses to work. But if you did not, and others also did not, perhaps the cook and the waitresses would suffer such a loss of income as to make them unable to sustain life?

It is simple to realize that if your donkey or your child falls into a ravine on Sunday, you will not say, "Good luck until Monday," but rather will pull them out of the ravine. A farmer can abstain from many of his chores on Sunday and spend an enjoyable day at Church and with his family - but if he has milk cows they must be milked in the morning and in the evening otherwise they will suffer, and may stop giving milk.

But the optional or non-necessitous activities can present difficult problems. In such situations arises the opportunity to be more courteous than on other occasions, to leave a better tip where appropriate, and in general to assist in making a little better, the life of the one who is performing a work for you or the life of the one from whom you are performing a service. In such situations arise the opportunities to be a Christian.

Honor thy father and thy mother.

Obviously minor children must follow the rule and instructions of their parents. That is a fiat.

"Honor" is not just a simple matter of being nice to your parents nor of respecting them whether or not they have earned that respect. Your parents worked with God to create you - even if your conception was based in physical passion, which is something we do not like to think about when it is applied to our parents. They therefore are entitled to an image of the respect we must acknowledge to God as Creator of everything.

But "honor" is more than that we treat them better than we treat anyone else, especially for adult children. If we are obligated to assist those in need, we are obligated to a greater measure to assist our parents whether or not they are in need. We must be patient with them when they are being difficult, and we must never manipulate or ignore them. We must take care of them ourselves to the extent we have the physical, mental, emotional, and financial ability so to do, and must not abandon our obligations to them by hiring others to perform such tasks as are necessary unless we ourselves are not capable of performing those tasks at the level and in the manner necessary.

Where they desire our company and companionship, we should provide that company and companionship, and this is one of the great matters which is most often neglected by adult children.

But we must also guard against being manipulated and controlled by them just as we must guard against our controlling and manipulating them.

Thou shalt not kill.

This in many ways, with its sister not to steal, form two paths to the Two Great Commandments, the First, to Love God, the Second, to Love thy neighbor.

This is more than just an admonition against killing, though at its foundation it forbids killing. It is an admonition against hatred, and even against dislike.

(Continued **PREPARE** on page 12)

CHILDREN'S PAGE

The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism

Q. 848. How long has the practice of granting Indulgences been in use in the Church, and what was its origin?

A. The practice of granting Indulgences has been in use in the Church since the time of the apostles. It had its origin in the earnest prayers of holy persons, and especially of the martyrs begging the Church for their sake to shorten the severe penances of sinners, or to change them into lighter penances. The request was frequently granted and the penance remitted, shortened or changed, and with the penance remitted the temporal punishment corresponding to it was blotted out.

Q. 849. How do we show that the Church has the power to grant Indulgences?

A. We show that the Church has the power to grant Indulgences, because Christ has given it power to remit all guilt without restriction, and if the Church has power, in the Sacrament of penance, to remit the eternal punishment -- which is the greatest -- it must have power to remit the temporal or lesser punishment, even outside the Sacrament of Penance.

Q. 850. How do we know that these Indulgences have their effect?

A. We know that these Indulgences have their effect, because the Church, through her councils, declares Indulgences useful, and if they have no effect they would be useless, and the Church would thus teach error in spite of Christ's promise to guide it.

Q. 851. Have there ever existed abuses among the faithful in the manner of using Indulgences?

A. There have existed, in past ages, some abuses among the faithful in the manner of using Indulgences, and the Church has always labored to correct such abuses as soon as possible. In the use of pious practices we must be always

guided by our lawful superiors.

Q. 852. How have the enemies of the Church made use of the abuse of Indulgences?

A. The enemies of the Church have made use of the abuse of Indulgences to deny the doctrine of Indulgences, and to break down the teaching and limit the power of the Church. Not to be deceived in matters of faith, we must always distinguish very carefully between the abuses to which a devotion may lead and the truths upon which the devotion rests.

Q. 853. How does the Church by means of Indulgences remit the temporal punishment due to sin?

A. The Church, by means of Indulgences, remits the temporal punishment due to sin by applying to us the merits of Jesus Christ, and the superabundant satisfactions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints; which merits and satisfactions are its spiritual treasury.

Q. 854. What do we mean by the "superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints"?

A. By the superabundant satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, we mean all the satisfaction over and above what was necessary to satisfy for their own sins. As their good works were many and their sins few -- the Blessed Virgin being sinless -- the satisfaction not needed for themselves is kept by the Church in a spiritual treasury to be used for our benefit.

Q. 855. Does the Church, by granting Indulgences, free us from doing Penance?

A. The Church, by granting Indulgences, does not free us from doing penance, but simply makes our penance lighter that we may more easily satisfy for our sins and escape the punishments they deserve.

Q. 856. Who has the power to grant Indulgences?

A. Only a Patriarch or a Jurisdictional Primate has the power to grant Indulgences for his Church; but the bishops have power to grant partial Indulgences in their own diocese. Some others, by the special permission of a Patriarch or a Jurisdictional Primate, have the right to grant certain Indulgences.

Q. 857. Where shall we find the Indulgences granted by the Church?

A. We shall find the Indulgences granted by the Church in the declarations of a Patriarch or a Jurisdictional Primate, and in the local and Ecumenical Councils of the Church. These declarations are usually put into prayer books and books of devotion or instruction.

Q. 858. What must we do to gain an Indulgence?

A. To gain an Indulgence we must be in the state of grace and perform the works enjoined.

Q. 859. Besides being in a state of grace and performing the works enjoined, what else is necessary for the gaining of an Indulgence?

A. Besides being in a state of grace and performing the works enjoined, it is necessary for the gaining of an Indulgence to have at least the general intention of gaining it.

Q. 860. How and why should we make a general intention to gain all possible Indulgences each day?

A. We should make a general intention at our morning prayers to gain all possible Indulgences each day, because several of the prayers we say and good works we perform may have Indulgences attached to them, though we are not aware of it.

Q. 861. What works are generally enjoined for the gaining of Indulgences?

A. The works generally enjoined for the gaining of Indulgences are: The saying of certain prayers, fasting, and the use

(Continued CATECHISM on page 11)

(Continued MONOTHEISM from page 22)

mandments of faith. The latter do not abuse fellow-men of theirs while following commandments of the Gospel, whereas Muslims oppress and exterminate while invoking the Koran, the Sharia(9). This is so because in Islam there is no distinction between Caesar's kingdom and God's kingdom; there is no distinction between state and religion. This is a major problem that draws the attention even of Churches methodically working for the promotion of interreligious dialogue(10), even of organisations of the European Union that work for the upgrading of Islam in Europe(11).

So we arrive at today's problematics. I shall not say much, because I am waiting to listen to your views, too. What I can say constitutes thoughts drawn upon the life of the Church. And I have to formulate them concisely here, reserving the right to develop them more fully on another occasion.

First of all, there can be no dialogue, nor of course any mutual understanding, if we depart from truth. Falsification of history does not constitute a ground for understanding but is like sand, upon which nothing stable can be constructed. Secondly, for all the campaigns against Islamophobia, the integration of Muslims into the European society will never be possible, unless a radical revision of the interpretation of the Koran precedes it on behalf of Muslims themselves. And this is not enough: Europe will not be able to assimilate the Islamic people that have settled in it, unless she sees first to the protection and strengthening of her own roots of origin, her Christian tradition(12).

Please allow me one last remark. We may have these or the other views of Islam and of the ability of Europe to integrate an Islamic population. What is certain is that, at this moment, there are economic immigrants who suffer in Europe. It is these people that we must show our solidarity and our care to, without waiting for all problems to be resolved first. As you know, our Church

provides such people with food and strives to offer them some relief. This can't be enough, though. We must constantly take care of these people who have taken refuge with us, filled with despair and expectations.

May I ask that we pray for them.

[Transl. into English by Dr Nikolaos C. Petropoulos, M.St., D.Phil. {Oxon.}]

Notes

1. As was the case with a recent formulation of the interreligious dialogue in Texas, on May 7, 2007.
2. An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, 1.19-22.
3. International Religious Freedom Report 2006, section Saudi Arabia, US Dept. of State.
4. Significant Reports are issued regularly by the International Christian Concern organisation.
5. Nina Shea, In the Lion's Den: A Shocking Account of Persecuted and Martyrdom of Christians Today and How We Should Respond, Nashville, TN, 1997.
6. The Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. Adopted and Issued at the Nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers in Cairo on August 5, 1990.
7. Stylianos Papadopoulos, Neomartyrs and a nation in servitude, Athens 1991, p. 68.
8. Robert J. Pauly, Jr., Islam in Europe, pp. 127ff.
9. Christodoulos Paraskevides, Metropolitan of Demetrias, Freedom of Religious Conscience in Islam, Athens 1991.
10. Joseph Ratzinger [Pope of Rome], Salt of the Earth. The Church at the End of the Millennium, an Interview with Peter Seewald, San Francisco 1997.
11. EUMC, Perceptions of discrimination and Islamophobia, Brussels 2006, pp. 17-21.
12. Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, The Soul of Europe, Athens 22007.

http://www.ecclesia.gr/English/archbishop/speeches.asp?cat_id=&id=641&what_main=3&what_sub=12&lang=en&archbishop_heading=Addresses/Speeches

<http://www.ecclesia.gr/English/Enindex.html>

(Continued IS THERE from page 1)

They are irrelevant because just as a person who has true sorrow for the damage he has caused will attempt to repair that damage, so too will a sinner who has true sorrow for his sins attempt to correct the wrongs he has committed - those wrongs known as sins because they are wrongs against God.

We know that since the sinner can do nothing to make atonement and reparation for transgressions against God, God incarnate, Jesus Christ, effected that ability for reconciliation between God and man.

But the sinner who has true repentance does desire to make atonement and reparation for his sins. Since not only is there no need for God to be effected by man's repentance and atonement, but it is also impossible for God to be changed by man's repentance and atonement - for God does not change - it immediately becomes obvious that the repentant man's reparation and atonement change the one making reparation and atonement.

Quibbling about the existence or reality of Purgatory is therefore nothing more than a distraction from the true issue. That issue is: Does man have to do anything about his sins or did the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ take care of everything related to sin?

Since the truly repentant desires to make reparation and atonement, and reparation and atonement can only change the penitent and not God, and that change will be to remove from the penitent that which is not in accord with God's desires, it is obvious that reparation and atonement by the sinner are necessary for salvation. Without them the sinner does not complete his part of the cleansing process.

With that in mind, Purgatory seem to be OK *(Is OK a theological term? - Ed.)*

(Continued MONOTHEISM from page 1)

according to strict distinctions. First of all, we must be clear about the aims and the limits of interreligious dialogue. Secondly, we should not give in to distortions of historical reality. Thirdly, we ought to study the role of Islam in today's Europe and in our own country, far from any racist rhetoric but also far from any embellishment. And finally, we must show solidarity with economic immigrants without overlooking the issues raised by the sharp rise of their numbers. Treating each element of the problem does not mean that the others should be downgraded or confounded with the others.

Let me begin by clarifying the limits of interreligious dialogue. Our Church is certainly in favour of the development of a dialogue with Islam. This is why we welcome the decision of the Conference of European Churches to develop such a dialogue in the forthcoming Assembly at Sibiu, Romania. However, at least from the point of view of our Church, this dialogue will be fertile, if and only if we see that it does not lead to syncretism, that it be not turned into an instrument of promotion of the perception that Christianity and Islam are both religions, one of which is better here and the other is better there, or even that Christians, Jews and Muslims talk of the same God(1).

For Christians, the following expression of St. John of Damascus, who also wrote the first methodical refutation of Islam, is of absolute validity beyond any discussion or dialogue: "All things, therefore, that have been delivered to us by Law and Prophets and Apostles and Evangelists we receive, and know, and honour, seeking for nothing beyond these"(2). There is neither place nor any point in dialogue on this.

There is a point in pursuing the interreligious dialogue as long as this latter studies the possibilities of jointly treating problems, in order to avert phenomena such as the invocation of religion as a justification of wars and terrorist actions, to enhance charity and respect for

man irrespective of denomination, gender or race, and to ensure mutual respect for the fulfilment of religious duties.

What comes out of this dialogue is, sadly, not encouraging. At this point I would like to express my sorrow, because, since interreligious dialogue began, considerable improvement has of course been achieved in the living conditions of Muslims in Europe, but this is by no means reciprocal: persecutions of Christians are continued in Islamic countries. Please allow me to mention only one example, in order to illustrate the true limits of dialogue. Saudi Arabia lavishly supports the construction of mosques all around Europe, as well as of Muslim Colleges (madrasahs). With the approval of European states, it fully covers the pay-roll of Muslim clerics and the operation of centres of promotion of the Islamic religion in Europe. However, in the same country it is still strictly prohibited to found Christian churches or to organise any public Christian event(3). Authoritative international organisations talk of persecutions of Christians both in Saudi Arabia and in other Islamic countries(4). It is estimated that during the 19th and 20th centuries more Christians were executed or murdered for their faith than during the eighteen previous centuries together(5). The modern Colosseum, that is the principal place of martyrdom and sacrifice of Christians, is now sadly the Islamic countries. Even today, the Declaration of the Rights of Man that was eventually signed by Muslim Foreign Affairs Ministers as late as 1990, has not yet been implemented in any Islamic country(6).

By this I do not suggest a change of attitude. On the contrary, I believe that dialogue with Islam must be continued, despite the one-sidedness of the results achieved so far, because the great causes that dictate it to us have not ceased: the search for peace, the standing by millions of innocent victims of war, servitude, poverty, diseases.

Another factor that we should pay atten-

tion to is history. There is now a prevalent trend to "rewrite" history so that it may serve geopolitical considerations. Thus, the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate in Spain are presented as having been bastions of religious liberty and tolerance.

As to the extent of Ottoman tolerance in Greece, we do not of course expect to learn about it from the history laundries that have sadly been assigned to teach the youth of Greece. How intolerant Ottomans were is taught by the innumerable neomartyrs who "gave up their blessed ghost either on a fire that would be set by an enthusiastic Turkish mob or through decapitation or skinning or skewering or hanging or merciless beating or drowning in seas, lakes and rivers or through severing of many of the limbs of their bodies or long starvation or even bricking-in"(7). The degree of Turkish tolerance, in particular, was also demonstrated by the 6,000 Greek clergymen, ca. 100 Bishops, and 11 Patriarchs, who knew the Ottoman sword.

Moreover, the caliphate of Cordoba, which has recently been presented as a quasi-paradise of tolerance and culture, did not for one day stop mercilessly applying the rules of the Islamic Sharia, according to which, if a Christian proclaims that Christ is God he or she is executed on the spot, processions and chiming of church bells are prohibited, Muslims who become Christians are executed, Christians are not allowed to wear shoes but must go around unshod, they must step aside when they cross a Muslim, it is prohibited to defend themselves when beaten but they only have the right to beg him who beats them to stop, and so much else that it is pointless to enumerate(8).

It is certain that Muslims, too, have suffered in the hands of Christians. However, I would like you to pay attention to the following point, which clarifies a great part of today's problematics: Muslims, and Christians alike, have suffered for centuries now in the hands of Christians who transgress the com-

(Continued MONOTHEISM on page 23)

CHILDREN'S PAGE

(Continued CATECHISM from page 10)

of certain articles of devotion; visits to Churches or altars, and the giving of alms. For the gaining of Plenary Indulgences it is generally required to go to confession and Holy Communion and pray for the intention of the Patriarch or Jurisdictional Primate.

Q. 862. What does praying for a person's intention mean?

A. Praying for a person's intention means praying for whatever he prays for or desires to obtain through prayer -- some spiritual or temporal favors.

Q. 863. What does an Indulgence of forty days mean?

A. An Indulgence of forty days means that for the prayer or work to which an Indulgence of forty days is attached, God remits as much of our temporal punishment as He remitted for forty days' canonical penance. We do not know just how much temporal punishment God remitted for forty days' public penance, but whatever it was, He remits the same now when we gain an Indulgence of forty days. The same rule applies to Indulgences of a year or any length of time.

Q. 864. Why did the Church moderate its severe penances?

A. The Church moderated its severe penances, because when Christians -- terrified by persecution -- grew weaker in their faith, there was danger of some abandoning their religion rather than submit to the penances imposed. The Church, therefore, wishing to save as many as possible, made the sinner's penance as light as possible.

Q. 865. To what things may Indulgences be attached?

A. Plenary or Partial Indulgences may be attached to prayers and solid articles of devotion; to places such as churches, altars, shrines, etc., to be visited; and by a special privilege they are sometimes attached to the good works of certain persons.

Q. 866. When do things lose the Indulgences attached to them?

A. Things lose the Indulgences attached to them:

1. When they are so changed at once as to be no longer what they were;
2. When they are sold.

Rosaries and other indulgenced articles do not lose their indulgences, when they are loaned or given away, for the indulgence is not personal but attached to the article itself.

Q. 867. Will a weekly Confession suffice to gain during the week all Indulgences to which Confession is enjoined as one of the works?

A Weekly confession will suffice to gain during the week all Indulgences to which confession is enjoined as one of the works, provided we continue in a state of grace, perform the other works enjoined and have the intention of gaining these Indulgences.

Q. 868. How and when may we apply Indulgences for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory?

A. We may apply Indulgences for the benefit of the souls in Purgatory by way of intercession; whenever this application is mentioned and permitted by the Church in granting the Indulgence; that is, when the Church declares that the Indulgence granted is applicable to the souls of the living or the souls in Purgatory; so that we may gain it for the benefit of either.

LESSON TWENTY-SECOND: On the Holy Eucharist

Q. 869. What does the word Eucharist strictly mean?

A. The word Eucharist strictly means pleasing, and this Sacrament is so called because it renders us most pleasing to God by the grace it imparts, and it gives us the best means of thanking Him for all His blessings.

Q. 870. What is the Holy Eucharist?

A. The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament which contains the body and blood, soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine.

Q. 871. What do we mean when we say the Sacrament which contains the Body and Blood?

A. When we say the Sacrament which contains the Body and Blood, we mean the Sacrament which is the Body and Blood, for after the Consecration there is no other substance present in the Eucharist.

Q. 872. When is the Holy Eucharist a Sacrament, and when is it a sacrifice?

A. The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament when we receive it in Holy Communion and when it remains in the Tabernacle of the Altar. It is a sacrifice when it is offered up at Divine Liturgy (Mass) by the separate Consecration of the bread and wine, which signifies the separation of Our Lord's blood from His body when He died on the Cross.

Q. 873. When did Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?

A. Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, the night before He died.

Q. 874. Who were present when our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist?

A. When Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, the twelve Apostles were present.

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(Continued PREPARE from page 9)

At its most gentle, one is permitted to dislike someone because of what that person does, and if what that person does which is disagreeable is very severe and also an integral part of that person's character, then the dislike may extend beyond what the person does to the person himself. By way of example, one may dislike another person's playing obnoxious music in such a manner that it intrudes upon the peace which others reasonably may expect - but that is not necessarily a sufficiently severe situation to allow dislike of the individual playing the "music". But one is allowed to dislike the individual who tortures people, not simply to dislike their torture but also to dislike the torturer.

There is a positive aspect to the command to not kill. It is the instruction to love. It is an admonition to love and to act and be loving of others and of one's self. It also is the instruction to avoid ambivalence.

We must not simply not care one way or another about other people. We must love each and every other person, whether they inflict evil upon us, shower us with blessings, or are themselves ambivalent towards us.

Thus, ***Thou shalt not kill***, becomes an admonition against both the provision of and the use of pornography, which treats humans as things used for animalistic sensual gratification.

The wide range of this commandment becomes very clear when it is viewed in conjunction with the other portions of the system which God has created for us to utilize in preparing to meet Him. Especially when viewed in conjunction with the Second of the Two Great Commandments.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The most basic application of the command to avoid adultery is this: Marriage is the permanent union of one man and one woman before God wherein the two become as one, the married person, with

all the rights and all the obligations one has for one's self being also for the one to whom one is married. You may only have sexual relations with the one to whom you are married - not simply sexual intercourse, but any type or kind of sexual relations, even to include sexual desires.

Thus, pre-marital sexual activities are prohibited, because sexual experiences are reserved to married people as a privilege and a right of marriage. Even when both individuals are not married, sexual activities are prohibited.

Sexuality is a significant aspect of marriage, but it is not the mainstay of marriage. Marriages very often are very healthy and sustained without sexual intercourse because they possess friendship, love, and respect one spouse for the other and each for themselves, bounded in love for God. And this is the main focus of the admonition against committing adultery, for in fomenting and fostering friendship, love, respect, and love for God in the marriage, the marriage is made strong and the likelihood of adultery is greatly diminished. This therefore is not only a command to not commit adultery, but also is an instruction to do that which is required to strengthen a marriage.

Committing adultery is in a very real sense a taking of a right which belongs to another, and is therefore a form of theft.

Thou shalt not steal.

It is relatively simple to comprehend the concept that taking something which belongs to another is stealing, is wrong, is evil.

But the sin of stealing, of theft, is not limited to material things.

One of the most common forms of the sin of stealing is the theft of time. When one engages in frivolity with another who is in a serious mode the one being frivolous is stealing the time of the serious one. When one "cuts in line", be it

in traffic, a check out line, entrance line to a theater, or otherwise, he has stolen the time of those who have been waiting and are now behind him.

When a supervisor does not give proper credit to a subordinate who has developed a product or procedure the supervisor has stolen the credit, honor, and any reward to which the subordinate has a right. He has also lied.

When one falsifies an insurance claim, either by making false statements or by not including all relevant facts, he has both stolen any benefit received by the report, and lied.

When a store clerk gives a patron too much change and the patron notices the error the patron who does not correct the error has stolen the excess change.

There are a multitude of means of stealing, many of which society does not view as thefts.

It is also possible to take something which does not belong to another, which belongs to no one - except God - and that taking be a theft. An example is when someone goes hunting. The right to hunt on land belongs to the owner of the land. A wild animal which is traveling across the land does not necessarily belong to the land owner, but the right to hunt and to kill that animal while it is traveling across that parcel of land is the exclusive right of the owner of that land. (There are exceptions, such as in those countries where hunting certain types of animals is restricted to a certain segment of society. E.G.: harts were the exclusive province of the English King during certain periods of history.)

Basically, if "it" does not belong to you or if you do not have a right to "it" leave "it" alone. This includes your neighbor's spouse.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

(Continued PREPARE on page 15)

WAGES OF SIN AND OF TRYING TO DO A GOOD JOB

Some people are uncomfortable being admonished about sin. They are foolish, for sin is the only thing which can keep one from heaven and eternal union with God.

Sin is not just lusting after someone or some thing, or robbing a bank, or things like that. If one does not have Faith, and has had the opportunity to have Faith, that is a sin. When one who dies without having the opportunity to have Faith, is given the opportunity by God gives to have Faith, and that opportunity is rejected, that person sins. (This may be the only instance whereat a person is able to sin without there being union of body, spirit and soul.)

If a person thinks faith is an opportunity to manipulate God, that person sins.

Some sins will not keep a person from Heaven - even a large accumulation of them will not keep a person from Heaven. And some sins will send the sinner directly to Hell if they die in the state of that sin.

This is one of the reasons we talk about sin.

Another reason is that sin hurts the only Persons and the only One who loves you perfectly and without reservation - the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, God.

We constantly hurt those who love us. Usually this is through being thoughtless or neglectful or not realizing the consequences of what we do or omit. We usually have some form of knowledge of when we hurt someone we love, for we usually can see what we have done or not done and how it effects that person.

But when we hurt God, we can not see how we have hurt Him because we can not see Him and do not experience Him in the same manner which we see and

experience our fellow creatures.

Remember that the wages of sin really are death, the death of the soul, and the wages of holiness are eternal life.

We labor in the field of life into which God has placed us. Some of us live for only a few years, and some live longer, and some live until a very old age. Each one of us will receive a wage and a reward for our labors in the field of life.

Those who do not even try to perform their assigned tasks, or who disrupt the work of the other laborers, or who work in a manner which is against their employer who is God, will receive wages and reward commensurate with their labors or lack thereof. They probably will not be happy when they are paid.

And those who at least try to do the work assigned, even if they are not very diligent or very good at it - if they avoid destruction of their employer's property and at least try a little to do something positive in their employment, will receive wages and reward commensurate with their labors and their negligence. They may be happy when they are paid, but they will know they could have received more.

Those who generally try to do a good job, and generally try to be consistent and to focus on their employment and what their employer desires and to accomplish that desire, will also receive wages and reward commensurate with their labors. These probably will be very happy.

But even these will not be as happy as those who have total focus on the desires of their employer and use their entirety to accomplish and be what the will of God directs they accomplish and be.

This is true whether a person labors in God's fields for an hour, or for an hundred years.

When a person makes even one little sin more important than doing God's will,

that person is not attempting to do the best they can do. But when a person attempts to rid themselves of sin, even though they are only marginally successful, they are attempting to comply with the will of God, and they will receive a reward and a wage with which they can be happy.

Remember to use your time here on Earth to make yourself a better employee of God.

Do simple things, like making the Sign of the Cross better and with thought - not just a quick motion about your face and chest.

Think about God as you get into bed to sleep and for a second or two thank Him for the day, apologize for your deficiencies of the day - you do not have to try to remember each of them - and ask Him to take care of you that night.

Some great thinker said every journey begins with the first step.

These simple things are like putting on shoes as you begin the journey. They make the traveling a little easier. These shoes can protect you from the rocks of temptation and the dung and slop of sin when you stumble outside The Way of Jesus Christ God.

1 Cor. 9:24-27; 10:1-5; Mat. 20:1-16

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(Continued MODELS from page 19)

which desired harmony. He has brought temporal prosperity to those who in holiness sought his intercession. Some even believe him to be a real estate agent, though the practice of burying his statue head down in the yard of a house which is for sale is both disrespectful and a superstition which should not be followed. Simple intercessory prayer for assistance is sufficient.

In many ways Saint Joseph could be called the forgotten saint. Some cultures celebrate his feast day as the deliverer from famine. His having been visited by the angels to receive explanation about the pending birth of Jesus, and to receive instruction to flee into Egypt to save Our Lord from Herod, and then return when Herod was dead, are well known. But he is rarely presented in one of his most valuable roles, that of a role model.

Attempt as diligently as possible and you will never find anyone who exemplifies the holy qualities of Christ's human nature more and better than Saint Joseph. Though we know very little about Saint Joseph, that little which we do know speaks volumes.

A just man of mercy, he thought he could not complete his betrothal to the Ever Virgin Mary for she was with child, but not by him. But he did not seek to publicly humiliate her, but only to quietly break their relationship. To all appearances he had been betrayed, but he did not seek revenge for the apparent betrayal, but merely to follow the law in the manner least harmful to his betrothed. How many of us would do the same?

Though well settled and advanced in years, when it was necessary to save the life of his step-Son, Jesus, he fled with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. He took care of their every need and provided every luxury within his ability to provide. He protected them. He loved them, and in every way possible he let them know he loved them.

He is proof that a married man can readily be a holy man, and is an example to every married man.

Saint Patrick is also an example to every married man, as well as to every single man, and every Priest.

Enslaved as a youth he served his master well and honestly, being an example to every person who works for wages. After his escape he became a Priest and later returned to Ireland to spread Christianity to those who had enslaved him. He subtly taught them better methods of governance and converted virtually the entire nation to Christianity by his example of simply being good, honest, and helpful.

Saint Patrick did not seek social reform through upheaval, revolution, or forced re-distribution of wealth. He sought conversion to true Christianity and in the process of conversion wrought social reform which lasted until Ireland was conquered by, well, by Protestants - people who call themselves Christians but who really are not - but that subject is for another time.

Even if a man does not know how to be a good husband, father, son, brother, Saint Joseph and Saint Patrick show us all a man has to do is try to be good, try to be holy - not a fanatic, but really holy - and in the process he will do what a good husband, father, son, brother, does. This works for women as well.

Gal. 4:22-31; John 6:1-15

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COMMENTS ON SOME INDICATORS OF OUR TIMES

LETTERMAN - 1; DR. PHIL - 0 On his television show broadcast November 1, 2007, David Letterman shed his normal frivolous persona and asked meaningful questions of his guest, Dr. Phil (Dr. Phil McGraw).

Generally, in his responses Dr. Phil failed miserably. Particularly did he fail when Mr. Letterman, making reference to ever increasing numbers of grade school and high school girls becoming pregnant, asked Dr. Phil is he perceived a correlation between the increasing percentage of pregnant teens, and modern entertainment which depicts a sexually promiscuous life style.

Dr. Phil ridiculed the concept that there could be a correlation between portrayal of promiscuity in entertainment, and teen pregnancies.

He also avoided every attempt at serious conversation by Mr. Letterman; responding in a frivolous manner to every serious comment and inquiry by Mr. Letterman.

It was quite extraordinary.

But if one considers the source of Dr. Phil's celebrity, perhaps Dr. Phil's attitude and demeanor should have been anticipated. For, Dr. Phil attained celebrity status through the patronage of Oprah Winfrey. What ever happened to merit as opposed to patronage?

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(Continued **OTHER GUYS** from page 17)

these things as well. They could have attempted to deny their meaning and significance but that is an internal and intellectual lie - a conscious lie of which they were totally aware. They knew Jesus is God.

So after His first two appearances to just a chosen few, and then of His appearances on occasions too numerous to mention, His constant being with the Apostles and Disciples who numbered several hundred, considering their families and associates, when the news of His resurrection from the dead began to be made known, all of the leaders, religious and civil, knew for a certainty that Jesus Christ both is God and had risen complete and whole from the dead - and that He actually ate with His followers.

But very few of these leaders repented and became followers of Christ. We believe Pontius Pilate eventually did, and that his wife definitely did, as did Saint Longinus and many others. But none of these had "sold out to the Devil". They just lacked a basic spirituality until it was presented to them in a manner which they could not ignore, and then they accepted it.

But of the others there is no indication they accepted Christ even though their senses and intellects told them He is God.

While we can not know what "the other guys" thought, we can know what "the other guys" knew. But we can not begin to comprehend why they did not act positively on that knowledge, unless they desired the relative certainty of the material things they possessed over the apparent uncertainty of spiritual happiness, or valued short term material happiness over long term spiritual happiness; or perhaps they thought they could never be forgiven for what they had done. But Longinus, Pontius Pilate and his wife, and many others involved in Christ's passion and death, did regret and repent.

There must be some form of hardness of

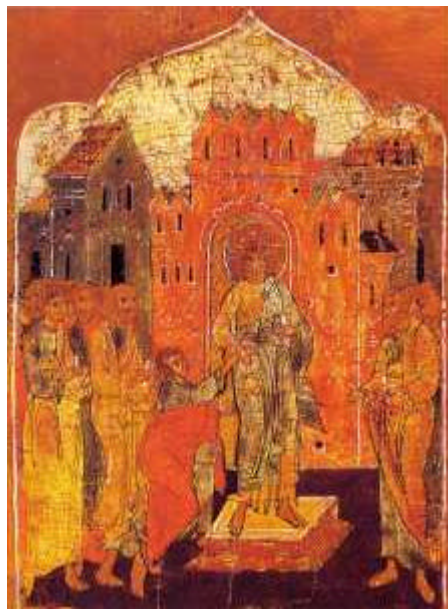
heart which is difficult for normal people to comprehend. Or, perhaps, that hardness of heart is just difficult for people who do not have it to comprehend. We can not be sure, and hopefully we will only know when we know all things in Heaven. But what ever it is, let us pray we never acquire it.

It is quite obvious that after a relatively short period of time everyone who had been and remained in or around Jerusalem and Galilee during and after the Crucifixion soon knew that Jesus is God and had risen from the dead.

The great mystery is not that of God made man, nor of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ God. Nor is it of the Sacred Eucharist, the other Sacraments, and God's Charity - Divine Love - of and for mankind. No, the great mystery then is that so many knew the truth yet did not act in accordance with the truth. And the great mystery today is that so many know the truth yet do not act in accordance with the truth. The truth that Jesus Christ is the risen God.

1 John 5:4-10; John 20:19-31

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WHO IS JESUS? WHAT IS JESUS?

Who is Jesus Christ? What *is* Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the Soldier who keeps the enemy at bay so some of us can put flowers in our hair and dance around like dope fairies protesting the war. He is the soldier who sheds His blood so some of us can march like SS Storm Troopers protesting His fighting to keep us free so some of us can spit on Him when He returns from the battle front to recover from His wounds.

Jesus established the difference between having sex and making love.

A community which follows Jesus has peace within its borders, but may be attacked from outside its borders by those who do not follow Jesus.

But a community which does not follow Jesus murders its leaders, and ridicules those of its leaders who attempt to follow Jesus. Such a community finds nothing disagreeable in sexual promiscuity, in conceiving children who are never parented, in conceiving children and killing them before they are born, in conceiving children so they can be killed for their body parts.

A community which does not follow Jesus removes His teachings from its mind then wonders why society does not practice the very basic courtesies, refusing to accept as fact the real fact that all courtesies are based in morality which comes from Jesus and the following of His teachings.

A community which does not follow Jesus experiences mass murders on its college campuses.

There are many men and women who present themselves as gentlemen, gentlewomen and ladies. And others who appear to so be. Many of these are presenting a facade. When their mask is washed away sometimes their crassness

(Continued **WHO IS** on page 19)

(Continued **PREPARE** from page 12)

This is not just an admonition against giving false testimony against someone in a legal matter. It is a blanket prohibition against uttering or making any false statement, or leaving a false impression.

It also requires one not suppress the truth. Thus, if a person is accused of something and another possesses exculpatory information the one possessing that information must make that information known and make it known in a manner useful to the accused.

It is not a prohibition against "telling a good story," such as have been told by Samuel Langhorne Clemens (Mark Twain), Shakespeare, Dickens, Louis Lamour, and the person just returning from a fishing trip relating "how the big one got away," - provided it is obvious the story of how the big one got away is a fisherman's tale.

It is not always necessary or required that one broadcast the truth, especially when there is no harm in withholding the truth and when proclaiming the truth may cause unwarranted harm. Thus if someone is a bed wetter it would be a sin against the commandment not to kill to broadcast that information when such is not necessary. Likewise, if your great aunt inquires as to your opinion of her new hat, even though it looks like a flying saucer with a salad on top, you can truthfully avoid making that comment and simply state that it compliments her . . . which is a truthful statement regarding anyone who would chose to wear such an hat.

Politicians who tell half-truths about other politicians or situations are bearing false witness.

Journalists who suppress or bury news which is beneficial to those whose politics they oppose bear false witness; as do those political cartoonist who unjustly use ridicule in caricature.

Quite simply, this is a requirement to be considerately, decently, and honorably

honest.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

Not just thy neighbor's wife, but thy neighbor's husband, must be beyond that pale. Covet not male to female, female to male, male to male, female to female.

Nor should one attempt to induce that desire in another, especially if either is married.

Which prompts an interesting truth.

Many if not most actresses are married. In their acting roles they often if not usually or more often than not, use their physical charms and allure to attract some members of their audience. This is an attempt to induce a form of an inordinate desire for the actress in at least a portion of the audience. A similar statement may be made of actors.

This is similar to a wife taking a bath on the roof of her house in sight of the king - in an attempt to induce him to covet her, *al la David and Bethsabee* - 2 Kings 11:2.

The command not to covet the wife (or husband) of another therefore obviously includes a prohibition against inducing covetousness. Indeed, implicit in each of The Ten Commandments is a prohibition against inducement of others to violate that Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

In light of the prohibition against inducement to covet, can it not therefore also be said that an actress or actor should not present herself or himself in a manner which induces any member of the audience to covet their good(ies)?

As well should be remembered that one may desire to also obtain something similar to that which another already possesses. But that desire should be neither for the exact same thing, nor

should the desire be inordinate.

When the desire to possess that which another possesses extends only to the object or another object just like that possessed by another - be it a retailer or a person who possesses the object - one may be within the bounds of propriety. But if the desire to possess without there being any use to which the object may be placed, or because it is owned by one who is viewed with envy and the desire arises out of that envy, then the desire to possess is inappropriate.

This cursory review of The Ten Commandments shows the commands to do certain "things" are not limited to doing strictly what is stated, but includes doing "things" auxiliary to the specific command. It also shows the commands to do certain "things" include, of necessity, avoiding other "things". And that the commands to not do certain "things" include not doing "things" beyond the shadow of the "things" specifically forbidden, as well as doing "things". This requires an attitude, a spirit, and an understanding of the spirit which is the foundation of each Commandment - and acceptance and following of that spirit.

So too is the approach to The Two Great Commandments, The Corporal Works of Mercy, The Spiritual Works of Mercy, and the Seven Sacraments.

Philipp 4:4-7; John 1:19-28

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(Continued **BE IT DONE** from page 1)

distances, you are aware of what is euphemistically termed "the facts of life."

You have made a promise to God that you will remain a virgin, devoted to worshipping Him continually.

But no matter what the circumstances of your life, you are still a little girl. Not a pre-juvenile, and in your culture and experience you are much more mature than females of like age in more "modern" cultures. But in the eyes of anyone fifty years of age or older, you are still a little girl.

Then this person who looks like a man but glows like fiery bronze and gold and obviously could toss the universe around like a blade of grass suddenly appears in your family's house, greets you as though he were greeting the leader of the greatest empire in the world, and in that greeting says, "Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee: Blessed art thou amongst women."

And your only surprise is at the manner of his greeting; at what he has said; at instead of calling you Mary he calls you "Full of Grace". You know only God is full of Grace. "The Lord is with Thee". People can walk with God, follow what God has taught and required. But that means that person is with God. How can it be said that God is with someone when it is only proper to say that someone is with God? "Blessed art thou amongst women." Out of all the women who are living, who ever were, who ever will be, how can I alone be called Blessed? It is not that there must be someone else who is more Blessed than I am, more holy, more devoted to God; rather, it is, what does that mean?

There was no fear, no surprise at the sudden appearance of Saint Gabriel. Only wonderment at his greeting and what did that greeting mean.

Had angels been appearing to Mary all of her life? Perhaps, but we will not know in this life.

But when Saint Gabriel stated his purpose and God's request, her response was mature beyond the years of anyone ever in the history of the world, for her response was in effect, how is it to be that I will conceive and bear a child for I have made a vow to God which can never be broken, that I will remain a virgin perpetually.

When Saint Gabriel explained she would conceive by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost in the power of the Most High - of God - and that therefore the Child born to her will be the Son of God, Mary had no hesitation. She said, in effect, I am God's to do with as He wills, so I agree to conceive by God making it happen knowing I will remain a virgin forever even though I conceive and give birth to a Son.

Total acceptance once she was assured her sacred promise to God, to remain a perpetual virgin, would not be broken. She knew that since only God could do what Saint Gabriel described, that only God could conceive in her while she remained a virgin, that the messenger must be from God. But, again, perhaps the Ever Virgin Mary was well acquainted with angels from God, which means she would also be well acquainted with devils from Satan, so she could tell them apart, or test them.

Once we ascertained that something actually is God's will, how many of us have ever even thought of doing it, much less actually done it, without hesitation? Occasionally this may happen. But it is not likely it happens very often.

Yet this was what the Ever Virgin Mary always did. Always.

No matter how old we become, what our station or condition in life is, perfect obedience to God's will is that to which we should strive to attain. We do not have to be concerned about extraordinary matters. Just the simple every day matters should be our focus.

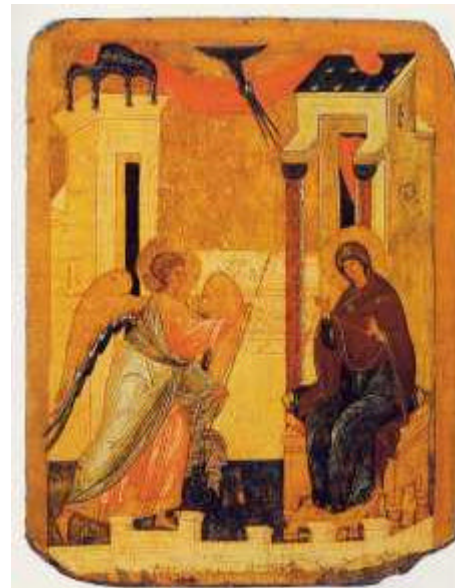
This is a matter of will. It is something which most of us find difficult primarily because we are not fully committed to it. And becoming more committed to it is also a matter of will.

Since it is today, today is a good time for us to not only resolve to be committed to doing God's will. It also is a good time to actually become committed to doing God's will. If it were yesterday, or if it were tomorrow, it would also be a good day to do this, for doing God's will is, absolutely is, the best thing we can ever do.

And it is not something which we must research to determine. God had made His will known. So, let's do it.

Is 8:10-15; Luke 1:26-38

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PASCHAL SHAME

If the New Testament is carefully examined you will discover the Apostles and Evangelists focused on the shame of Our Lord's passion and death more than they focused on His suffering. Life was difficult, life was hard, even for the wealthy. Pain and suffering were part of every day life. Torture and death, not just at the hands of those in authority, but at the hands of the "common people" was an aspect of life with which one had to contend.

One might not be able to avoid oppression, but shame was something which one could usually avoid. The shame of death by crucifixion was one of the most notable of shames. One was stripped naked and tortured in various manners, defecating and urinating all over one's self for all to see with one's bodily wastes mingling with one's own blood and being beaten into every part of one's body. Then one was nailed to a cross and raised up to slowly suffocate to death or die from heart stoppage or organ failure - a shameful way to die, stripped of all dignity, as well as being a very painful way to die.

We turn now to the Devil. The Devil hates himself as thoroughly and as totally as it is possible to hate. He expresses this hate by "taking it out" against everyone else, especially God, but also against the Angels, Humankind, the other Devils, and all of creation. He also "takes it out" against himself and his own best interests.

At the time of the Crucifixion had he known for a certainty that Jesus Christ is God the Devil would non-the-less induced and fostered the passion and death of Our Lord. Even though he knew it would lead to the ability of each human to attain eternal salvation - which, of course, is not in the Devil's best self interest - the Devil would have pressed for Christ's passion and death. He would have pressed for Christ's passion and death out of hatred for himself expressed in hatred of God and a desire to inflict pain, suffering, humiliation,

and every evil possible upon God, all in his desire to inflict the same upon himself.

When Christ suffered and died, all was as it was before He suffered and died. But when He rose from the dead glorified, shame, suffering, death and all evils all died for Him and for those who follow Christ.

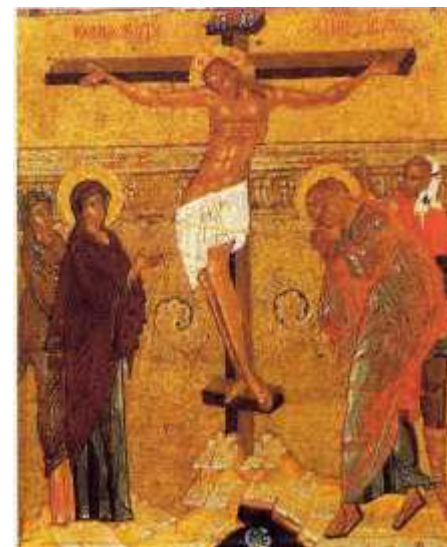
We continue to experience these and other evils because we do not truly and faithfully follow Christ. But as we improve in following Christ, these and all evils diminish and begin to die to us as well: even shame.

But shame is a perverse thing. In those who wish to be holy, shame increases with every increase in holiness until one attains holiness in union with God at which time shame is gone. But for those who wish to be evil, shame diminishes with every increase in evil until one is eternally damned in Hell at which time shame returns in its fullness.

Perhaps this is a clue as to why the Evangelists and Apostles focused so greatly on the shame of Christ's Passion, Crucifixion, and Death.

Col. 3:1-4; Mat 28:1-7

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WHAT DID THE OTHER GUYS THINK?

We know Saint Thomas doubted Our Lord had risen from the dead until he personally saw Jesus. But what about The chief priest and his ensemble, the Pharisees, Pontius Pilate and the civil authorities?

We know Longinus and the soldiers who crucified Christ immediately upon the death of Our Lord, believed He is the Son of God, and that Saint Longinus himself believed in the resurrection. So too did the soldiers who were sent to guard Christ's tomb.

Everyone in Jerusalem at the time Jesus Christ died saw the dead rising from their graves, the light from the sun cease and darkness, pure darkness, descend upon the earth - yet that pure darkness allowed them to see the dead rising from their graves and visiting with their families and friends.

Those visits must have scared the hell out of those who were being visited. And what did they talk about? It is difficult to imagine a living person being visited by their deceased father and mother and a couple of cousins and just saying, "Hi Mom and Dad. How are things going?"

The chief priest and religious rulers saw the curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple, torn, revealing the Holy of Holies and thereby desecrating it for all time.

Everyone present felt the earthquake and saw all these things. Perhaps Saint Thomas had left the city. We do not know. But we do know he believed Jesus Christ is God, for he continued to meet with the other Apostles. He just had difficulty in believing in Christ's resurrection until he saw the risen Christ.

But the Jewish priests and leaders and the Roman and other civilian leaders, as well as the masses, all experienced

(Continued **OTHER GUYS** on page 18)