



# REDEMPTION

The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil  
(The Basilians - The Basilian Fathers )  
THE ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE AMERICAS



Volume 21 No. 4 OF THE CHURCH OF MAN WITH GOD November, 2011

## ~ WHEN THE “SOMETHING” ONE CAN NOT DESCRIBE COMES UPON YOU ~

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

There are times when something which is not quite capable of being described comes upon us; as if it were a form or type of need, but it is not.

Some think of this “something” as the need to be hugged. It is not.



Some think of it as the need to hug. In a sense it is. But hugging just anyone does not begin to do anything to or with this “something”. Hugging your spouse is better but that also does not accomplish what is called upon by this “something”. Hugging your child(ren) or grandchild(ren) is better, but that too does not approach nor does it complete what the “something” seeks.

When you are blessed with this occurrence, you may wish to do this. Place yourself before the dead Christ crucified on the cross. Assist Saint Joseph of Arimathea, Saint

Nicodemus, and Saint John, as they lower Our Lord from the cross and place Him in the arms of His Blessed Mother. She holds Him to her breast. Saint Mary Magdalene cradles His feet washing His blood from His feet with her tears. You - kneel before Him in His Blessed Mother’s arms and pick up His lifeless right hand from the ground. Press His arm against your chest and hold His bloody fingers in a kiss against your lips. His peace will flood you as you find yourself in the arms of the risen Christ..



++ *Lee, S.S.B.*

*God, please help me love You*

### ***THE REDEMPTION - A SERIES OF ARTICLES EXPLORING ASPECTS OF GOD AND OF MAN REVEALED, EXPRESSED, AND MADE EXPLICIT IN THE REDEMPTION***

### ***THE REDEMPTION: PROPRIETY IN PERCEPTION OF HUMAN STATUS IS DEFINED IN REDEMPTION***

Whenever we attempt to justify what we do, have done, wish to do, have omitted or not done, or to justify what we think, or an attitude we have, the attempt at justification often is supported on a foundation based in the concept that we are “finding”, expressing, exploring, maturing, our own psyche, personality, personhood . . .

Contemplate this genre of philosophy, this line of thought, in light of the reason man was created in the image and likeness of God - that reason being that each human glorify God by an homage of love.

A person who does something which is  
*(Continued REDEMPTION on page 6)*

## **THE BEAUTY PERCEIVED**

We each have the primary vocation of living in accordance with God’s instructions for the sake of God, and in concordance therewith uniting ourselves as best we are able with God, and all others as well as best as we are able, and all of creation as well as best as we are able, as an offering to God for love of God.

We may have occupations which are tasked with this vocation, especially if one is a Priest or a religious. If such is the situation, when one such individual, in the course of their occupation, transgresses their vocation, as did the doctor of the law who attempted to tempt Our Lord, or the Pharisees who were in conspiracy with the doctor of the law, then a great blasphemy is committed.

But one need not be a Priest or religious to have an occupation which is tasked with the primary vocation of living in accordance with God’s instructions for

*(Continued BEAUTY on page 15)*

## **ADVENT - THE TIME BEFORE THE EVENT - A GOOD TIME TO CONTEMPLATE THE EVENT**

Advent is the time of anticipation of the celebration of the event of the birth of the Incarnate only Begotten Son of God. It is a very good time to reflect on this historical event which is equaled in importance only by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the same Word Incarnate - Jesus Christ.

This event had been anticipated for thousands of years by mankind and all people, human and angelic, since the

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The sole purpose of this publication is to comply with the teachings and instructions of Jesus Christ, second person of the Trinity God, and to further His kingdom; or, in plain language, to get as many of our sorry selves to heaven as is possible.

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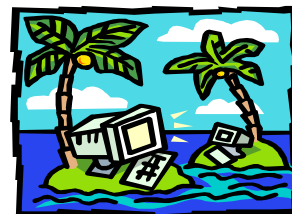
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Prayer requests operates under a simple premise. When we pray for each other we fulfill a portion of our Christian duty. Prayers for the living and for the dead are allowed and welcome. Those who make prayer requests agree to include the prayer requests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

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**LETTERS**

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

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

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

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### PLEASE NOTE:

**Partially as an economy measure, and partially out of aggravation with the conspicuously petty increase in costs and changes in policy by AT&T, we have dropped the telephone number (225) 294-2233, which was the house number for Holy Innocents.**

**The telephone number (504) 298-3867, will be our primary telephone number. This is an Internet telephone system which works quite well as those of you who have used it know.**

**But, since AT&T is involved (AT&T is our Internet Provider at our new location), and considering the problems we have experienced with AT&T, it would not be a surprise if some additional problems were encountered.**

By the way, anyone who believes government should be run or operated like

a business obviously has not considered the possibility it already is being run and operated like a business, namely AT&T.

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### RETREATS

We hosted several retreats at Holy Innocents this year. Some with just single retreatant, and others with several. They are basically unstructured in that there are no formal "lectures", but there is a somewhat structured prayer format.

Divine Liturgy is at 8:00 AM, weekdays and Saturdays and at 10:00 AM, Sundays. We use computer generated bells and bugle calls to mark the prayer day. Angelus bells ring at 6 AM, Noon, and 6 PM. Church call (bugle) is at 7:45 AM, weekdays and Saturdays, and at 9:30 AM, Sundays. Assembly (bugle) sounds at 2:00 PM, weekdays and Sundays for rosary or other prayer, and at 5:00 PM, Saturdays. Vespers and confessions for the public are at 6:00 PM, Saturdays. Tattoo (lights out) sounds at 8:45 PM, and Taps at 9:00 PM, but we are rather "loose" as to retiring for the night . . . adults should be aware as to how much rest they require.

Meals are simple, filling, low or no sodium (salt) with a salt shaker on the table. Coffee is virtually always available.

Most clergy arrive on a Monday or Tuesday and leave by Friday so-as-to be able to tend to their flock on Saturday and Sunday.

We have provisions for married clergy but it seems that married clergy only bring Matuska if they are visiting. And of course, if they are visiting, their children are welcome as well.

Concelebration of Divine Liturgy is the norm but we do have additional antimensas for individual praying of Divine Liturgy.

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## CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

We have made little progress since the basic construction of the Church (Holy Innocents) in October of 2010. The unusual heat and drought of this past summer, combined with the normal "ravages" and "deterioration" of the human aging process, slowed the construction process to a virtual stand still.

While the Church building is completely usable, and is in fact being used for worship on a daily basis, we have yet to build the Iconostat, install the Altar platform, panel the walls, build shelving, cabinets, and closets, new pew benches, and carpet.

Before we do any of these we must first finish the work shop. All of the fine and much of the rough carpenter work should be done in the work shop for this will result in better craftsmanship. But the weather has been too hot to complete the work shop. This has compromised our ability to make more than nominal progress in completing the interior of the Church.

Perhaps now that the hottest portion of the year is past, we will be able to begin completion of the work shop and then on the interior of the Church. But we are now experiencing an unusually cold beginning to the end of the warm weather season.

As Charlie Brown is wont to say every Autumn when he trusts Lucy to hold the football and she yanks it away causing him to fly through the air and crash land, "**AAAaaagggggrrrrrhhh!**"

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**EVIL WILL FLOURISH WHEN IT IS NOT OPPOSED**  
**We must therefore persevere in promulgation of Truth.**

Those who corrupt the teachings of Christ expose themselves to severe consequences.

Christ's teachings can be corrupted by those who promulgate them unintentionally. If this happens because of inattention or other personal and very easily avoidable deficiency of one teaching The Way, the damage done is just as severe as that which occurs because of a deficiency which is extremely difficult to avoid. It also is just as severe as the damage done by one who intentionally corrupts Christ's teachings.

We will presume to believe the judgment imposed by God upon each of these is greatly different; though we would not presume to even begin to pretend to know what such judgments will be.

However, we do have an indication as to what the most severe judgment will be, and that it will be reserved for those who intentionally spread evil under the guise of teaching the Word of God. They are enemies who have spread the seeds of false teachings, of weeds, in the world, in God's field, where God spread the seeds of truth, of His own teachings, of wheat. The field, the world, will therefore yield a harvest of wheat and of weeds, of the fruit of truth and of the fruit of lies, of good and of evil,.

The good will be taken into the mansion of the Father of Jesus Christ, while the evil will be cast into the eternal fires of Hell.

Where are the brave sowers of the truth? We constantly see and hear the sowers of cockle, of weeds, of lies. From those who preach a false Christ who grants material wealth with little or no spiritual focus, to those who teach mankind and each individual is god, and those in between who teach there is no God or that the universe is god, we hear their teachings and see their effects. But where are the promulgators of the truth?

There can be no accommodation with the sowers of cockle. There can be no common interests with followers of that which is in opposition to God. If a sower of weeds desires to obtain a living wage for all who are employed, while that is an honorable goal, the fact that it is propounded by one who is evil means those who truly follow Christ can not join with the one who follows Satan, even for the purpose of attaining a great good, the good of a living wage for all employees. It does not prevent the true followers of Christ from seeking a living wage for all employees. Indeed, the true followers of Christ must seek a living wage for all employees. But they can not join their efforts with those who oppose Christ.

On the part of those who would follow Christ, there simply can not be any collusion with, no trafficking with, no working with, EVIL.

Where are the promulgators of the truth?

Often they are demeaned and ridiculed by those who traffic with the sowers of cockle, who seek the approval of their equals instead of seeking the approval of the only One Who and Which is supreme - of God.

They are shouted down by those who plant twenty seeds of hell for every seed of heaven.

Often they become so battered they find it difficult to ascertain a pragmatic, realistic, and effective method of promulgating the truth, the real worship of the one, only, real God.

There is only one, sure, always effective, method and means of promulgating what Christ actually taught and lived. That method is living it yourself. Even when adverse measures are taken against you, whether it be ridicule by the so called sophisticated, or even economic attack on you, your family, and those dependent upon you, live what Christ taught.

Preaching is mostly effective when it is in effect preaching to the choir or those who

wish to join the choir. The most ardent supporters of those who teach a religion of material gain are those who wish to receive material gain.

But being a living example of of your beliefs will immediately induce either attraction or aversion in others. Any normal and even an abnormal person who sees a celebrity lying drunk in the gutter will experience an aversion to that person, and from that, some form of aversion to that which lead to the celebrity's condition. Likewise, a straight talking Priest who wears his office in public and does not deign himself too important to talk with the public - even aggravating charismatic power seekers, will have a positive effect on those with whom he comes in contact. Especially if people perceive his happiness despite impoverishment. And a laborer who refuses to turn his pay check into beer and whiskey in favor of taking care of his family will leave an impression on his fellow workers. The executive who does not take advantage of his subordinates, who grants rewards where appropriate, gives credit where credit is due, and does not engage in unfair business or retail practices, also makes a Godly statement in the midst of a Godless world.

There is no more effective means of promulgating God's truth than actually living it.

Ref: Col. 3:12-17; Mat. 13:24-30

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not in harmony with the reason we were created, but who is doing the best they are able to do having sought truth, generally may not be culpable for their errors.

Other than that, and again, generally, anything we do or think which is not in harmony with the reason we were created is a sin. Remember, sin, according to Saint Basil, is the misuse of powers given us by God for doing good, a use contrary to God's commandments.

These are very simple concepts which we readily comprehend. What we often fail to do is to properly realize, or to properly appreciate, that every sin is an attempt by the sinner to be an equal with or even superior to God, to replace God's judgment, standards, and desires with the sinner's judgment, standards, and desires. Every sin also is a refusal by the sinner to give to God the sinner's heart's submission, and a refusal by the sinner to glorify God by an homage of love. Of course there are varying degrees of this as well as varying degrees of awareness, with some sins seeming to be more of an instinctive reaction related to self-preservation or desire to please or to be liked rather than actual intentional and planned insult to God.

Eve and Adam committed the first sin committed by man. And every human since Adam and Eve who has attained the ability to reason, except the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary, has sinned.

Because of what sin is, every sin is an insult to God, and the most severe sins we each commit are for each of us our own individual supreme insult to God.

As a result of human sin, all of that part of creation which was planned by God to be husbanded by and to be subject to mankind, became corrupted, as did all of mankind - again except the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary.

Such a horrible occurrence and continued occurrences cried out by the very nature of having been made purpose specific by God, cried out both for reparation and for rehabilitation. But the sinner was incapable of

making reparation and self-rehabilitation for two important reasons. God was the One insulted and therefore only God could make reparation. But also the sinner had severed himself from the ready flow of love from God which had before the fall of man been so abundantly showered upon mankind.

Many men desired this love be activated in themselves for the purpose of furthering the course and progress of reparation and rehabilitation, of making eternal salvation and union with God possible. But sinners lacked the ability to love in a manner acceptable to God which would give life to reparation and to rehabilitation and those who desired this knew and were well aware of their lack of ability to so love.

Jesus Christ being totally Divine and totally human, uniting those two complete and different natures in His own person hypostatically without confusing or changing them, reconciled them in His sinless Self. By so doing He assured our redemption because by His very constitution as both man and God He was Redeemer even before He actually redeemed us by the privileged acts - some of which acts others had done but which were not privileged because they were not done by the Redeemer.

Salvation, for those who chose to accept it, was in hand from the instant there was Someone who could worship God with the worship that is His due, Someone who could worship in an effective manner, worship in a manner which was capable of producing the desired effect, worship efficaciously.

This is reality. In reality there is salvation through only Jesus Christ. Any modification of They Way indestructibly established by Jesus Christ does not modify The Way taught by Jesus Christ but does create a barrier to salvation for those who attempt to make the modifications as well as those who follow the attempted modifications.

God chose freely to make reparation, salvation, redemption, and rehabilitation readily accessible to man and within the

ability of every human to accept, achieve, and for each human to complete in and for his or her self. Those who wish to be or claim to be God or equal to or superior to God will not perceive this or will ignore this. If only such people would humble themselves - just a little - so that they could love.

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### **THE REDEMPTION: WHY DID GOD REDEEM MANKIND AND WHY IN THE MANNER DONE?**

Let us consider two facts: First, the reason man was created in the image and likeness of God was that each human glorify God by an homage of love; Second, every sin is an attempt by the sinner to be an equal with or even superior to God, and also a refusal by the sinner to give to God the sinner's heart's submission, and to glorify God by an homage of love.

The very same God Who is insulted by sin being the only avenue by which sinful man can be re-establish a positive relationship with God: Query, is the Redemption actually proper, fit, or necessary? It may seem to be a moot point since the Redemption is an accomplished fact of which we may take advantage or ignore. But answering this inquiry reveals much about man, God, and their relationship.

Saint Athanasius gives us an insight to this where he advises us: It was not fitting that man, who is endowed with reason and had been admitted to participation in the Word - the Son of God not yet Incarnate - should perish, fall into nothingness, corrupt into eternal damnation or into ceasing to exist, which were the alternatives after the first human sin. It was not worthy of God that God's works - mankind - should be destroyed or corrupted by the devil's deceit. It would be improper and unworthy of God's excellence to not ef-

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(Continued REDEMPTION from page 6)  
 fact the Redemption. (Note: this is a paraphrase, not a quote.)

**It is not that the sense of guilt in a sinner's heart, or the desire of a sinner to purify himself so-as-to establish a proper relationship with God, acted to activate a sense of Divine justice in God prompting God to effect Redemption.** The sense of guilt in sinners basically effected only sinners, and prompted sinners to offer sacrifice to God in reparation for their sins. In many times and places this sense of

guilt and need to sacrifice induced offering the most pure and innocent of sacrifices, which established an increase in the value of the sacrifice itself. There are many instances where sacrifices were at first of crops, the first fruits of the harvest as it were, and then animals - yearlings or the first calved -

and then human sacrifices, culminating in the most pure and innocent the human mind could envision - virgins - usually young girl children. **Thus the devil took the human realization of the need to sacrifice in atonement and corrupted this realization into a horrible mockery.**

**The reason the sinner's sense of guilt could not prompt a response of Divine justice, or even Divine mercy, from God in the form of Redemption is that the only cause of Redemption must of necessity issue from God Himself.** Prior to the Redemption, Divine mercy could be activated in anticipation of the Redemption, because Divine reality is the Eternal Now, wherein the act which

prompted Divine mercy prior to the Redemption, and the Redemption itself, are even now occurring.

Human reason is incapable of comprehending the changeless God Who is not static but rather is the ultimate in being dynamic; from Whom Redemption could not be prompted, for it of necessity issues solely from God, Who, being changeless, simply does not react, even though He rewards and punishes; Who, while being the measure we must meet, does not simply course man to the measure with man proceeding to the destination

**Saint Athanasius gives us an insight to this where he advises us: It was not fitting that man, who is endowed with reason and had been admitted to participation in the Word - the Son of God not yet Incarnate - should perish, fall into nothingness, corrupt into eternal damnation or into ceasing to exist, which were the alternatives after the first human sin. It was not worthy of God that God's works - mankind - should be destroyed or corrupted by the devil's deceit. It would be improper and unworthy of God's excellence to not effect the Redemption. (Note: this is a paraphrase, not a quote.)**

indicated by the measure but rather Who judges.

Likewise, human reason is incapable of providing a logical necessity for the Redemption, or, ultimately, even of its existence. But human reason is *AWARE* of the *FITNESS* of Redemption.

Man's comprehension of the Redemption must accommodate both the divine and the human perspectives into one perspective. It must begin *from* the will of God which is absolutely gratuitous and which transcends all of our reasons. Human reasons and reasoning therefore can never lead us to the justification of the views and actions of God - to stating the Divine Why. Yet we actually are aware of the fitness of Redemption.

Why was Redemption in the form of Christ's Passion and death? Some have expressed the Passion as God putting to death God to appease God. In so doing they inform everyone - well, apparently except themselves - that they have totally not comprehended Redemption,

and have totally "missed the point".

In order for a creature to comprehend and to understand Redemption to the fullest extent to which a creature is capable, the creature must abandon pride, and attain intellectual modesty. For as God tells us in Isaiah, God's thoughts are not our thoughts and our ways are not His ways (*Is. 55:8*).

The rigorous justice demanded by divine forgiveness is also the most eloquent revelation of divine love: since in God, mercy always precedes justice. Nothing in or of a creature is able to alter God's supreme changelessness. In rewarding our merits, in rewarding our seeking to operate in accordance with Faith, in rewarding our horror of our sins and our attempt to avoid sin, God actually crowns His own gifts to us.

In appeasing God it is not that God has a desire that we make up for our sins. It is that God is actively watching over our interests and actively willing and assisting in their successful realization. Our interests, of course, is eternal union with God. Anything else may be ancillary but mostly is, eventually and ultimately, peripheral and superfluous.

God died in the human nature He assumed so that we sinners, as viable members of the Body of Christ, as real members of the Saviour, might die in Him.

Human reason which is not seeped and based in Christianity lacks the humility to perceive and to actually properly accept a most important truth. That truth is, in the Redemption is the expression of God's absolute liberty and initiative without there being any aspect of a necessity outside of His will. God could initiate Redemption or not initiate Redemption without any diminution or injury to Himself, any aspect of Himself, or any of His attributes.

God is the sole judge of the ultimate reason for His Redemption, and for all His acts. We comprehend this reason in

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 our limited ability as being His glory. God did not decide to save the world and then do it for the concept of making a decision applies to creatures and specifically to mankind, and in a different manner to angels. (Angels, in a sense, decide and do simultaneously, as though decision and deed are one.) God's changelessness and existence in the Eternal Now makes Redemption one within what Saint Paul most properly described as the length, and breath, and height, and depth. He did not add the word "of" with other words following for that of which he wrote is "the length, and breath, and height, and depth".

In providing an avenue to eternal salvation God so did in perfection: Therefore He provided not only the means to receive pardon, but also adequate satisfaction for the sins of the repentant. Within the divine parameters it therefore required a Saviour initiated by God intervene, a Saviour who is totally innocent and also God, a Saviour who is perfect in love and obedient even unto death.

Why the Passion when just the Incarnation was sufficient? Ultimately, only God knows. What we do know is that involved in the reason for the Passion rather than just the Incarnation, are these realities. As regards man, the glory of God is living man (*Saint Irenaeus*). The happiness of God's creatures in God is His glory. Changeless God can not benefit in any way from His works, and that applies to Redemption. The advantage to man made available in Redemption, that alone, as it were, inspired the means by which God made Redemption and Salvation avail-

**Human reason is incapable of comprehending the changeless God Who is not static but rather is the ultimate in being dynamic; from Whom Redemption could not be prompted, for it of necessity issues solely from God, Who, being changeless, simply does not react, even though He rewards and punishes; Who, while being the measure we must meet, does not simply course man to the measure with man proceeding to the destination indicated by the measure but rather Who judges.**

able.  
 Divine economy inspired Redemption through the Passion rather than the other means available. Redemption through the Passion teaches man and so does in manner and method by which man will best comprehend and understand. In this very economy is revealed the disproportion between sin and

God's infinite justice, which is always preceded by His divine mercy. The infinitely great mercy and love for man is exhibited in a manner impossible to ignore - even by those for whom God is not an important factor in their lives. Thus is the condemnation of the damned made even more unassailable.

The very great dignity of man as established by God is proclaimed by the Passion because in the Passion is made known several important matters, a few of which are: First, the reparation that God demands for our sins; Second, the cooperation He expects of us on the Saviour's Cross, our very union with Christ, not in some nebulous and foggy concept of the

mystical body of Christ, but in actually being whipped, beaten, and crucified to death, with Christ, in what ever form of burden and Cross with which we may be blessed, that we may rise from the dead with Christ; Third, the importance He attaches to our moral activity; Fourth, the phenomenal value He has established upon us; Fifth, considering the horror of our sins, that despite our sins, God still has great respect for us. God actually desires and wills and has established Redemption in a manner that requires our participation in accordance with our capabilities as determined by God.

This is why the Early Fathers of the Church, especially the Desert Fathers, would readily express the concept: *Oh happy sin of Adam, which inspired the Incarnation of the Saviour.*

For what God has done is not to simply patch up or repair that aspect of His creation as regards man. What He has done is take that which He so wondrously created and even more wondrously re-create it in the Saviour.

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**THE REDEMPTION: DIVINE ACTS IN THE HISTORICAL PASSION**

Study of the Redemption reveals and clarifies an enormous amount of information useful to mankind as pertains to the ultimate purpose of human life, including that purpose - which is established by God as being God's glorification both in this life and in either eternal sorrowful damnation separated from God or eternal gloriously joyful Heavenly union with God.

The Redemption therefore answers the question of what is our purpose in life.

In studying the Redemption, particularly The Passion, we must not act or seek with simple curiosity, but, rather, with reverent attention. We are, after all, dealing with God and the most dramatic, dynamic, and revealing event and episode in human history concurrent with creation.

While the immensity of Christ's sufferings in The Passion arouses our emotions, passions, and breaks our hearts, it is through our mind, our intellect, that we are able to penetrate into the mystery of the Redemption as well as clearly reveal and examine aspects of God.

Jesus willed to undergo the most excruciating torture invented up to that time. He so did for the purpose of mankind's

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redemption. Crucifixion tortured every part of the human body, and Christ had already been tortured by savage experts prior to His crucifixion. But His physical torture was more excruciating than that ever experienced by any other human because His body was perfect, at the peak of development, powers, and prowess, having never been diminished by illness, injury, or anything, His senses being perfect. Unlike us, in whom one pain inhibits our experience of another pain, His will did not allow one pain to overwhelm another pain but rather maintained the peak of awareness of every single abuse He experienced. Being God He therefore physically suffered perfectly. His suffering was not limited to the physical, but also was the total suffering of His mind, spirit, intellect, and heart. The grief He experienced was immeasurable and perfect, and His experience of abandonment or betrayal or both, virtually total.

Yet while Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was experiencing all of this His soul was immersed in the immeasurable joy of The Blessed Trinity, of The Beatific Vision. And in that immeasurable joy was the equally immeasurable joy that the Redemption was being effected. It is the joy of gratuitously giving the ultimate because of love, and the joy of the supreme proof of supreme love.

A very few of the martyrs and other saints, as it were the elect of the elect, have experienced this joy in this life. This joy is of such magnitude that those martyrs who experienced it in the midst of their various torturous deaths were incapable of sorrow or tears and their pain and suffering, while very real and in full measure, was overshadowed by their joy. Christ, being Divinely perfect, had to by conscious act possible only in Divine Will, exert that Will to restrain that joy from invading His soul because that joy would have made it impossible for Him to suffer. And that suffering in all of its aspects, by Him, was the requirement to effect the Redemption.

There are very few examples which fall

within the realm of human experience, or what man is able to imagine as a potential experience, which are able to even hint at such an experience. We will make an attempt, anyway.

Your house explodes in fire - the reason is immaterial - while you are taking a nap on the sofa. The flames erupt from the kitchen and unimaginable heat sears your skin. You pull back from the flames - that reaction is known as spontaneous volition, often a virtually instinctive reaction or decision. As you pull away from the heat and flames you hear your five year old daughter screaming, calling, "DADDY! DADDY!" from her bedroom. Are you able to overcome spontaneous volition, and engage in deliberative volition. Are you able to overcome your instinctive desire to avoid the most excruciating pain, suffering, and perhaps death, in an attempt to save you five year old daughter? Are you even physically able to rescue her before you and she burn to death? You probably will explode in flames before you even reach her. But if you make the attempt, and somehow are able to rescue her, perhaps wrapping her in a water soaked blanket, even though you yourself are in total agony as a living flame rushing her to safety as you die, the knowledge of her rescue may be a source of inexpressible joy to you.

There is nothing shameful in fearing or knowing you yourself are incapable of such heroics. Very few people are. For one who has been at death's door, death itself often is not frightening, especially if one is confident of being in a state of Grace. But anticipation of such a horrible death is frightening and often disabling.

Hopefully the reality, the fact, that it is possible to experience joy in the midst of and as a result of accepting such torturous horror being inflicted upon one's self, and that Jesus Christ actually did experience in His human soul the ultimate in joy of the beatific vision in the execution of His Passion, and had to restrain the joy so He could suffer and ef-

fect the Redemption, hopefully this knowledge will give one some measure of insight to the Divine, and effect one's life to holiness.

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### **THE REDEMPTION: THE PASSION WAS AT CHRIST'S INITIATIVE; HOW DID THE PASSION "MAKE" REDEMPTION**

Yes, God has visited His people, yet they continue to sow in the flesh and therefore reap in the flesh, and the flesh becomes corrupt. If we consider the various aspects of The Redemption, and what The Redemption reveals to us about God, perhaps we will strive to sow in the spirit.

It is accurate to state that the Father is the author of the economy of The Redemption and Salvation. It is accurate to state this was accomplished because, by, and through the Son's obedience. But it is more accurate to state that it was accomplished by The Holy Trinity for there is but one God and we creatures - or at least we humans - experience God's energies, God's external works, as being those of The Holy Trinity, One God. Redemption therefore is a work of The Blessed Trinity and within The Blessed Trinity it is the Word, the Son of God, more exactly the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, which redeems us.

This reveals to us an aspect of the inner relationships of The Blessed Trinity. While it remains a mystery, we know, from The Redemption, that the Son is obedient to the Father, receives everything from the Father, without being inferior to the Father; for the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet there is but one God, three Persons but one Substance.

This leads us to this very important truth: Jesus Christ was not the victim of

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## CHILDREN'S PAGE

### *The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism*

**Q. 1274. What sin is it to destroy one's own life, or commit suicide, as this act is called?**

A. It is a mortal sin to destroy one's own life or commit suicide, as this act is called, and persons who willfully and knowingly commit such an act die in a state of mortal sin and are deprived of Christian burial. It is also wrong to expose one's self unnecessarily to the danger of death by rash or foolhardy feats of daring.

**Q. 1275. Is it ever lawful for any cause to deliberately and intentionally take away the life of an innocent person?**

A. It is never lawful for any cause to deliberately and intentionally take away the life of an innocent person. Such deeds are always murder, and can never be excused for any reason, however important or necessary.

**Q. 1276. Under what circumstances may human life be lawfully taken?**

A. Human life may be lawfully taken:  
1. In self-defense, when we are unjustly attacked and have no other means of saving our own lives; 2. In a just war, when the safety or rights of the nation require it; 3. By the lawful execution of a criminal, fairly tried and found guilty of a crime punishable by death when the preservation of law and order and the good of the community require such execution. Such execution can not be for the purpose of punishing the criminal, for only God can punish in that manner. Such execution must be only when the criminal is so dangerous as to present a real and extremely dangerous threat to the well-being of the community should he be allowed to live.

**Q. 1277. What is forbidden by the fifth Commandment?**

A. The fifth Commandment forbids all willful murder, fighting, anger, hatred, revenge, and bad example.

**Q. 1278. Can the fifth commandment be broken by giving scandal or bad example and by inducing others to sin?**

A. The fifth commandment can be broken by giving scandal or bad example and inducing others to sin, because such acts may destroy the life of the soul by leading it into mortal sin.

**Q. 1279. What is scandal?**

A. Scandal is any sinful word, deed or omission that disposes others to sin, or lessens their respect for God and holy religion.

**Q. 1280. Why are fighting, anger, hatred and revenge forbidden by the fifth commandment?**

A. Fighting, anger, hatred and revenge are forbidden by the fifth commandment because they are sinful in themselves and may lead to murder. The commandments forbid not only whatever violates them, but also whatever may lead to their violation.

**Q. 1281. What is the sixth Commandment?**

A. The sixth Commandment is: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

**Q. 1282. What are we commanded by the sixth Commandment?**

A. We are commanded by the sixth Commandment to be pure in thought and modest in all our looks, words, and actions.

**Q. 1283. It is a sin to listen to immodest conversation, songs or jokes?**

A. It is a sin to listen to immodest conversation, songs or jokes when we can avoid it, or to show in any way that we take pleasure in such things.

**Q. 1284. What is forbidden by the sixth Commandment?**

A. The sixth Commandment forbids all unchaste freedom with another's wife or husband; also all immodesty with ourselves or others in looks, dress, words, and actions.

**Q. 1285. Why are sins of impurity the most dangerous?**

A. Sins of impurity are the most dangerous:  
1. Because they have the most numerous temptations; 2. Because, if deliberate, they are always mortal, and 3. Because, more than other sins, they lead to the loss of faith. 4. Because they ply on one of the most deeply seated natural instincts, that of procreation and continuation of the human race.

**Q. 1286. Does the sixth Commandment forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers?**

A. The sixth Commandment does forbid the reading of bad and immodest books and newspapers.

**Q. 1287. What should be done with immodest book and newspapers?**

A. Immodest books and newspapers should be destroyed as soon as possible, and if we cannot destroy them ourselves we should induce their owners to do so.

**Q. 1288. What books does the Church consider bad?**

A. The Church considers bad all books containing teaching contrary to faith or morals, or that willfully misrepresent Catholic doctrine and practice.

**Q. 1289. What places are dangerous to the virtue of purity?**

A. Indecent theaters and similar places of amusement such as InterNet pronography sires are dangerous to the virtue of purity, because their entertainments are frequently intended to suggest immodest things.

### LESSON THIRTY-FOURTH: From the Seventh to the End of the Tenth Commandment

**Q. 1290. What is the seventh Commandment?**

A. The seventh Commandment is: Thou shalt not steal.

*(Continued CHILDREN PAGE on page 11)*

## CHILDREN'S PAGE

*(Continued CHILDREN PAGE from page 10)*

**Q. 1291. What sin is it to steal?**

A. To steal is a mortal or venial sin, according to the amount stolen either at once or at different times, and from whom the theft is made and their circumstances. Circumstances may make the sin greater or less, and they should be explained in confession.

**Q. 1292. Is stealing ever a sacrilege?**

A. Stealing is a sacrilege when the thing stolen belongs to the Church and when the stealing takes place in the Church.

**Q. 1293. What sins are equivalent to stealing?**

A. All sins of cheating, defrauding or wronging others of their property; also all sins of borrowing or buying with the intention of never repaying are equivalent to stealing.

**Q. 1294. In what other ways may persons sin against honesty?**

A. Persons may sin against honesty also by knowingly receiving, buying or sharing in stolen goods; likewise by giving or taking bribes for dishonest purposes.

**Q. 1295. What are we commanded by the seventh Commandment?**

A. By the seventh Commandment we are commanded to give to all men what belongs to them and to respect their property.

**Q. 1296. How may persons working for others be guilty of dishonesty?**

A. Persons working for others may be guilty of dishonesty by idling the time for which they are paid; also by doing bad work or supplying bad material without their employer's knowledge, or in taking things from work such as office supplies, or using equipment at work for personal purposes.

**Q. 1297. In what other way may a person be guilty of dishonesty?**

A. A person may be guilty of dishonesty

in getting money or goods by false pretenses and by using either for purposes for which they were not given.

**Q. 1298. What is forbidden by the seventh Commandment?**

A. The seventh Commandment forbids all unjust taking or keeping what belongs to another.

**Q. 1299. What must we do with things found?**

A. We must return things found to their lawful owners as soon as possible, and we must also use reasonable means to find the owners if they are unknown to us.

**Q. 1300. What must we do if we discover we have bought stolen goods?**

A. If we discover we have bought stolen goods and know their lawful owners we must return the goods to them as soon as possible without demanding compensation from the owner for what we paid for the goods.

**Q. 1301. Are we bound to restore ill-gotten goods?**

A. We are bound to restore ill-gotten goods, or the value of them, as far as we are able; otherwise we cannot be forgiven.

**Q. 1302. What must we do if we cannot restore all we owe, or if the person to whom we should restore be dead?**

A. If we cannot restore all we owe, we must restore as much as we can, and if the person to whom we should restore be dead we must restore to his children or heirs, and if these cannot be found we may give alms to the poor.

**Q. 1303. What must one do who cannot pay his debts and yet wishes to receive the Sacraments?**

A. One who cannot pay his debts and yet wishes to receive the Sacraments must sincerely promise and intend to pay them as soon as possible, and must without delay make every effort to do so.

**Q. 1304. Are we obliged to repair the damage we have unjustly caused?**

A. We are bound to repair the damage we have unjustly caused.

**Q. 1305. What is the eighth Commandment?**

A. The eighth Commandment is: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

**Q. 1306. What are we commanded by the eighth Commandment?**

A. We are commanded by the eighth Commandment to speak the truth in all things, and to be careful of the honor and reputation of every one.

**Q. 1307. What is a lie?**

A. A lie is a sin committed by knowingly saying what is untrue with the intention of deceiving. To swear to a lie makes the sin greater, and such swearing is called perjury. Pretense, hypocrisy, false praise, boasting, etc., are similar to lies.

**Q. 1308. How can we know the degree of sinfulness in a lie?**

A. We can know the degree of sinfulness in a lie by the amount of harm it does and from the intention we had in telling it.

**Q. 1309. Will a good reason for telling a lie excuse it?**

A. No reason, however good, will excuse the telling of a lie, because a lie is always bad in itself. It is never allowed, even for a good intention to do a thing that is bad in itself.

**Q. 1310. What is forbidden by the eighth Commandment?**

A. The eighth Commandment forbids all rash judgments, backbiting, slanders, and lies.

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(Continued REDEMPTION from page 9)

the actions of the Jewish high priest and his cohorts, and of the inaction of Pilate and Herod. Christ was the active cause, instigator, and director of His own Passion and unlawful execution. It was not that Jesus acceded to or allowed the Passion. The Passion was at Christ's initiative.

The fact that The Redemption was effected through Christ's Passion and death, which were effected at Christ's own initiative and direction, and served to carry out God's will and the Son's obedience to the Father, these facts do not diminish the guilt of those who actually inflicted the Passion. Those who inflicted the Passion could have decided to proceed in a just manner, dismiss the charges against Christ, and free Him. They did not so do and therefore are guilty of their immoral acts and immoral omissions.

This also reveals to us and starkly clarifies for us that our free will allows us to accept and utilize or to reject or ignore God's grace which He bestows upon us for the purpose of assisting us to become and to be holy, to avoid evil, and to glorify Him..

Now for another important question, and answer. How did the Passion effect, establish, make, put together, redemption. Some believe Christ suffered the punishment we earned by our sins. But that offends our sense of justice - rightfully so - and also disregards the fact that each sin must inalienably be attached to the one who commits it. The theological sense of expiation is slightly more palatable in that it is more acceptable to contemplate that Christ through His Passion endured what we should have endured. But that ignores the lack of practice of moral values which are intrinsic to each sin, the moral values required for reparation of sin, and again emphasizes punishment without emphasizing opening reconciliation between Creator and creature.

For those who simply find it difficult to comprehend that humans can not com-

prehend the, as it were, reasoning and inner workings of God, reparation comes very close to answering the question. Reparation places primary emphasis on being moral, on moral values, while acknowledging the physical and penal aspects of expiation. The life and death of Christ have the power to Redeem, to save, by reason of His love for His Father and for us, because of the union within His Person of His human suffering in His human nature united with His Divine nature in that one Person the Word made flesh - by the way this is called the hypostatic union. The Passion was therefore endowed with infinite value and thereby easily re-established the moral equilibrium of creation which had been destroyed by sin. In this supreme act of Divine Love, Charity, a totally new relationship with God was made available to mankind.

See how tortuous the mental process is when a creature insists on attempting to comprehend the incomprehensible - God and His "reasoning".

It is much simpler, as well as more accurate, in fact it is totally and absolutely accurate, to state that the Redemption was accomplished by the very fact of the Incarnation of the Word. When the Word was made flesh, when Christ was incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Every Virgin Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, the Redemption was accomplished. Why then was the Passion? Because of all those other concepts explained under suffering the punishment, expiation, and reparation, as well as those matters covered in earlier articles in this series, particularly that one entitled, *The Redemption: Propriety in Perception of Human Status is Defined in Redemption.*

Simply realize the Redemption was a totally gratuitous act of Divine Love, and that the Passion was an integral aspect within that act of Divine Charity.

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### ***THE REDEMPTION: THE***

### **MEANS BY WHICH MAN PARTICIPATES IN THE REDEMPTION**

The Redemption is a marvelous Divine work. As is usual with humankind, when humans contemplate the Divine or Divine works, humans forget to seek the simple and non-complex, and muddy the waters with complexity of their own invention.

Man had been separated from God through his sinfulness. The Incarnation, in one of its essences, is The Redemption because Divine Nature Perfection was united with fallen, sinful, and therefore imperfect human nature and since Divine Perfection can not fall it had to be that human nature was given the potential to be raised to Divine Perfection. In the logic of the Divine system of redemption which God established, The Passion was both the logical conclusion of The Redemption and also a major avenue by which individual humans are able to participate in the act of redemption which was the sole act of Jesus Christ God and Man.

By taking human nature to Himself Christ raised the quality of human nature and changed its essence into something more and better than it was before He assumed human nature in conjunction with His Divine Nature. Thus The Redemption applies to every single human being.

But the means by which The Redemption applies to every single human being, and the means by which man participates in The Redemption, is through the Mystical Body of Christ. Entry into the Mystical Body of Christ is through the Sacrament of Baptism. Participation in the Mystical Body of Christ in this life, is through the Sacraments, prayer, and operating divinely - which means thinking and acting in accordance with the Divine Virtue of Faith.

Let us turn back to The Passion for an example of how this participation in the Mystical Body of Christ works.

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Whether you stub your toe on some furniture in the middle of the night going to the bathroom, or suffer a gun shot wound from a robber, or have a glowing hot iron rod pressed through your body by a person who is torturing you because of your religious beliefs, you suffer. You also may suffer outside of the physical arena: in areas such as the mental and the emotional.

If you are not a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, well, you just suffer.

But if you are a Member of the Mystical Body of Christ, then you are able to join your suffering with that of Christ in The Passion. You are able to offer your suffering for the same purposes for which Christ offered His suffering, and it actually is effective because Christ has changed the fallen essence of human nature into something much more by His Incarnation and His Passion.

This is a morally positive effect we are able to make because it is a natural result of our act of offering of something which is worth while. It is not that the "merit" of our virtuous acts are "applied" or "have a holy effect". Rather, it is a natural result and progression: exactly the same as putting water into a pot and heating the pot to a sufficiently high temperature will result in the water boiling off and turning into steam and vapor; exactly the same as properly watering, fertilizing, and otherwise tending a plant will in natural progression produce a flower which will fruit and seed.

**This is a morally positive effect we are able to make because it is a natural result of our act of offering of something which is worth while. It is not that the "merit" of our virtuous acts are "applied" or "have a holy effect". Rather, it is a natural result and progression: exactly the same as putting water into a pot and heating the pot to a sufficiently high temperature will result in the water boiling off and turning into steam and vapor; exactly the same as properly watering, fertilizing, and otherwise tending a plant will in natural progression produce a flower which will fruit and seed.**

This does not apply just to suffering, but it is very easy and simple to comprehend the application using suffering as an example. It is not that our suffering offered in union with Christ on the Cross lessens Christ's suffering or "makes it easier on Christ", but rather, that our suffering offered in union with Christ on the Cross makes us participants in that aspect of The Redemption associated with The Passion. We are not essential participants. Christ is the only essential participant. But we are participants.

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When we act or function as a sole or single individual we receive within the limits of that function. We merit the results of our acts. We may or may not receive what we merit, but we do merit what ever it is we have merited. We often receive what we have merited, but we also often receive what we have not merited. Sometimes we like what we have received and sometimes we do not.

But when we act or function as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, by definition we act in holiness, our acts are holy, and we are holy - to some measure. And our thoughts and acts functioning as members of the Mystical Body of Christ have that same

divinely natural flow and effect as was described regarding suffering in union with Christ on the Cross. There is a holiness which emanates and effects others, even those who are not members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Sometimes the effect is a drift towards holiness, and sometimes the effect is that someone turns even further away from God. But there always is an effect.

Where people are inclined to loose perspective or not properly comprehend this reality is when people expect a temporal, physical world result, which they will like. But the focus of all of this is spiritual, religious, and fulfillment of our purpose in our very existence - that being the glorification of God.

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**THE REDEMPTION: ELEMENTS OF APPRECIATION AND APPLICATION OF THE PASSION**

In the logical analysis which often is a seemingly essential aspect of exploring The Redemption, the horribleness of sin is often overlooked. The Passion itself was horrible. Christ endured The Passion because the Father established The Passion as an essential element of The Redemption, and in so doing clearly established the utter horribleness of sin.

We should establish the reality of these horriblenesses indelibly in our essence.

The Passion also provided us with something of which mankind has been in need since the first human sin and even before the first human sin. A combination of satisfaction for sin and ful-

(Continued REDEMPTION on page 14)

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fillment of duty to God.

The concept and reality of satisfaction for sin is accomplished within sacrifice, in its ultimate form in The Passion.

But our prime duty to God, to glorify God, which is most properly and readily received and accepted by God as and in the form of our love for God, is the pinnacle of sacrifice for sacrifice is due by the inferior human to the superior God. Very simply, homage is due to God by man. The ultimate homage unaided man can give is love; aided by God man is able to Charity - Divine Love - to God.

**The Passion is the sacrificial ritual written and composed by God using the sacrificial victim designated by God and therefore it is perfect.** The same can not be said for any sacrifice which has its origin in man.

The humanity of Christ is the instrument of His Godhead. It is a fully comprehending and willful instrument with the capacity to decline being the instrument and the instrumentality which it not only willingly accepted but actually sought in the hypostatic union. After all, while Christ is totally Divine and totally human, with both a Divine will and a human will, He is but one Person, with a single personality, and the fact that we are unable to comprehend this does not mean we are incapable of knowing that a single, healthy, perfect person will be in perfect harmony regarding all aspects of himself.

Since Christ is both the Priest making the offering on Calvary, and the Sacrificial Victim being offered on Calvary, the Incarnation and The Passion are inseparably united.

God composed and established The Passion not simply as a one time event. God composed and established The Passion to be an event which occurred in bloody format but once, with the additional ability to be continually offered innumerable times as the full and com-

plete offering of the same perfect Sacrificial Victim but in a bloodless manner, within the context of the Divine Liturgy.

One of the aspects of a sacrificial victim is that the sacrifice be consumed in some manner. Christ gave Himself to His Apostles and Disciples as the Sacrifice to be consumed at the Last Supper prior to His being offered as the same Sacrificial Victim in The Passion. This establishes the perpetuity of the same Sacrificial Victim within the ritual of the Divine Liturgy.

It is this same sacrificial body and blood of Christ, at the Last Supper, on The Cross, and in Divine Liturgy, that gives us life. Saint Cyril, in the Council of Ephesus, stated it most succinctly in stating the flesh of Christ is life-giving because it is the flesh of the Word Himself, Who has the power of giving life to all things, and that anyone who denies this is anathema.

It also is plainly clear considering the Divine love which exists and is bathed upon all creation, that Christ died for all men, that The Redemption applies to every human being, even Pagans, heretics, and politicians. He did not die just for the predestined, or just for the faithful, or just for the elect, but for all men. Every single human being is the beneficiary of The Cross of Christ and is saved **IF THEY DO NOT PLACE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF THEIR OWN INDIVIDUAL REDEMPTION!**

It is unfortunate that great numbers of people give themselves the glory that is due to God and thereby place severe obstacles in the way of their own redemption. Because humans are inclined to do this, God established Sacramental Confession and Absolution to remove those obstacles. This in conjunction with the other Sacraments provides us with ready access to the Grace necessary to cooperate with God in His and our own individual pursuit of our own eternal salvation and that of other humans.

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## THE LAWN MOWER (Humor)

*Thanks, Mike*

A preacher was making his rounds on a bicycle, when he came upon a little boy trying to sell a lawn mower.

"How much do you want for the mower?" asked the preacher.

"I just want enough money to go out and buy me a bicycle," said the boy.

After a moment of consideration, the preacher asked, "Will you take my bike in trade for it?"

The little boy asked if he could try it out first, and, after riding the bike around a little while, said, "Mister, you've got yourself a deal."

The preacher took the mower and began to crank it. He pulled on the rope a few times with no response from the mower. The preacher called the little boy over and said, "I can't get this mower to start."

The little boy said, "That's because you have to cuss at it to get it started."

The preacher said, "I can't cuss. It's been so long since I became a Christian that I don't even remember how to cuss."

The little boy looked at him happily and said, "You just keep pulling on that rope. It'll come back to ya."

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**WHICH IS YOUR CITY (TOWN, COMMUNITY)?**

In some cities a citizen will say with pride that local industry produced two million pots, pans, and kitchen utensils, five million tons of fertilizer, a million board feet of lumber products, and two million bolt yards of fabric.

In other cities a citizen will say with pride that industrious local citizens committed seventeen million major sins amongst themselves and thirty-three million major sins with visitors, tourist, and conventioners.

In some cities a citizen will point with pride to the local high school home coming queen saying, "Isn't she a beautiful young lady! She has a 4.0 grade point average. She also volunteers at the local VA clinic helping our boys and girls wounded in the war."

In other cities a citizen will say, "See that boy and that girl. They are the home coming queens of Buggery High School. She has a 0.02 grade point average and he has the main heron distributorship at Buggery High." The one making the comment will then go on to say with pride, "She was a mother at age eight and now that she is graduating from the freshman class at age nineteen she is a grandmother. And he has been bugged by two mayors, three councilmen, and one councilwoman. Together they have put over a thousand people into the AIDS clinic just this year."

In some cities tourists are viewed as people to whom local accomplishments can be shown with pride. When a group of tourists leaves the city the locals discuss whether or not the tourists were made to feel comfortable, were able to see, participate in, and enjoy the local activities, and whether or not the city "put its best foot forward."

In other cities tourist are viewed as "marks" from whom money can be obtained. When a group of tourist leaves such cities the locals discuss how much

money the tourist spent.

Secularly: One of the main differences between "some cities" and "other cities" is attitude. "Some Cities" have an attitude born of self respect; "Other Cities" do not.

Morally: Well, if you require an explanation this brief writing will be of little use to you other than to perhaps arouse your curiosity.

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*(Continued BEAUTY from page 1)*

the sake of God and of uniting all as best we are able as an offering to God for love of God. Each one of us has a multitude of occupations. We may harvest crops to earn a living. That is an occupation, and it may also be a vocation. We may be a parent. That is an occupation, and it definitely is a vocation - although many abandon this vocation just as many abandon their primary vocation of serving God.

But when we grasp our primary vocation, of bringing creation into harmony with God according to God's standards, then we effect our occupations in a positive manner. The results are not always an obvious success, but when they are an obvious success the results can be amazing.

If you are a parent, just think of those occasions when you are in a harmony of love with your child or children. If your child is an adult and you are able to perceive a good moral tendency in their life as a result of your influence, there is a special joy which you experience. If your child has made you a grandparent, and your grandchild exhibits good moral tendencies, then, even when your grand child is playing in the dirt, or playing with toys, or just being a child learning about and exploring God's creation, there is a special amazement which draws you. It could be described as a fascination, but what ever it is is more than a fascination, more than an amazement. It is your personal harmony with God our Father as Father, with God our Saviour as the giver of Divine Love even to the extent of sacrificing one's self which is the foundation of our human ability to love and also a different harmony with God the Son in His delight with joyful associations with each human being, with God the Holy Ghost in His effervesce of Charity - Divine Love - and in His being our guide, protector, and advocate - for all of us and for each of us.

But fulfilling our primary vocation in our occupation of parent is but one of

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the occupations wherein we have the potential to experience this nexus with each person of the Blessed Trinity.

Every relationship we have, even if it is meeting someone for the first and only time, and only for a few seconds, without a word being spoken, has this same potential for being an impetus to deification of our selves and of the other person.

There is another amazing effect which flows from a sincere pursuit of our prime vocation of attaining harmony with God and uniting all as an offering to God. The greater the consistency of our pursuit of the prime vocation, the more beautiful everyone and everything becomes. There is a cross to bear in this beauty which we perceive. The cross is in the realization that a particular individual has rejected God, or rejected an aspect of God's will or instructions. When an individual merely has difficulty in meeting God's expectations, we recognize this as the common lot of most of mankind. But when we realize that a particular individual rejects God or an aspect of God's expressed instructions and will, then we expedience the cross of sorrow that such beauty is risking loss of everything worth anything, of everything worth seeking, of everything worth having, all for nothing.

Look at or think about someone you know well and who knows you as well, and who has abandoned God or an aspect of God's will. You will perceive a multitude of what are commonly referred to simply as negatives. You will perceive some or most or all of fear, viciousness, grasping at material things, selfishness, envy, and other qualities from which you wish to distance yourself.

Look at someone you know is attempting to be holy, but make it someone whom you know, who knows you as well. You may perceive frustration at failure to attain or be consistent in holiness. But you will perceive a focus which brings a multitude of apparently

conflicting qualities into a harmony. In that harmony you will find qualities which you wish to make your own.

When you perceive that special beauty do not be tempted to take credit for it or for being able to perceive it. The beauty is an aspect of God residing in that which He has created. Your ability to perceive that beauty is the result of God's efforts to bring you into union with Himself, and both a reward to you and a divinely natural result of your acceptance of God's assistance.

Ref: Eph. 4:1-6; Mat. 22:35-46

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fall of mankind.

At the time Our Saviour Jesus Christ was born, the merchants of spiritual death, the advocates of materialism, the promoters of the concept that the material world and things are more important than the spiritual world and a healthy spiritual life, these men, women, and spirits of evil had so clouded the minds and hearts of a significant portion of mankind, that much of mankind thought the Messiah's main or only purpose was to establish a great Jewish physical world empire. There was little thought given to the potential of the Messiah's purpose being to enable mankind and the individual members of the human race to re-establish the spiritual relationship with God that had existed prior to the fall of mankind, and to enable each individual human being to attain eternal salvation.

But this spiritual purpose was the purpose.

That conflict between materialism and spiritual life as regards celebration of the birth of the Saviour continues to today.

For the materialists and those without God in their lives, Advent is the time to promote materialism, to promote sale and purchase of merchandise, to encourage greed both in the anticipation of receiving gifts and the anticipation of making money. It is the time to discourage any form of spiritual life or contemplation for such things interfere with materialistic pursuits. To further these forms of immorality, good and holy practices and concepts are corrupted into and used to promote their evil counterparts.

By way of example, the concept of giving alms has been corrupted into the promotion of giving gifts: some gifts being given as an obligation, such as gifts by parents to their children, and some as a form of bribe, such as gifts which

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will hopefully lead to sexual gratification.

It also is absolutely astounding to observe organizations which oppose Divine Law and instructions, which promote abortion on demand funded by public revenues, which advocate the restriction and the denial of God granted rights

and the subverting of those rights to the dictates of a few totalitarians - it is astounding to observe these organizations promote such concepts, immoralities, and horrors, by declaring this to be the season of peace, the time to bring joy to the world.

Peace, joy, and any form of happiness, can only be found in God, and can only be obtained through a good relationship with God on God's terms - not our own terms. Anyone who thinks otherwise suffers from the affliction of stupidity occurring in the form of the belief their opinion is of greater validity than God's explicit statement of reality.

The materialists and worshipers of humankind and of the material world, often express the concept of "enabling" and "empowering". someone or some class or group. Usually, this enabling and empowering focuses on materialism and the materialistic, with the real focus being on the deprivation of a healthy spiritual life. If a spiritual life is mentioned, it is a spiritual life which pretends the individual is god, which contemplates some form of spirituality invented by the devil or humans, with no consideration of spirituality as expressly established by God Himself.

**It simply makes more sense to become empowered in Christ by becoming His faithful follower and thereby attain eternal happiness, than it does to become empowered by following the sinful leadership of those who are on the path to eternal sorrow. After all, we are already empowered to do that - we need not follow someone else's path to hell. We are able to go to hell quite nicely without any assistance from anyone.**

If a person really desires to really become "enabled" and "empowered" that person should anticipate celebration of the birthday of the Messiah. It is He Who enabled and empowered us to each attain eternal salvation. An integral aspect of that anticipation must be preparation to receive the Messiah, to attend to His instructions and desires, to modify our

own desires so-as-to conform to His, and to live in accordance with His will.

It simply makes more sense to become empowered in Christ by becoming His faithful follower and thereby attain eternal happiness, than it does to become

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But we are able to be truly happy and happy for all eternity only through being in harmony and in concert with Jesus Christ God. A good place to begin practicing this harmony is in preparing to celebrate His birthday, and in the actual celebration of His birthday.

Ref: Rom. 13: 11-14; Luke 21: 25-34

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## REDEMPTION AND SALVATION IN THE UNITY OF THE INCARNATION THROUGH THE RESURRECTION

The Incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ Who is God, is but the beginning of the realization humankind's quest to become Godlike. But if a person does not know God, then the quest to become Godlike becomes a quest not to become like unto the real God, but unto each individual human being's uninformed and formed without education concept of God.

We have the life of Jesus Christ God to study, and even though we know little of His every day activities prior to His beginning His public life, we may properly apply what we do know to that about which we do not know. Just as we really do not know very much about the ordinary, daily lives of the founding fathers of our country, and apply what we do know mainly of their public lives, to their private and unrecorded lives, so too are we able to do with the life of Christ.

For the thousands of years between the fall of Adam and Eve, until the Incarnation and birth of Our Saviour Jesus Christ God, mankind was in a wretched state. Mankind had neither the ability to repair nor the knowledge of how to repair this state of wretchedness.

Jesus Christ God is the Repairer of our wretchedness (*Pascal's Pensees, Brunsch, No. 547*). Carefully avoiding interfering with our exercise of our own individual free will, the Repairer of our wretchedness, in His Divine Love and Divine Justice, pours His very essence into those humans who are willing to receive it, that such individuals may: first, learn about and know what God really is, to know what God really is like; then decide whether or not that individual desires to become like what God really is; and if the individual so desires, then to emulate, imitate, and

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follow God, absorbing God so-as-to-be, as it were, absorbed in God, yet maintaining individual personhood.

The Birth of Our Saviour, and the celebration of that event, reminds us of the real form of this desire to become Godlike. The Passion and Death of Our Lord reminds each of us of the actual wretchedness of our own state. That we are degenerate, reprobate, really prodigal. That we can not reach the heights of being Godlike to which we aspire until we are first raised up from the depths to which humankind had fallen as the result of the Original Sin of Adam and Eve. That Redemption from those depths was required, and made available through the united - as it were single though separate - events of the Incarnation, birth, Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ Son of God Son of Man.

From the event of the sin of Adam and Eve to the Birth of the Incarnate, God had informed humankind of the pending redemption of mankind. God informed the chosen people that the Messiah would be born of them, and made it very clear the Messiah would be Divinely human - though very few of the descendants of Israel comprehended this. God also made it clear to both the Jews and the Gentiles that redemption could only be attained through the shedding of blood, through the bloody sacrifice and death of that which would redeem every member of the human race and thereby make eternal salvation available to every member of the human race. The culmination of these Divine prophecies began with the Incarnation and was made publicly known to all of the human race with the birth of the Word Incarnate.

Saint Stephen understood this, refused to deny it, and insisted on proclaiming it. The coalition which stoned him to death, making Saint Stephen the first martyr, was composed of every religious persuasion: it included those who did not believe in life after death, those who believed in a dream state of life here-

after, those who did not believe in God, those who were not sure if there is a God, those who believed in God and an active life in the hereafter, and even a few who believed in the hereafter as being either in some form of union with God or being cast from God depending on the individual's merits.

In his fidelity Saint Stephen was given the privilege of being united with Christ through martyrdom. We perceive this as being both a painful and a terrifying privilege, yet non-the-less we must acknowledge it as a privilege for which most of us in truth believe we do not possess the fortitude and are thankful we have not been presented the opportunity.

Yet we have been presented with this opportunity, and will continue to be presented with this opportunity until the time of our death. For every day we find ourselves in situations, whether public or private, where what we truly believe is challenged.

Most often the challenge is a distraction, a shining bauble leading us away from Godliness. But occasionally it is a severe challenge to our maintaining redemption and attaining eternal salvation. Such an occasion is when one observes an employer or superior engaging in immoral conduct which effects the job, workplace, customers, employees, or employer. This occurs not just in a factory or store, or in a stock brokerage or office. Imagine a priest who observes his bishop engaging in immoral conduct or following policies contrary to dogma. Does he challenge the bishop? If so, does he do it privately and if there is no resolution, then publicly? Obviously the priest must be sure his assessment is correct . . . otherwise to act would be to risk destroying something which does not deserve to be destroyed. But if the priest does act, he risks losing the ability to engage in his vocation, the ability to provide for himself food, shelter, and the necessities of life . . . just as would the factory, farm, or office worker.

Saint Stephen challenged the erroneous beliefs of those in the temple of Jerusalem by proclaiming the Divinity and Gospel of Jesus Christ, engaging in discussion with the most knowledgeable of those who held those erroneous beliefs, declaring the reality and actuality of the heavenly vision which God presented to him during those debates, fully realizing it would lead to his death.

One who desires to become Godlike in one of the millions of human concepts of what this entails would likely avoid such a confrontation. But one who desires to become Godlike in reality, knows he can not avoid such a confrontation.

When a person is able to resolve the simplicity and complexity of redemption and to establish both the Redemption and the Redeemer within himself, that person is finally on the road to eternal peace, no matter how tumultuous and chaotic their physical and spiritual environment may seem to be.

Ref: Gal 4:1-7; Luke 2:33-40; Pascal's *Pensees*, Brunsch, No. 547; Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59

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**BE CONSCIENTIOUS**

It would be very terrible and tragic for someone who had struggled to follow Christ, to falter at the end. But many people do falter: perhaps not fatally but they do falter.

Think of all the Priest who retire and after they retire only pray Divine Liturgy for the public on Sundays to give assistance to the local Priest. They may pray Divine Liturgy at home, but do not encourage anyone to attend. They may hear confessions when asked, but they regard it as an imposition to be avoided.

Think of the married couples who experienced domestic tribulation yet stayed together for the sake of the children. And, when the children are grown and out of the house, they divorce, not because of any great immorality on the part of one or the other - such as perpetual infidelity or change in sexual orientation preference - but because they “do not have anything in common” or have “grown apart”; and then they “marry” other people.

Then think of Saint Andrew, the first called by Christ to be an Apostle. From the instant he was called by Christ to follow Christ, he did just that. Even as he was being martyred for being a Christian he continued to teach and live The Way taught by Christ, for during the two days he hung upon the X shaped cross he preached to and taught all who passed by, converting even members of the government that had condemned him to death.

Be prepared to live, and actually do live The Way of Christ, and to teach, and actually do teach The Way of Christ by word and example, continually.

If you do these things you will have no concern as to when the end of the world will be. You will have no concern as to when the second coming of Christ will be. You will have no concern as to whether or not someone is the real Christ or is a false Christ, for you will

be following The Way taught by Christ and will know that when you meet the real Christ you will have no doubt, will require no one to introduce you to Him, require no persuasion, for everyone will *know* this is God. But most important: you will be living The Way taught by Christ and therefore will be prepared to meet Him face to face, whether it be at the end of time or your own personal judgment at death.

Consider the words of Christ: ***“And from the fig tree learn a parable: When the branch thereof is now tender and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh, even at the doors.”*** (Mat. 24:3-33) Now consider what He said immediately after these words: ***“Amen I say to you that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass: but my words shall not pass.”***

Obviously, in the spiritual course of events, the branch of the fig tree is tender, leaves have come forth, and summer is nigh. Christ has come, the requirements for eternal salvation have been set in stone by God, and your individual place in eternity is being established right now by you.

Don’t mess it up. Don’t blow it. Don’t screw it up. Do not botch it. Do not hopelessly foul it up. Do not follow The Way in a makeshift way or manner. Follow The Way taught by Christ and do a good job of following The Way. Be like Saint Andrew. But never presume you are holy for none of us will be truly holy until after we are dead.

Ref: Col. 1:9-14; Mat. 24:15-35

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**ARE YOU SUFFICIENTLY WISE SO-AS-TO FOLLOW GOD’S EXAMPLE?**

Perhaps the most difficult combination of qualities for humans to embrace and exercise are obedience, especially obedience for the proper reasons, plus the combination of realization and acknowledgment that there is One Who is better at guiding our lives than are we ourselves; and an embracing of these in a manner which induces us to and in which we actually do, obey and follow the guidance of that One to whom obedience is due. That One Who is God.

We are triply blessed because there is but one God, but that one God is three Persons, each of Whom gives us the opportunity to reciprocate the Divine Love the one God bestows upon us, and in that reciprocation enabling each of us to embrace the guidance God gives to us.

Those who live as though the only difference between themselves and God is that God is stronger than they are, or that God knows how to manipulate physics, chemistry, and things in accordance with His desires, do not live in accordance with reality. Think of every thing and every person and entity that has ever or will ever or could ever exist. None of them are God and all of them were created from absolutely nothing by God.

The reason nothing of which you can think is God is because no one creature nor any combination or accumulation and concert of creatures can even begin to think of God - creatures can only know there is a God and can only know about God, that which God has revealed. That is the most bare indication of the total difference between God and us, and the most bare indication of the total superiority of God to us.

That very same God in the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity added human nature to His divine Nature, while remaining the same individual Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. And that

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very same Second Person of the Blessed Trinity obeyed the instructions of those in authority over Him in His human nature, even though He was over them in His Divine Nature and in His Person.

Are any of us greater than God and therefore exempt from lawful and moral obedience to Him? No, and everyone who deems his or her self so to be or acts as though he or she were, is both wrong and a fool.

The twelve year old Jesus taught the most learned of those in the Temple, amazing them with His knowledge, understanding, insight, and wisdom. Yet that same Jesus, in being obedient to and accepting guidance from His mother in human nature, and His step-father, advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men.

Are any of us greater than God and therefore without the need to accept guidance from God in the same manner in which Jesus Christ, God the Son, in His human nature accepted the guidance of His human mother and step-father?

Of course not. But many act as though they have no need for God's guidance, and no obligation or need to be obedient to God.

God the Son was teaching us by example when He made Himself obedient to and accepted guidance from His human mother and step-father.

The truly wise person accepts the example given by God and follows it to the best of his or her ability.

Life is a voyage. It is like a voyage on a ship which will never reach the dock but which will surely sink either from adverse external conditions or through corruption of the vessel itself. Unlike the Titanic, there are enough life boats for all of the passengers and crew. The purser and crew, under the guidance of the Captain, attempt to lead each of us from our luxurious state rooms or from

our passage in steerage, to the life boats. Will each individual follow their instructions and be saved, or will some individuals go down with the ship? The Captain and crew will not go down with the ship for they have another, much better place awaiting them and all the passengers who join them. None of us can take anything with us into the life boat, but there awaits each of us in the new place, not just all that each of us needs, not just all that each of us wants or could want, but a life of the most complete and full happiness to an extent far beyond the ability of any of us to imagine. Will you disobey and ignore the guidance of the Captain and go down with the ship in death, or follow His guidance and embark in the true fullness of life?

Ref: Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:42-52

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## DO NOT MERELY ANTICIPATE - SEIZE

For some two thousand years the world has had the opportunity to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ God. On its face that seems to be a total contradiction in terms, for how is it possible to celebrate the birth of someone who is eternal, always was, always will be, and who may be accurately describes as always is?

Resolving that apparent contradiction, that apparent impossibility, is easy and simple. Comprehending the resolution is impossible for some, but simple for those who truly have Faith.

The apparent contradiction is resolved by the facts. The facts are, that one of the Three Persons of The Blessed Trinity which is God, the Person we refer to as the Son and as the Word of God, became incarnate - which means He took on human nature - and was born. He became incarnate in the womb of the Ever Virgin Mary through her being overshadowed by the Holy Ghost who is God and the one whom we refer to as the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. And to further simplify matters, His birth was a - actually the - virgin birth - His mother was a virgin before His incarnation, all through her pregnancy with Him, and even during and after His birth, and remains a virgin even to this very day and will always be a virgin. It is a very simple matter when one contemplates it. The fact that this is so foreign to any human experience, ever, makes it difficult to formulate questions about it.

We anticipate celebrating the Birth of Christ as a historical event just as we anticipate celebrating our own birthday or the birthday of someone we love as that date approaches.

But consider the anticipation of the actual event by all those people who understood at least some aspect of the prophecies regarding the Perfect Sacrificial Victim Saviour of the World. All of creation, sentient and non-sentient,

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whether consciously or only as a dim underlying awareness, every angel, devil, human, animal, plant, mineral, bacteria, virus, molecule, atom, electron, form of energy, form of matter, and even every form of negative energy, negative matter, anti-matter, dark matter, everything physical, spiritual, and otherwise - all of creation awaited the coming of Jesus Christ God.

But very few really fully knew, really completely comprehended, what it was that was anticipated. The Devil and perhaps a few of his followers had a fairly good comprehension as probably did Adam and Eve; and at least some of the Heavenly Bodiless Powers comprehended. Perhaps those who had died and awaited redemption, such as Abraham and Moses, had a better comprehension than the living. But few of the living had more than an inkling.

The living anticipated with differing levels of comprehension and differing expectations.

We who are alive today are much more fortunate. We do not have to anticipate the event, it has happened. We do not have to wonder what it will be or mean, He Who came has explained these things to us. What we anticipate is celebration of the event and the wonderfulness which resulted from that event and everything associated with it - from incarnation to birth to teaching, death, and resurrection.

We are rightfully inclined to orderly comingle all of the events of Christ God-man on Earth as that which made salvation attainable.

Therefore, it behooves us to not simply anticipate celebrating the historical event of His birth. Nor is it sufficient to celebrate His birth.

We should, we must, seize that eternal salvation which Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Elias could only anticipate.

Ref: Rom. 13: 11-14; Luke 21: 25-34

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## WHY DOES GOD CONCERN HIMSELF WITH OUR ETERNAL SALVATION?

**Because we are basically inclined to be good, even though we often are not, and included in that basic desire to be good is the desire to glorify God.**

What kind of creatures are we humans that God would become one of us to make eternal union with Him available to us. What kind of creatures are we that God made both special effort and arrangements so that we could attain eternal salvation? Do not focus on Divine Love; focus on us humans, who are able to reap the benefit of that Divine Love.

All that has been created was created by God. Since evil and sin are totally foreign to God, all that He created of necessity was created good. Since God is totally good, all that comes from God is good. Basically, humans are good. So too are the bodiless powers most commonly referred to as angels.

But there are creatures, humans and angels, who are evil and who sin.

We will not concern ourselves with the bodiless powers, angels. While their nature is similar to our nature in some respects and aspects, they are different types of creatures with free will, functioning under different spiritual "physics".

Since God created everything, and God is good, and God did not and does not create evil and sin, where did sin and evil come from?

Evil and sin come from the exercise of free will by creatures. Free will, one of the qualities which makes us in the image and likeness of God, the quality which enables us to qualify for eternal union with God, is also the quality which allows us to reject God or part of God or some or all of God's instructions.

Original Sin degraded the holiness and goodness of all humans after Adam and Eve and introduced in human nature an inclination to reject or to partially reject God and His instructions in favor of whatever it is that entices us at the moment.

We are inclined to follow or pursue that which entices us.

If what entices us at the moment is evil or sinful, then we are inclined to follow that enticement. If we explore that enticement and find it to be contrary to God, then we have two choices: we can reject the enticement and chose God, or we can reject God and pursue the enticement. But if we fail to explore that enticement we probably will pursue that enticement. That is a very weak exercise of free will.

If what entices us at the moment is good and holy, then we are inclined to follow *that* enticement. If we explore that enticement and find it to be in accord with God, then we again have two choices: we can accept and pursue the enticement and chose God, or we can reject God and the enticement. Again, if we fail to explore that enticement we probably will pursue that enticement. But even though it is a Godly enticement, that is a very weak exercise of our free will.

We must learn to instantly recognize an enticement as being bad or sinful, or as being holy, good, and Godly. And simultaneously to reject the bad and to accept the good. That instantaneous recognition and simultaneous rejection or acceptance is one of the qualities, character traits, and characteristics of the Blessed Theotokos, The Blessed Ever Virgin Mary. Stated simplistically, the Mother of God exercised her free will in a manner which consciously conformed to God, which consciously rejected anything which did not conform to God, and which consciously accepted everything which did conform to God. This was innate in her human nature and is innate in our human nature.

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She simply did and does it consistently, while we often fail so to do.

Mary worked with God. We often fail to work with God. But we not only have the ability to work with God, but also are by our very nature, inclined to work with God. It requires effort, sometimes great effort, sometimes continually practiced effort over years, to overcome that inclination to work with God, to quiet or incapacitate our conscience and make that which is sinful and evil our preferred path.

Remember, while we are born basically good, that does not mean we are born basically holy. We are born with a tendency or an inclination to become holy. Just a slight, seemingly insignificant, propensity to sin and evil is sufficient to warrant eternal damnation, or if we are blessed, purgatory.

But that natural inclination to God, goodness, and holiness, innate in human nature which by Divine design possesses both free will and the inclination to Godliness, is an aspect of our likewise innate inclination to glorify God. In that inclination to glorify God is an important aspect of the reason God became one of us and made both special effort and arrangements so that we could attain eternal salvation. For not only is eternal salvation attained in glorifying God, but also, the most perfect - for humans - glorification of God is made by those who have attained eternal salvation.

Ref: Romans 15:4-13; Mat. 11:2-10

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## **IF THE NAME OF JESUS IS ONLY RARELY, OR NEVER, WORSHIPFULLY ON ONE'S LIPS, WHAT SHOULD BE ONE'S REALISTIC FUTURE EXPECTATIONS**

It is very interesting to note that modern culture and society have replaced celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ during Christmas. The celebration of the birth of God Incarnate has been replaced with the likes of the exploits of three cartoon characters, two of them being green Orgeres (o'gers) named Shrek - a male, and Princess Fiona - a female, and a donkey named, what else, Donkey.

Years ago Easter, which is the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ from death by torture and crucifixion, thus proving His Divinity and validating His teachings, was replaced by Spring Break, which is a week devoted to inducing as many females as possible between the ages of teen-hood and early twenties, to engage in sexual exploits from nudity to sexual intercourse with other females, males, animals, vegetables, and inanimate objects, and recording these exploits on film or video.

Only rarely is the Name of Jesus ever mentioned, heard, or printed in the popular media. Only rarely is the Name of Jesus heard or mentioned at Christmas Eve and Christmas Day gatherings in the millions of homes throughout the world. The same is true of the Easter gatherings.

When that which one worships is an imaginary green, hideous monster, who by definition eats humans, and is presented as being nice, the worshipers should expect to be consumed by a very real, horrible monster. To expect otherwise is indicative that the ogre worshipers have the mental prowess of a donkey.

When that which one worships is human sensuality one soon becomes bored and generally indifferent to normal levels of stimulation. When this happens

some seek ever increasing levels of stimulation, to which there is a practical limit. Others seek varying types of stimulation, to which there are again practical limits. Some few abandon seeking this form of stimulation; and a few fortunate ones relegate such stimulation to a more proper level of importance.

If each individual would center their life on the true Jesus Christ we all would not necessarily instantly become saints for we are continually distracted. But re-focusing on Jesus after becoming distracted would be a much simpler, easy, and quick process.

And that would be of much greater benefit to each such individual, for the Name of Jesus does mean Saviour Anointed With Oil, or more succinctly, The Anointed Saviour - The One Anointed by God as Saviour of mankind; the Messiah.

Many people presume that no matter what they do during this life, they will be happy for all eternity after their physical death. It is unfortunate that anyone would exercise their innate mental prowess at a level below that of a donkey, to the extent they would believe eternal happiness awaits those who do nothing to prepare for it and nothing to deserve or merit it.

Ref: Acts 4:8-12; Luke 2:21

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## USING TEMPTATION TO SQUASH SIN

No one of us has a true comprehension as to why God allows temptation to sin. We can guess, and possibly be partially accurate, but not fully accurate because no one can know the mind of God beyond what God has revealed - and He has not revealed more than a glimmer of this to us.

We know temptation comes from the Devil, and from ourselves: from the animalistic part of our human nature, and also from the intellectual part of our human nature. We can conclude that even the spiritual part of our nature is a source of temptation because the Devil was an angel, and because our intellect, our mind, is in both the physical and spiritual realms.

While we really do not know why God allows temptation, we can use what God has told us so that we wind up using temptation to sin for our own benefit.

If we are tempted to sin and resist the temptation, we become stronger, more able to resist temptation to sin. It is not likely that anyone ever becomes immune to temptation, but it may be possible that some persons become so strong against temptations that they brush them off like dust on one's clothing or squash them like an annoying insect.

That would be nice: to squash temptations like an annoying fly.

Unfortunately, when you resist temptation, the forces which promote temptation rebound and press temptation even stronger. So the more you resist, the more temptation is presented and the stronger the temptation becomes. If you continue to resist you become stronger against temptation and the temptation continues to occur more often and become stronger, so that you must become stronger and stronger if you are to continue to resist.

It can be compared to being pushed, and you resist the push and perhaps push

back. Then the one pushing you increases the power of his push and the frequency of his pushes so that you must increase the strength of your resistance if you are just to maintain equilibrium, and increase the strength of your push even more if you are to push against the pusher and move him away from you. Then, the pusher comes back, just like a drug dealer, and enhances the temptation in an attempt to have you follow his direction.

It would be nice: to squash temptations like squashing an annoying fly. But if that is accomplished there will be more flies, because the Devil produces flies.

That is why we must rely on God to squash the flies of temptation. It may seem strange that the very One, God, Who allows temptation, is the One upon Whom we must rely to squash temptation; but it is not strange. He is the only one Who can squash temptations.

In our weakness God's strength is shown, for what we are unable to accomplish, He accomplished easily. And when we fail in our attempts to resist or overcome temptation, God's forgiveness of our sins shows His strength for He grants this forgiveness in Sacramental Confession which He established, and through which He shares His Divine Power with weak mankind.

Resisting temptation can be an agonizing activity. But for those who commit sin and really do not wish to commit sin, the commission of the sin causes even more agony. For those who do not care whether or not what they do is sin, the commission of their sins may cause them eternal agony.

But for those who resist temptation, even though the resisting and overcoming may be an agonizing process, even if they have failed miserably, if they have sought, received, and accepted Sacramental Confession and Absolution, when they are judged by God on their death, their agony in resisting temptation, and their agony in sinning, will be turned into everlasting joy.

You therefore can use temptation to squash sin, even if you wind up sinning, if you use the tools of the Sacraments which God has provided.

Ref: 1 Peter 2:11-19; John 16:16-22

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## WHAT FRUIT FROM STUPIDITY?

### The Search For Other Nourishment Creates Additional Sins In Waste Of Time, Energy, and Effort.

Review a few of the foolish things you have done, said, or believed. Review a few of the really stupid things. What fruit was yielded or evolved or was derived from them? Was the fruit useful?

If you acknowledge the foolishness or stupidity and from that acknowledgment make a resolve to avoid the foolishness or stupidity, then there was a good fruit. If you actually are successful in your resolve, and successfully avoid the foolishness or stupidity, this is not a fruit from the foolishness or stupidity but is actually a fruit born from the attentions of the Divine Husbandman. Attentions to which you have responded.

We do not have the ability to bear good fruit if we rely only on our own abilities. We can only bear good fruit if we receive attention from the Divine Husbandman, then accept and flourish within the environment which He establishes for us. If we send branches or shoots into another environment what we experience in that other environment will bring disease and poisonous elements into our good environment and we will become sickly and bear vile fruit if we bear any fruit at all.

Then we will be dependent on the Divine Husbandman to prune away that which is sickly from us, and to cart away our vile fruit so it does not contaminate us with our own sins.

Most of our problems do not occur because someone else such as the Devil has poisoned our soil. They occur because we have sent out shoots and roots into poisonous soil and have attempted to obtain nourishment from that foreign environment.

Since we know the source of our good and proper nourishment, it behooves us

to not seek nourishment elsewhere, but only from the proven source.

There are additional evil fruit which result from our seeking nourishment other than that which God provides. It is the sinful waste of time, energy, and effort. It requires significant time, energy, and effort, both on the part of God, and on our part, to rectify the effects of our sins. If we did not sin these could be spent improving our holiness and having a positive effect on others. But instead of improving ourselves and others, these are spent on repairing us. Our repairs are not wastes of time, energy, and effort. It is our making necessary these expenditure for our own pruning, purging, and reestablishment of a healthy and nourished holiness which is sinful.

Think of how much more positive an effect we would have on ourselves and all those with whom we come in contact if we did not have to spend so much time, effort, and energy making repairs!

Sometimes we seem to be like a plant which invites weeds and harmful insects to cohabitate with us. We take joy in their companionship until the weeds choke us off from nourishment, water, and sunlight, and the insects poison us and eat us alive. We feel relief when the Divine Husbandman removes the weeds and harmful insects; when he aerates our soil, spreads fertilizer, and irrigates. We would never have felt the evil effects had we not invited the weeds and harmful insects to live with us. Yet, once we are again healthy, we often seek the same weeds and harmful insects to have them cohabitate with us again.

Instead, we should seek to spread the seeds of Faith. We should invite that which compliments the Faith: plants which are both similar to us and compatible with our species; helpful virtues instead of harmful vices. Then the gardens and orchards of the Divine Husbandman would grow into healthy and productive fields and gardens covering all of creation.

And neither God nor we would have to spend time, energy, and effort repairing us.

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

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## WHOSE GOSPEL DO YOU DESIRE?

The Gospel which Christ taught is the Gospel of Freedom obtained through voluntary acquisition of principles which in and of themselves, and by their very nature and character, free the individual from the gravity of fallen human nature and enable, encourage, and actually cause one to soar far beyond what the human mind can conceive or think possible.

But the gospel of the world restricts the individual to attempting to obtain only physical delights which are very seldom actually attained and which, if attained, do not fulfill.

From the male perspective: if you were able to live the life of the man the world considers the most fortunate, would you want his wife or girlfriend or girlfriends? Would you really want to wake up next to a materialistic strumpet every day of your life, or would you exchange her for another materialistic strumpet; or perhaps exchange her for someone you actually liked? Would you really want to go out and party, get drunk and high on drugs, engage in sexual intercourse in the street while being photographed and video taped for all your bodily imperfections to be displayed to the world thus ruining your "sexy image" and prestige. Let us not forget your waking up the next day or days later with alcohol poisoning, a burning and upset stomach, diarrhea, and a headache which is so severe you wish you had the energy and ability to kill yourself.

From the female perspective: if you were able to live the life of the woman the world considers the most fortunate, would you want her unfaithful and cheating husband or boyfriend or boyfriends? Do you want a man in your life whose major concern is to look prettier than you? Do you really think that if you lose that twenty or fifty or one hundred pounds you will actually look like the younger woman on the magazine cover and live what you imagine

her life to be? Would you actually desire to look like her and do you actually desire to live her life?

Does any man or woman with any level of common sense really want to experience all of the surgery necessary to maintain the physical appearance? It looks very incongruous when a woman's eyes approach her ears, her breasts look like two skin colored garbage can lids, her legs look like turkey drumsticks after the kids have had at them after Thanksgiving dinner, and what ever else has not been tuck-up just simply sags. And no man can find a wig that does not look like a wig, nor false teeth that fit like the originals made by God. Combine this with the occasional gymnastic workout and ask, is it worth it? Only if you are so shallow the only thing you can float is your ego, for the bigger the ego the lighter the weight.

The ordinary person does not have the financial ability to purchase the bodily reconstruction which celebrities of today deem necessary; yet many of the ordinary people of today desire that image to be their own image.

Of what use is that image if it is false, empty, and associated with a life which no person in their right mind would desire to live?

This is the result of the slavery induced by the gospel of the world.

The Gospel of Christ frees you from concern over that over which you have no control, and gives you a realistic approach to matters over which you do have control.

It does not preach, "I'm OK and you're OK". It does not condone your being an hundred pounds overweight if you can do something reasonable about it, nor does it condone your having attained the overweight problem if there was something you could have reasonably done to prevent it. But the Gospel of Christ also does not state you are what you look like. Considering the fact that

concepts of physical attractiveness constantly change, plump being preferred in one culture, thin in another, there is no absolute constant or absolute norm of physical beauty or attractiveness. But there is a constant and absolute norm of spiritual beauty and that norm is not only set out and established in the Gospel of Christ. The means and method by which this norm is attained are also in that very same Gospel of Christ.

Christ is always ready and eager to do what only He can do: to cure our spiritual blindness, our spiritual deafness, and our spiritual ignorance. Only with these cures will we speak, act, and think in holiness.

Why do we constantly turn our heads away from Him when He reaches to cure our blindness, deafness, and dumbness?

Is it that one prefers the gospel of the world to the Gospel of Christ? If so, then that one is doomed unless that one changes. Is it that one desires the gospel of the world to the Gospel of Christ? If so, then that one is doomed unless that one changes. Or is it that one knows the gospel of the world and doubts the Gospel of Christ? If so, then that one is doomed until that one attains Faith. Or is it that one has lived in the gospel of the world and struggles to live the Gospel of Christ? If so, then one must constantly accept the cure from Christ until one is safely in the eternal arms of Christ.

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

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## CHARITY IS THE ESSENCE

Saint Paul's first letter to the Corinthians contains many phrases which have become very well known:

***13:11. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But, when I became a man, I put away the things of a child.***

***13:12. We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. Now I know in part: but then I shall know even as I am known.***

and

***13:13. And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.***

But the very beginning of that portion of Saint Paul's letter is only rarely cited. It states:

***13:8. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease or knowledge shall be destroyed. 13:9. For we know in part: and we prophesy in part. 13:10. But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.***

With Charity, which is Divine Love, all that is not God or of God or associated with God or Godly or Godlike becomes simultaneously both insignificant and of paramount importance. Insignificant because it is not God and possesses no association with God; of paramount importance because it is given to us by God to bring to an association with God that which is without God.

Possession of, continuity with, and total immersion in Charity makes Faith, Hope, and all which is of importance, operable. Without Charity the Apostles and Disciples did not comprehend the very clear statement Jesus made to them as they prepared to go to Jerusalem. He told them, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the

prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon. And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death. And the third day he shall rise again." (*Luke 18:31-33*) They heard the words but did not understand them.

Charity overcomes every slight, every injury, every nasty thing anyone has ever done to the one who possesses it. But while Charity overcomes the nastiness for the one who has been on the receiving end of the nastiness - if the recipient possesses Charity - it does not overcome the reward the nasty person will receive unless the nasty person has acquired Charity. The acquisition of Charity disintegrates the nastiness, induces remorse for the nastiness, and a desire - and where possible the attempt - to repair that harm caused by the nastiness.

Charity, Divine Love, is in a very real sense the essence of God. In a very real sense it is that in which is God's omnipotence. These words are very inadequate and that which they express is totally inadequate, but they point in the direction of Truth. They are inadequate because while we live in this life we are incapable of assimilating into that which is perfect even though that which is perfect "*is come*". In this life we are able to know only "*in part*" because we only casually associate with Charity. Were an individual to totally harmonize with, in, and into Divine Love, then that which is perfect would be "come" in that individual, and that which is in part in that individual would be done away and replaced with that which is perfect.

As Charity increases in an individual that individual has a decreasing concern for the nastiness inflicted upon him and increasing concern for the individual who inflicts nastiness. As Charity increases there is an increase in desire to assist others to attain eternal salvation and to remove one's self from thoughts, desires, deeds, and any process which lacks total harmony with

God.

As Divine Love increases in a person there is a corresponding increase in the desire to express that Love to others. There is a desire to guide others through their foolishness, to protect them from danger and when they are in danger - which is always.

How does one acquire Charity? In common parlance, "how does one get Divine Love?" For, after all is said which a creature can say about Charity, it is a Divine Virtue, an infused theological virtue being a gift from God along with Faith and Hope. It is not a moral virtue - those being Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance - which we are able to acquire through application of innate character traits which God has made common in all humans. How do we acquire this gift from God?

One simply prays for it, desires it, and simultaneously thinks and acts in accordance with it and it - Charity - will be offered to and given to that person for that person to accept.

Ref: 1 Cor 13:1-13; Luke 18:31-43

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**THE CHURCH HISTORY OF  
EUSEBIUS**

**BOOK I.**

**CHAPTER VIII.**

The Cruelty of Herod toward the Infants, and the Manner of his Death.

(Continued)

10 But he, although wrestling with such sufferings, nevertheless clung to life and hoped for safety, and devised methods of cure. For instance, crossing over Jordan he used the warm baths at Calirhoë, which flow into the Lake Asphaltites, but are themselves sweet enough to drink.

11 His physicians here thought that they could warm his whole body again by means of heated oil. But when they had let him down into a tub filled with oil, his eyes became weak and turned up like the eyes of a dead person. But when his attendants raised an outcry, he recovered at the noise; but finally, despairing of a cure, he commanded about fifty drachms to be distributed among the soldiers, and great sums to be given to his generals and friends.

12 Then returning he came to Jericho, where, being seized with melancholy, he planned to commit an impious deed, as if challenging death itself. For, collecting from every town the most illustrious men of all Judea, he commanded that they be shut up in the so-called hippodrome.

13 And having summoned Salome, his sister, and her husband, Alexander, he said: 'I know that the Jews will rejoice at my death. But I may be lamented by others and have a splendid funeral if you are willing to perform my commands. When I shall expire surround these men, who are now under guard, as quickly as possible with soldiers, and slay them, in order that all Judea and every house may weep for me even against their will.'" And after a little Josephus says,

14 "And again he was so tortured by want of food and by a convulsive cough that, overcome by his pains, he planned to anticipate his fate. Taking an apple he asked also for a knife, for he was accustomed to cut apples and eat them. Then looking round to see that there was no one to hinder, he raised his right hand as if to stab himself."

15 In addition to these things the same writer records that he slew another of his own sons before his death, the third one slain by his command, and that immediately afterward he breathed his last, not without excessive pain.

16 Such was the end of Herod, who suffered a just punishment for his slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, which was the result of his plots against our Saviour.

17 After this an angel appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and commanded him to go to Judea with the child and its mother, revealing to him that those who had sought the life of the child were dead. To this the evangelist adds, "But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in the room of his father Herod he was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding being warned of God in a dream he turned aside into the parts of Galilee."

**CHAPTER IX.**

The Times of Pilate.

THE historian already mentioned agrees with the evangelist in regard to the fact that Archelaus succeeded to the government after Herod. He records the manner in which he received the kingdom of the Jews by the will of his father Herod and by the decree of Caesar Augustus, and how, after he had reigned ten years, he lost his kingdom, and his brothers Philip and Herod the younger, with Lysanias, still ruled their own tetrarchies. The same writer, in the eighteenth book of his Antiquities, says that about the twelfth year of the reign of Tiberius, who had succeeded to the

empire after Augustus had ruled fifty-seven years, Pontius Pilate was entrusted with the government of Judea, and that he remained there ten full years, almost until the death of Tiberius.

2 Accordingly the forgery of those who have recently given currency to acts against our Saviour is clearly proved. For the very date given in them shows the falsehood of their fabricators.

3 For the things which they have dared to say concerning the passion of the Saviour are put into the fourth consulship of Tiberius, which occurred in the seventh year of his reign; at which time it is plain that Pilate was not yet ruling in Judea, if the testimony of Josephus is to be believed, who clearly shows in the above-mentioned work that Pilate was made procurator of Judea by Tiberius in the twelfth year of his reign.

**CHAPTER X.**

The High Priests of the Jews under whom Christ taught.

1 IT was in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, according to the evangelist, and in the fourth year of the governorship of Pontius Pilate, while Herod and Lysanias and Philip were ruling the rest of Judea, that our Saviour and Lord, Jesus the Christ of God, being about thirty years of age, came to John for baptism and began the promulgation of the Gospel.

2 The Divine Scripture says, moreover, that he passed the entire time of his ministry under the high priests Annas and Caiaphas, showing that in the time which belonged to the priesthood of those two men the whole period of his teaching was completed. Since he began his work during the high priesthood of Annas and taught until Caiaphas held the office, the entire time does not comprise quite four years.

3 For the rites of the law having been already abolished since that time, the

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(Continued EUSEBIUS from page 27)

customary usages in connection with the worship of God, according to which the high priest acquired his office by hereditary descent and held it for life, were also annulled and there were appointed to the high priesthood by the Roman governors now one and now another person who continued in office not more than one year.

4 Josephus relates that there were four high priests in succession from Annas to Caiaphas. Thus in the same book of the Antiquities he writes as follows: "Valerius Graters having put an end to the priesthood of Ananus appoints Ishmael, the son of Fabi, high priest. And having removed him after a little he appoints Eleazer, the son of Ananus the high priest, to the same office. And having removed him also at the end of a year he gives the high priesthood to Simon, the son of Camithus. But he likewise held the honor no more than a year, when Josephus, called also Caiaphas, succeeded him." Accordingly the whole time of our Saviour's ministry is shown to have been not quite four full years, four high priests, from Annas to the accession of Caiaphas, having held office a year each. The Gospel therefore has rightly indicated Caiaphas as the high priest under whom the Saviour suffered. From which also we can see that the time of our Saviour's ministry does not disagree with the foregoing investigation.

5 Our Saviour and Lord, not long after the beginning of his ministry, called the twelve apostles, and these alone of all his disciples he named apostles, as an especial honor. And again he appointed seventy others whom he sent out two by two before his face into every place and city whither he himself was about to come.

#### CHAPTER XI.

Testimonies in Regard to John the Baptist and Christ.

1 NOT long after this John the Baptist was beheaded by the younger Herod, as

is stated in the Gospels. Josephus also records the same fact, making mention of Herodias by name, and stating that, although she was the wife of his brother, Herod made her his own wife after divorcing his former lawful wife, who was the daughter of Aretas, king of Petra, and separating Herodias from her husband while he was still alive.

2 It was on her account also that he slew John, and waged war with Aretas, because of the disgrace inflicted on the daughter of the latter. Josephus relates that in this war, when they came to battle, Herod's entire army was destroyed, and that he suffered this calamity on account of his crime against John.

3 The same Josephus confesses in this account that John the Baptist was an exceedingly righteous man, and thus agrees with the things written of him in the Gospels. He records also that Herod lost his kingdom on account of the same Herodias, and that he was driven into banishment with her, and condemned to live at Vienne in Gaul.

4 He relates these things in the eighteenth book of the Antiquities, where he writes of John in the following words: "It seemed to some of the Jews that the army of Herod was destroyed by God, who most justly avenged John called the Baptist.

5 For Herod slew him, a good man and one who exhorted the Jews to come and receive baptism, practicing virtue and exercising righteousness toward each other and toward God; for baptism would appear acceptable unto Him when they employed it, not for the remission of certain sins, but for the purification of the body, as the soul had been already purified in righteousness.

6 And when others gathered about him (for they found much pleasure in listening to his words), Herod feared that his great influence might lead to some sedition, for they appeared ready to do whatever he might advise. He therefore considered it much better, before any new thing should be done under John's

influence, to anticipate it by slaying him, than to repent after revolution had come, and when he found himself in the midst of difficulties. On account of Herod's suspicion John was sent in bonds to the above-mentioned citadel of Mach'ra, and there slain."

7 After relating these things concerning John, he makes mention of our Saviour in the same work, in the following words: "And there lived at that time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be proper to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works, and a teacher of such men as receive the truth in gladness. And he attached to himself many of the Jews, and many also of the Greeks. He was the Christ.

8 When Pilate, on the accusation of our principal men, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him in the beginning did not cease loving him. For he appeared unto them again alive on the third day, the divine prophets having told these and countless other wonderful things concerning him. Moreover, the race of Christians, named after him, continues down to the present day."

9 Since an historian, who is one of the Hebrews themselves, has recorded in his work these things concerning John the Baptist and our Saviour, what excuse is there left for not convicting them of being destitute of all shame, who have forged the acts against them? But let this suffice here.

#### CHAPTER XII.

The Disciples of our Saviour.

1 THE names of the apostles of our Saviour are known to every one from the Gospels. But there exists no catalogue of the seventy disciples. Barnabas, indeed, is said to have been one of them, of whom the Acts of the apostles makes mention in various places, and especially Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians.

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2 They say that Sosthenes also, who wrote to the Corinthians with Paul, was one of them. This is the account of Clement in the fifth book of his Hypotyposes, in which he also says that Cephas was one of the seventy disciples, a man who bore the same name as the apostle Peter, and the one concerning whom Paul says, "When Cephas came to Antioch I withstood him to his face."

3 Matthias, also, who was numbered with the apostles in the place of Judas, and the one who was honored by being made a candidate with him, are likewise said to have been deemed worthy of the same calling with the seventy. They say that Thaddeus also was one of them, concerning whom I shall presently relate an account which has come down to us. And upon examination you will find that our Saviour had more than seventy disciples, according to the testimony of Paul, who says that after his resurrection from the dead he appeared first to Cephas, then to the twelve, and after them to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom some had fallen asleep; but the majority were still living at the time he wrote.

4 Afterwards he says he appeared unto James, who was one of the so-called brethren of the Saviour. But, since in addition to these, there were many others who were called apostles, in imitation of the Twelve, as was Paul himself, he adds: "Afterward he appeared to all the apostles." So much in regard to these persons. But the story concerning Thaddeus is as follows.

### CHAPTER XIII.

Narrative concerning the Prince of the Edessences.

1 The divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ being noised abroad among all men on account of his wonder-working power, he attracted countless numbers from foreign countries lying far away from Judea, who had the opening of being cured of their diseases and of all kinds of sufferings.

**2 For instance the King Abgarus, who ruled with great glory the nations beyond the Euphrates, being afflicted with a terrible disease which it was beyond the power of human skill to cure, when he heard of the name of Jesus, and of his miracles, which were attested by all with one accord sent a message to him by a courier and begged him to heal his disease.**

**3 But he did not at that time comply with his request; yet he deemed him worthy of a personal letter in which he said that he would send one of his disciples to cure his disease, and at the same time promised salvation to himself and all his house.**

**4 Not long afterward his promise was fulfilled. For after his resurrection from the dead and his ascent into heaven, Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, under divine impulse sent Thaddeus, who was also numbered among the seventy disciples of Christ, to Edessa, as a preacher and evangelist of the teaching of Christ.**

**5 And all that our Saviour had promised received through him its fulfillment. You have written evidence of these things taken from the archives of Edessa, which was at that time a royal city. For in the public registers there, which contain accounts of ancient times and the acts of Abgarus, these things have been found preserved down to the present time. But there is no better way than to hear the epistles themselves which we have taken from the archives and have literally translated from the Syriac language in the following manner. Copy of an epistle written by Abgarus the ruler to Jesus, tend sent to him at Jerusalem by Ananias the swift courier.**

**6 "Abgarus, ruler Of Edessa, to Jesus the excellent Saviour who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard the reports of thee and of thy cures as performed by thee without medicines or herbs. For**

**it is said that thou makest the blind to see and the lame to walk, that thou cleansest lepers and castest out impure spirits and demons, and that thou healest those afflicted with lingering disease, and raisest the dead.**

**7 And having heard all these things concerning thee, I have concluded that one of two things must be true: either thou art God, and having come down from heaven thou doest these things, or else thou, who doest these things, art the Son of God.**

**8 I have therefore written to thee to ask thee that thou wouldest take the trouble to come to me and heal the disease which I have. For I have heard that the Jews are murmuring against thee and are plotting to injure thee. But I have a very small yet noble city which is great enough for us both."**

**The answer of Jesus to the ruler Abgarus by the courier Ananias.**

**9 "Blessed art thou who hast believed in me without having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe in me, and that they who have not seen me will believe and be saved. But in regard to what thou hast written me, that I should come to thee, it is necessary for me to fulfill all things here for which I have been sent, and after I have fulfilled them thus to be taken up again to him that sent me. But after I have been taken up I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy disease and give life to thee and thine."**

10 To these epistles there was added the following account in the Syriac language. "After the ascension of Jesus, Judas, who was also called Thomas, sent to him Thaddeus, an apostle, one of the Seventy. When he was come he lodged with Tobias, the son of Tobias. When the report of him got broad, it was told Abgarus that an apostle of Jesus was come, as he had written him.

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11 Thaddeus began then in the power of God to heal every disease and infirmity, insomuch that all wondered. And when Abgarus heard of the great and wonderful things which he did and of the cures which he performed, he began to suspect that he was the one of whom Jesus had written him, saying, 'After I have been taken up I will send to thee one of my disciples who will heal thee.'

12 Therefore, summoning Tobias, with whom Thaddeus lodged, he said, I have heard that a certain man of power has come and is lodging in thy house. Bring him to me. And Tobias coming to Thaddeus said to him, The ruler Abgarus summoned me and told me to bring thee to him that thou mightest heal him. And Thaddeus said, I will go, for I have been sent to him with power.

13 Tobias therefore arose early on the following day, and taking Thaddeus came to Abgarus. And when he came, the nobles were present and stood about Abgarus. And immediately upon his entrance a great vision appeared to Abgarus in the countenance of the apostle Thaddeus. When Abgarus saw it he prostrated himself before Thaddeus, while all those who stood about were astonished; for they did not see the vision, which appeared to Abgarus alone.

14 He then asked Thaddeus if he were in truth a disciple of Jesus the Son of God, who had said to him, 'I will send thee one of my disciples, who shall heal thee and give thee life.' And Thaddeus said, Because thou hast mightily believed in him that sent me, therefore have I 'been sent unto thee. And still further, if thou believest in him, the petitions of thy heart shall be granted thee as thou believest.

15 And Abgarus said to him, So much have I believed in him that I wished to take an army and destroy those Jews who crucified him, had I not been deterred from it by reason of the dominion of the Romans. And Thaddeus said, Our Lord has fulfilled the will of his Father,

and having fulfilled it has been taken up to his Father. And Abgarus said to him, I too have believed in him and in his Father.

16 And Thaddeus said to him, Therefore I place my hand upon thee in his name. And when he had done it, immediately Abgarus was cured of the disease and of the suffering which he had.

17 And Abgarus marvelled, that as he had heard concerning Jesus, so he had received in very deed through his disciple Thaddeus, who healed him without medicines and herbs, and not only him, but also Abdus the son of Abdus, who was afflicted with the gout; for he too came to him and fell at his feet, and having received a benediction by the imposition of his hands, he was healed. The same Thaddeus cured also many other inhabitants of the city, and did wonders and marvelous works, and preached the word of God. And afterward Abgarus said, Thou, O Thaddeus, doest these things with the power of God, and we marvel. But, in addition to these things, I pray thee to inform me in regard to the coming of Jesus, how he was born; and in regard to his power, by what power he performed those deeds of which I have heard.

19 And Thaddeus said, Now indeed will I keep silence, since I have been sent to proclaim the word publicly. But tomorrow assemble for me all thy citizens, and I will preach in their presence and sow among them the word of God, concerning the coming of Jesus, how he was born; and concerning his mission, for what purpose he was sent by the Father; and concerning the power of his works, and the mysteries which he proclaimed in the world, and by what power he did these things; and concerning his new preaching, and his abasement and humiliation, and how he humbled himself, and died and debased his divinity and was crucified, and descended into Hades, and burst the bars which from eternity had not been broken, and raised the dead; for he descended alone, but rose with many, and thus ascended to his Father.

20 Abgarus therefore commanded the citizens to assemble early in the morning to hear the preaching of Thaddeus, and afterward he ordered gold and silver to be given him. But he refused to take it, saying, If we have forsaken that which was our own, how shall we take that which is another's? These things were done in the three hundred and fortieth year."

I have inserted them here in their proper place, translated from the Syriac literally, and I hope to good purpose.

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Tradition holds the letter which Jesus wrote to Abgarus was in the Patriarchal library in Constantinople and was burned with much of that which was in that library by the Crusaders when they sacked Constantinople, maiming and killing as many Orthodox clergy as they were able, raping and killing the wives and daughters of the Orthodox clergy, and defecating on the Altars of the Orthodox Churches after pillaging them, all in the best of Roman tradition. - *Ed.*

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**CATION OF THE PASSION** In the logical analysis which often is a seemingly essential aspect of exploring The Redemption, the horribleness of sin is often overlooked. The Passion itself was horrible. Christ endured The Passion because the Father established The Passion as an essential element of The Redemption, and in so doing clearly established the utter horribleness of sin. page 13

**THE BEAUTY PERCEIVED** We each have the primary vocation of living in accordance with God's instructions for page 1

**ADVENT - THE TIME BEFORE THE EVENT - A GOOD TIME TO CONTEMPLATE THE EVENT** Advent is the time of anticipation of the celebration of the event of the birth of the Incarnate only Begotten Son of God. It is a very good time to reflect on this historical event which is equaled in importance only by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the same Word Incarnate - Jesus Christ. page 1

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**THE BASILIAN FATHERS The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil at Holy Innocents Orthodox Church ~ Retreat House ~: telephone, RETREATS, CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS** page 4

**EVIL WILL FLOURISH WHEN IT IS NOT OPPOSED** We must therefore persevere in promulgation of Truth. Those who corrupt the teachings of Christ expose themselves to severe consequences. page 5

**CHILDREN'S PAGE The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism Q. 1274. What sin**

**is it to destroy one's own life, or commit suicide, as this act is called? - Q. 1310. What is forbidden by the eighth Commandment?** pages 10-11

**THE LAWN MOWER (Humor) Thanks, Mike** A preacher was making his rounds on a bicycle, when he came upon a little boy trying to sell a lawn mower. page 14

**WHICH IS YOUR CITY (TOWN, COMMUNITY)?** In some cities a citizen will say with pride that local industry produced two million pots, pans, and kitchen utensils, five million tons of fertilizer, a million board feet of lumber products, and two million bolt yards of fabric. In other cities a citizen will say with pride that industrious local citizens committed seventeen million major sins amongst themselves and thirty-three million major sins with visitors, tourist, and conventioners. page 15

**REDEMPTION AND SALVATION IN THE UNITY OF THE INCARNATION THROUGH THE RESURRECTION** The Incarnation and birth of Jesus Christ Who is God, is but the beginning of the realization humankind's quest to become Godlike. But if a person does not know God, then the quest to become Godlike becomes a quest not to become like unto the real God, but unto each individual human being's uninformed and formed without education concept of God. page 17

**BE CONSCIENTIOUS** It would be very terrible and tragic for someone who had struggled to follow Christ, to falter at the end. But many people do falter: perhaps not fatally but they do falter. page 19

**ARE YOU SUFFICIENTLY WISE SO-AS-TO FOLLOW GOD'S EXAMPLE?** Perhaps the most difficult combination of qualities for humans to embrace and exercise are obedience, especially obedience for the proper reasons, plus page 19

**DO NOT MERELY ANTICIPATE - SEIZE** For some two thousand years

the world has had the opportunity to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ God. On its face that seems to be a total contradiction in terms, for how is it possible to celebrate the birth of someone who is eternal, always was, always will be, and who may be accurately describes as always is? page 20

**WHY DOES GOD CONCERN HIMSELF WITH OUR ETERNAL SALVATION? Because we are basically inclined to be good, even though we often are not, and included in that basic desire to be good is the desire to glorify God.** What kind of creatures are we humans that God would become one of us to make eternal union with Him available to us. page 21

**IF THE NAME OF JESUS IS ONLY RARELY, OR NEVER, WORSHIPFULLY ON ONE'S LIPS, WHAT SHOULD BE ONE'S REALISTIC FUTURE EXPECTATIONS** page 22

**USING TEMPTATION TO SQUASH SIN** page 23

**WHAT FRUIT FROM STUPIDITY? The Search For Other Nourishment Creates Additional Sins In Waste Of Time, Energy, and Effort.** Review a few of the foolish things you have done, said, or believed. Review a few of the really stupid things. What fruit was yielded or evolved or was derived from them? Was the fruit useful? page 24

**WHOSE GOSPEL DO YOU DESIRE?** The Gospel which Christ taught is the Gospel of Freedom obtained through voluntary acquisition of principles which in and of themselves, and by their very nature and character, free the individual from the gravity of fallen human nature page 25

**CHARITY IS THE ESSENCE** page 26

**THE CHURCH HISTORY OF EUSEBIUS BOOK I. CHAPTER VIII.** page 27

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**~ WHEN THE “SOMETHING” ONE CAN NOT DESCRIBE COMES UPON YOU ~** *From Metropolitan Archbishop Lee S. Mc Colloster, S.S.B. To the flock entrusted into my care:* There are times when something which is not quite capable of being described comes upon us; as if it were a form or type of need, but it is not. page 1

**THE REDEMPTION - A SERIES OF ARTICLES EXPLORING ASPECTS OF GOD AND OF MAN REVEALED, EXPRESSED, AND MADE EXPLICIT IN THE REDEMPTION**

**~~~~~ THE REDEMPTION: PROPRIETY IN PERCEPTION OF HUMAN STATUS IS DEFINED IN REDEMPTION** Whenever we attempt to justify what we do, have done, wish to do, have omitted or not done, or to justify what we think, or an attitude we have, the attempt at justification often is supported on a foundation based in the concept that we are

“finding”, expressing, exploring, maturing, our own psyche, personality, personhood . . . page 1

**THE REDEMPTION: WHY DID GOD REDEEM MANKIND AND WHY IN THE MANNER DONE?** Let us consider two facts: First, the reason man was created in the image and likeness of God was that each human glorify God by an homage of love; Second, every sin is an attempt by the sinner to be an equal with or even superior to God, and also a refusal by the sinner to give to God the sinner's heart's submission, and to glorify God by an homage of love. page 6

**THE REDEMPTION: DIVINE ACTS IN THE HISTORICAL PASSION** Study of the Redemption reveals and clarifies an enormous amount of information useful to mankind as pertains to the ultimate purpose of human life, including that purpose - which is established by God as being God's glorification both in this life and in either eternal sorrowful damnation separated from God or eternal gloriously joyful Heavenly union with God. page 9

**THE REDEMPTION: THE PASSION WAS AT CHRIST'S INITIATIVE; HOW DID THE PASSION “MAKE” REDEMPTION** This leads us to this very important truth: Jesus Christ was not the victim of the actions of the Jewish high priest and his cohorts, and of the inaction of Pilate and Herod. Christ was the active cause, instigator, and director of His own Passion and unlawful execution. It was not that Jesus acceded to or allowed the Passion. The Passion was at Christ's initiative. page 9

**THE REDEMPTION: THE MEANS BY WHICH MAN PARTICIPATES IN THE REDEMPTION** The Redemption is a marvelous Divine work. As is usual with humankind, when humans contemplate the Divine or Divine works, humans forget to seek the simple and non-complex, and muddy the waters with complexity of their own invention. page 12

**THE REDEMPTION: ELEMENTS OF APPRECIATION AND APPLI-**  
*(Continued CONTENTS on page 31)*

**If you do not want the crop, do not prepare the soil, for if the soil is prepared it will surely receive seed which, should it sprout, you may then decide to kill with herbicide or to bush hog and plow under . . . and God does not like that.**

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