

REUNION

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



Volume 14 No. 1

OF THE CHURCH

OF MAN WITH GOD JULY 2006 A.D.

~ THE CLEANSING FIRE OF GOD'S LOVE ~

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

- I -

- CLEANSING OF THE SOUL AT DEATH -



If you do not believe in the classic (Roman Catholic) Purgatory you probably should read this because the portion on Purgatory is very short, and not at all classic. And if you do believe it, you also should read it.

The fire of Purgatory probably, actually is the fire of God's Love, His Divine Love, which burns away the impurities from the soul so as to leave it clean and pristine. Probably.

If it is the fire of His Love, then this might be, not must be but might be, the most happy and pleasing experience next to actually being united with God in Heaven.

Each of us has loved or loves someone or some thing with an all encompassing and all consuming love. We may only barely remember that experience, and not really be able to recall or experience that passion, and it may have been something which an adult would find inconsequential, such as the love for a pet or a favorite stuffed animal toy. But we all have given that passionate love to someone or something which we perceived as having human-like qualities.

God's love for us is the perfect, total, all encompassing, all consuming, Love. It is perfect Love for each individual.

The soul that responds to that Love, accepts it, and wishes to give love to God in that soul's fullest ability: that soul focuses only on God. Though it knows of itself and knows of others, and in a sense is aware of itself and of others, that Loving focus on God is so all consuming that the soul really is not aware of itself because its Loving focus on God is so strong and complete that it allows nothing else to be experienced by that soul. Its awareness of itself and of other creatures is more a knowledge of their existence than it is an awareness of their existence. Your recognition of yourself and of others and other things is similar to your having knowledge of the existence of the leader of your country in the far recesses of the back of your mind, but you really are not aware of him - he is not in your mind or in your active perception.

This Love that God has for us is the strongest Love possible for it comes from God and is therefore perfect. Those who accept that Love immerse themselves in it, and that Divine Love burns away anything which interferes with the soul receiving and immersing itself in that love. It burns away anything which prevents or hinders the soul being thoroughly saturated with that Love. It burns away the stains left by sin. And the soul wants those things to be taken away so it can fully immerse itself in that Divine

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NATURAL DISASTERS AND PRAYER

New Orleans and the Gulf Coast have begun the hurricane season. For over an hundred years there has been a New Orleans tradition of praying what is known as "The Hurricane Prayer", where intercessory protection of the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary is sought. And for all of those years, despite Hurricanes Betsy and Camille, people have acknowledged receipt of that protection.

But with the occurrence of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, many believe their prayers for protection were not granted.

Receipt of that for which we pray often requires our participation in bringing the request to fruition. In the matter of protection from hurricanes, our part of our required participation is meaningful levee and flood protection programs, as well as proper management of coast lands, swamp, and marsh lands. This is done through government and government agencies, which are elected by and accountable to the general public.

For over forty years the general public has been complacent with elected officials who have dispensed public funds and favors to a select few while giving selected family and friends the opportunity to join them in feeding at the public trough. Because many voters and members of the general public perceived some advantage in electing officials who were thought to be the type of people who would "dispense favors" (even though these "favors" were only "dispensed" to insiders), these officials and their associates have been continually elected and re-elected, with only occasionally there being an

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

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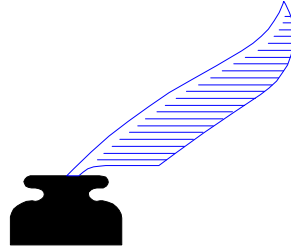
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+ Paul, S.S.B.
Publisher .

WORLD WIDE WEB:

The direct connection to the computer which functions as the message, file, and communications center for The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil, is:
<http://www.reu.org>
telnet://reu.org

Issues of REUNION, in color, in Adobe PDF and HTML, are available at:
<http://www.reu.org/public/news.htm>



On Line Chat Room: at the main web site log-in <http://www.reu.org> You have to register with the system before you can use it, and it is best to send e-mail to set a "chat schedule".

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

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

PRAYERS

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

(Continued WEB on page 3)

(Continued WEB from page 2)

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

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

BIBLE-DAY

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

SERMONS

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

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

STUDIES

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

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

ONE-BODY

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

REU_PUB

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

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

Or,

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

BasilNet ReuNet HIOC BBS Listserver E-mail Commands

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

User Commands

subscribe
Subscribe to an email list.

E.G.:
To subscribe to a mailing list, send a message to:
listserver@reu.org
In the message area put:
subscribe studies
subscribe sermons
subscribe prayers
subscribe bible-day
subscribe one-body

unsubscribe
Unsubscribe from an email list.

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

active
Make yourself active on the list again.

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

help
Retreives this information.

info
Retrieves information on email lists hosted by this server

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

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THE BASILIAN FATHERS

(The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil)

A few of the places we visited in Guatemala, March, 2006, before and afted the consecration of Bishop Fernando Castellanos, S.S.B.



Family on their farm established under land reform program initiated by Archbishop Andres



Our hostess (left) - in the residence where we stayed for the consecration of Bishop Fernando Castellanos



In the village of Avocado
where avocados do not grow

Above left - some of the residents of the village.

Above - interior of the Church.

Left - exterior front of the Church.

We hope to publish more pictures of the many Basilian and OCCA parishes and facilities in Guatemala in future editions of REUNION, and also hope to have new print equipment which will reproduce the pictures much better. - Ed.

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SIN: THE ROOT CAUSE OF CRIME

What is the root cause of crime? Our Saviour said, “. . . *unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*”

Allegedly:

Three young men, ages 18, 17, and 16 years of age, went into the back yard of a house, took a ladder, set it against the back wall of the house, and broke in the second story bedroom window. The man living in the house took his gun and shot dead the first one through the window.

The dead man's mother wailed, “My boy was a good boy. He didn't have to kill my boy. Why didn't the ambulance get there sooner. They could have saved my boy.”

Allegedly:

Three teen aged men stole a pick-up truck in one town, fled to a nearby town where they stole another pick-up truck, but were seen by the owner who called the police. The police gave pursuit, the driver of the truck lost control and slid off the road onto some grass where the truck was partially boxed in by police cars. The police ordered the men out of the truck, but the driver put the truck into reverse and attempted to run down one of the police officers. The other police officers - about five of them - shot into the truck until it stopped, killing the thief who was driving, firing approximately 100 rounds - approximately 20 rounds per officer. The other two men, upon being dragged from the stolen truck, virtually unharmed, said they told the driver not to try to run over the police officer.

A local preacher said the police officers were racist who used the driver for target practice and that there was no need for the officers to shoot. And the driver's aunt said he was a good boy.

Allegedly:

An off duty police officer was in a convenience grocery store when a man entered, walked to the counter with a gun in hand and before the officer could react, shot the store clerk dead and then the officer emptied his gun shooting into the robber. The robber ran towards the officer raising and shooting his (the robber's) gun. The officer dove for cover, dropped his empty clip and inserted a new clip, and shot the robber twice in the side of the face and head killing him.

The dead robber's grandmother said, he was a good boy. But the robber's stepfather said he had tried to guide the robber into a productive life, getting him a job where he, the stepfather worked, but the robber just did not want to work.

Allegedly:

Some corporate executives intentionally entered large expenses in the corporate ledger, as capital expenditures, which meant that regular expenses which are liabilities were entered as improvements which are considered investments and assets. This enabled the executives to have their stock increase in value, and the corporation to make additional loans (without there really being any collateral or backing for the loans) which the managers siphoned as raises in salaries and benefits amounting to tens and hundreds of millions of dollars. When the fraud was discovered, the defrauded investors were fortunate if they received 25 cents on the dollar, and most of them received nothing.

The corporate president was convicted and sentenced to several decades in prison - a virtual life in prison sentence considering his age.

His trophy wife cried the sentence was not fair. The executives said they should not have been convicted since the corporation was theirs and that meant the money was theirs too.

This picture should now be clear.

In the first situation the mother refused to acknowledge her son's sins. She blamed the man who defended his home and his life, and the ambulance personnel, for her son's death. But he was responsible for his own death. He and his friends had lived short, but full criminal lives. And she probably contributed by not correcting his prior criminal behavior, and by not examining her own behavior. She failed to seek out her own sins and her son's sins and to remove sin from her own and his behavior. The man who defended his home and his life is now forced to remember having killed someone, even though it was in defence of his own life and home. And the dead burglar is responsible for that as well - as is his mother. If someone in need of medical services did not receive them in a timely manner because the ambulance was attempting to attend to the dead burglar, then the burglar, his two accomplices, and his mother, are responsible for that as well.

In the second situation the driver and his friends stole two vehicles, and when cornered, the driver attempted to kill a police officer. He was killed instead, but his accomplices were virtually uninjured, showing the police used great restraint and expertise. The three criminals had criminal histories and were versed in crime. The preacher used the situation for his own political, power, and notoriety purposes. Following his line of thought, the police should have let the driver run over and kill the police officer - but that would have been immoral. The preacher should look to what he is preaching, for what he has preached in connection with that situation was not Christianity, nor was it any form of justice. He preached hate. And the aunt was wrong - the dead driver was not a good boy. He stole two vehicles and tried to kill a police officer. Good boys do not do that. The three men stole two vehicles causing disruption in the lives of the owners of those vehicles and their fami-

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lies, and those who depend on them and the vehicles. What does the preacher have to say about that. Perhaps in the eyes of the preacher, if the owners of the vehicles were white, the thieves, who are black, had the right to steal the vehicles. But what if the vehicles were owned, even one of them, by a black person? And what about the police officers? One was almost killed, and the officers were forced to kill a man in order to protect another and themselves. For the rest of their lives they will wonder about that; it will be difficult to live with, as will the fear they will have for the rest of their lives.

In the third situation the stepfather was correct. He saw the problem with his stepson, tried to assist the man to correct himself, but the man decided on a life of crime, a life of getting things the easy way even if he had to kill, a life of sin. And the murderer died in the process of doing just that. If his grandmother had acknowledged the murderer's evil, perhaps she could have influenced him at an early age. But she did not. The grandmother's "good boy" killed a person in cold blood - it was a cold blooded and totally unnecessary murder. The murderer was not even defending himself. He just killed the clerk. And then he tried to kill the police officer, who was fortunate enough to be able to defend himself. But still, the family and friends of the clerk will suffer the rest of their lives because of the murder of the clerk, and the police officer will have to relive witnessing the clerk's murder and his inability to react quickly enough to save the clerk's life; his barely being able to save his own life; and his having to kill the murderer to save his own life. All because the only person in the murderer's family who recognized the murderer's life of sin and attempted to correct it was his stepfather (and perhaps his mother - but definitely not his grandmother).

How did the corporate executives develop a mental attitude which allowed them to view other people's property as their own? How did they develop the attitude that they could steal what ever they

wished to steal, use what ever was in reach without regard to who owned it, all without being accountable? Were they born that way? Perhaps. Or, did they develop that attitude as they grew from childhood to being adults? Or, perhaps they developed that attitude after lifetimes of sliding to the depths of depravity, so that once in the depths, they no longer recognized the rights of anyone, and did not consider anyone other than themselves.

So: What is the root cause of crime?

Sin.

The cause of crime is not economic status, nor is it education or job opportunity. It is sin. If those raising children do not examine themselves for their own sins, and attempt to correct them, then their children will be greatly likely to engage in the same sins, and in worse sins. If the children's sins are not corrected by the parents or guardians when the children are young, then as the children become older, their sins will become more and more adult in nature. A fourteen year old can be fully adult in knowledge, intention, and sinning, thereby abandoning the status of being a child.

And when the members of the clergy attack anyone who attempts to require children and those who raise them, live up to at least minimal standards necessary for social stability, for preservation of some semblance of law, order, and decency, not to mention morality; **then the moral standards of those so called clergy, those so called preachers, ministers, pastors, and men and women of the "cloth", must be examined, questioned, and found to be deficient.**

Finally: A teenaged boy drove through a small town near where he lived. One of the town's police officers stopped the boy and gave him a ticket for running a red light. The boy had not been on the street where the light is, and told the office the had not run the light, that he had not been on the street where the light is located. The boy went to court and told the judge the officer was wrong. The

judge said, "Who do you think I am going to believe, you or my police officer," and fined the boy.

The officer knew the boy had not run the traffic light. He gave the boy the ticket just because he could. He gave the boy the ticket because: the boy was defenseless against him; the officer is a bully and could pick on a young teenager without fear of reprisal; if the boy resisted or said anything the police officer could have beat up the boy and had fun doing it while saying the boy resisted arrest; the town makes money on traffic tickets and that is how the officer is paid; but mostly he gave the boy the ticket because the officer is an evil person who follows his own desires and inclinations without regard to the rights of anyone else. And in his sin he is no different from the corporate executives, nor from any of the other criminals whose activities have been related.

The judge too, knew the boy had not run the traffic light.

We can not say the officer and the judge will go to hell when they die. But if we expect the active murderers, robbers, corporate thieves, and debased preachers to have problems in the hereafter, we can expect the judge and officer to have problems as well.

Because sin is sin.

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

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A MISFORTUNE IS A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

In these modern times in an industrialized country, things such as shipwrecks, imprisonment and government persecution for religious beliefs, whippings, and enduring hunger, medical problems, and lack of shelter and proper clothing, seem unlikely events, yet they are common not just in underdeveloped countries but even in the most developed and advanced countries.

We are familiar with religious persecution in communist countries, and there remain numerous communist countries. We are also familiar with religious persecution in many countries which have a state approved religion. Imprisonment combined with beatings, mutilation, and murder, especially of Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians, all in the name of religion, are common.

But persecution of the true Church and its members is not limited to these obvious forms of persecution. Many countries impose a tax penalty for those who are married - meaning single persons who live together in sin receive a tax break from their government. Bearing children out of wedlock is officially encouraged through government support programs which support a single parent but render less or no assistance to a husband and wife with children.

If you are going to be a true follower of Christ, you will probably be persecuted for following His teachings. If you do not think this will happen to you, just wait until your employer subtly instructs you to do something immoral or of questionable legality. Just wait until you observe your employer doing something dishonest, illegal, and immoral. If you do what is moral in such an instance, you will probably receive retaliation of some sort from your employer or your supervisor or department manager.

What will your reaction be if your spouse or your child does something they should not? What will your reaction be if you do something you should not? Will your Christianity sustain you and be sustained by you with God's help, or will you discard all or part of the gift of Christianity?

Will you become obsessed with contemplating the persecutions and the sufferings which have been given to you and your family as gifts, or will you accept and acknowledge these gifts and continue with your Christian life? If you become obsessed with contemplating the persecutions you and your family receive, then the suffering will be for naught; but if you acknowledge them as gifts, then you can be made a stronger follower of Christ because of them, and you can proceed with the life with which God has blessed you.

Do not presume every misfortune which befalls you occurs because you are a follower of Christ. But you should take advantage of every misfortune just as you should take advantage of every blessing, for a misfortune is really a blessing in disguise. So if you do spend any time contemplating your misfortunes, think of whether or not you made the misfortune into something positive, something good.

These examples may seem simple or exaggerated, but they are part of every day life. If someone steals the battery out of your car, you have the opportunity to practice divine mercy and to pray that you will receive the gifts of patience, fortitude, and mercy for yourself. What positive can come from the death of a child? The gift of having a saint in heaven who has an interest in you surpassed only by the interest God and the Blessed Mother have in you.

It is very easy to lose focus on The Way taught by Christ, to have the gift of Faith lose its place as the prime focus of your life. Engaging in that which is necessary for every day life can easily cause a person to make following Christ

take second place to earning a living or taking care of a family or obtaining things. Because of this some people try to change what Christ taught. They present their own teachings and desires as being the truth taught by Christ, and attempt to have as many followers as possible. They seem to think that if a great number of people all profess the same belief, the belief will be truth - but all that happens in such instances is that a large number of people are lead to live a lie instead of the truth.

Accept adversities as gifts and deal with them to the extent possible by turning them into an advantage in a Godly manner. You can not ignore the cares of this world for they are sometimes like a dog which has its teeth in your leg. Deal with that dog and learn from dealing with it, and never let it chase you off the path to God.

Ref: 2 Cor 11: 19-33; 12:1-9; Luke 8:4-15

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CHARITY REQUIRES

If Our Lord Jesus Christ had not actually exercised the unlimited Charity which is an aspect of His essence, mankind would never have had redemption made available to each of us, and eternal sorrow without God would have been the future for each of us.

This Charity of Our Lord is so strong that even as He was on His way to provide us with His Flesh and His Blood as our source of eternal life in the Eucharist, as He was on His way to suffer the most horrible torture as sacrifice for us, He stopped and answered the plea, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me."

Exercising Charity, performing Charity, living Charity, being Charitable: these are different expressions of the same, impossible to define, aspect of God. And if we do not have this aspect of God, then everything we do and everything we are, is meaningless.

Sometimes Charity induces us to give money to a cause or purpose; sometimes it requires we give of ourselves, our time, our expertise, our muscles, our intellect, and sometimes it simply requires we be present.

One who has Charity is possessed by Charity. Charity and Love are related, but they are different. Anyone can love, but Charity requires a surrender to God in at least some measure; and as one surrenders more and more to God one becomes more Charity, possesses more Charity, and is more possessed by more Charity. Love is an aspect of Charity and is a part of Charity, but it is not Charity. Charity is greater than love.

During Great Lent we fast and we abstain. Some give up something such as candy, and others do something such as pray extra prayers. These are good practices for they strengthen the spirit and help to bring the flesh under control. But the major accomplishment

we should seek during Great Lent is to increase our Charity. Very often this will require we give things which are extremely valuable to us: our time, patience, and attention. Very often it will require we focus less on what we desire and more on what others need. Most of us readily acknowledge that one person's need should have preference over another person's desire, but very few people are willing to give or donate that one, limited, valuable thing called time in order to supply that which is needed by someone else.

Charity can be thought of as the root of holiness. Acquisition of the Holy Spirit and Charity are concurrent. You can love Jesus and still sin, but the more you have and are possessed by Charity, the greater your horror of sin will become because Charity makes sin horrible to you.

We should pray for Charity, not just that we receive it, but that we also give it, practice it, and live it. In so doing we will increase in holiness, Faith, and Hope, and become more fit and acceptable to God.

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

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FASTING FOR SELF-CONTROL

Some think of fasting as being done as a form of penance, and that is good, but if that is the only reason a person fasts they are missing a great opportunity. Fasting is a means not only of penance, but also of attaining self-control or at least a measure of self-control.

Notice that Jesus was first lead into the desert to be tempted, and so He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and then He was tempted. So He prepared for being tempted by fasting. And the very first thing He was tempted with was food, for He obviously was hungry. We know Jesus is God, and as God all attempts to tempt His are ineffective for by His very Divine Nature God is beyond temptation. But Jesus is also totally human, with a total and complete human nature, and that human nature was subject to temptation. But Jesus resisted that human temptation.

So Satan tempted Jesus with ever increasingly stronger temptations, and Jesus resisted and eventually cast Satan away.

It is not that Satan attempted to tempt Jesus; he actually tempted Jesus, and Jesus resisted those temptations.

He resisted those temptations because He had His human cravings under control, and He fasted to provide us with the example of how to bring our earthly inclinations under control - primarily by fasting.

If we simply fast for the sake of fasting, we reap no spiritual benefit. Those who are on a restricted food intake diet usually are on the diet to improve their appearance or health, and have no thought of attaining spiritual benefit so they receive none. But those who fast for the purpose of attaining spiritual benefit will be attacked by the devil, they will surely be tempted, and through fasting, which includes prayer as well

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as restricted food intake, they attain spiritual benefit which assists them in overcoming the temptations.

We have God's own example of this and we do well to remember it.

Ref: 2 Cor 6:1-10; Mat. 4:1-11

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(Continued **DISASTERS** from page 1)

honest official elected. As a result, coast lands, swamps, marshes, and off shore islands which are the prime natural protection against hurricanes, have been destroyed. These natural protections were established by God. Man, partially through his greed, partially through neglect, has destroyed that which God provided.

Man, therefore, has negated God's answer to our prayer from protection from hurricanes.

The argumentation of the natural levee system by construction of new levees and reinforcement of natural levees was man's part of the work to protect us from hurricanes. Man's work was inadequate due to the same sins of the politicians and public which destroyed those natural protections which God had granted in answer to our prayers.

But while many did suffer loss of life and loved ones, and many more lost their homes and most of their worldly possessions, the vast majority of the populace did receive protection from the storms even though they suffered severe losses.

And that vast majority which is alive now has the opportunity to thank God that it also has the opportunity to improve their spiritual lives so that we all will become acceptable to God. That, after all, is the ultimate purpose of prayer, is it not?

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A MILITARY PERSON'S WAY OF FOLLOWING CHRIST

Have you ever wondered what Jesus, Moses, and Elias were discussing? Some think they were talking about Our Lord's coming Sacrifice on the cross. Obviously the Transfiguration is of extreme importance, and what ever the subject of the conversation was likewise important.

What we do know from the Transfiguration is the unlimited power of God and our reliance on that power for our very existence, and also for our salvation.

We are totally powerless to follow Our Lord unless He gives us the ability to follow Him and sustains us in following Him. We must do our part, which is to accept His assistance and to actually follow The Way taught by Him, but without His assistance, His very great and very strong assistance, we are doomed to failure in any attempt to follow The Way. It is the greatest of blessings that Our Lord never fails to support us, never fails to provide us with all the assistance we need, and never fails to forgive us when we ask forgiveness for having failed to follow His teachings and His Father's commandments.

It seems to unbelievers that there is a great contradiction in those who have Christian Faith, Hope, and Charity, for we all are sinners which means we break God's laws, but we also love all of God's laws and want to follow all of them and try to follow all of them.

We know that prayer is necessary for us to be enabled to be good and for us to be good, but there are many different ways to pray. There are the formal prayers such as the Divine Liturgy, the Rule of the Mother of God or the Rosary, and our personal prayers, but there are also prayers of action, of living what we have been taught.

A simple example of this is the

Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are: 1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; 2. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land; 3. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; 4. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled; 5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy; 6. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God; 7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God; 8. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Let us just look at just one of the Beatitudes: ***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*** An American or British or Australian soldier, sailor, or airman, who is fighting against a government which has killed 10,000 to 15,000 of its own people every year for the past fifteen or more years, and which operates torture rape rooms where it torture-rapes tens of thousands of women every year - that soldier who is fighting to free those under that Satanic government is a peacemaker, provided he is fighting that war to free the oppressed and not for his own gain.

Another form of prayer is the Corporal Works of Mercy. The chief corporal works of mercy are seven: To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead. That same soldier who is fighting to free an entire nation from the slavery and oppression of a Satanic dictator is performing the corporal work of mercy of ransoming the captive.

That soldier is actually offering his or her life for the welfare of millions of strangers. That soldier is being Christ-like in a way which many lack the desire or ability to comprehend, but any who condemn that soldier must also condemn the Allied soldiers of World War Two who freed the world from the

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism No. 1

Q. 362. Who sought to kill the Infant Jesus?

A. Herod sought to kill the Infant Jesus because he thought the influence of Christ -- the new-born King -- would deprive him of his throne.

Q. 363. How was the Holy Infant rescued from the power of Herod?

A. The Holy Infant was rescued from the power of Herod by the flight into Egypt, when St. Joseph -- warned by an Angel -- fled hastily into that country with Jesus and Mary.

Q. 364. How did Herod hope to accomplish his wicked designs?

A. Herod hoped to accomplish his wicked designs by murdering all the infants in and near Bethlehem. The day on which we commemorate the death of these first little martyrs, who shed their blood for Christ's sake, is called the feast of Holy Innocents.

Q. 365. How may the years of Christ's life be divided?

A. The years of Christ's life may be divided into three parts:

1. His childhood, extending from His birth to His twelfth year, when He went with his parents to worship in the Temple of Jerusalem.

2. His hidden life, which extends from His twelfth to His thirtieth year, during which time He dwelt with His parents at Nazareth.

3. His public life, extending from His thirtieth year -- or from His baptism by St. John the Baptist to His death; during which time He taught His doctrines and established His Church.

Q. 366. Why is Christ's life thus divided?

A. Christ's life is thus divided to show that all classes find in Him their model. In childhood He gave an example to the

young; in His hidden life an example to those who consecrate themselves to the service of God in a religious state; and in His public life an example to all Christians without exception.

Q. 367. How long did Christ live on earth?

A. Christ lived on earth about thirty-three years, and led a most holy life in poverty and suffering.

Q. 368. Why did Christ live so long on earth?

A. Christ lived so long on earth to show us the way to heaven by His teachings and example.

LESSON EIGHTH: On Our Lord's Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension

Q. 369. What do we mean by Our Lord's Passion?

A. By Our Lord's Passion we mean His dreadful sufferings from His agony in the garden till the moment of His death.

Q. 370. What did Jesus Christ suffer?

A. Jesus Christ suffered a bloody sweat, a cruel scourging, was crowned with thorns, and was crucified.

Q. 371. When did Our Lord suffer the "bloody sweat"?

A. Our Lord suffered the "bloody sweat" while drops of blood came forth from every pore of His body, during His agony in the Garden of Olives, near Jerusalem, where He went to pray on the night His Passion began.

Q. 372. Who accompanied Our Lord to the Garden of Olives on the night of His Agony?

A. The Apostles Peter, James and John, the same who had witnessed His transfiguration on the mount, accompanied Our Lord to the Garden of Olives, to watch and pray with Him on the night of His agony.

Q. 373. What do we mean by the transfiguration of Our Lord?

A. By the transfiguration of Our Lord we mean the supernatural change in His appearance when He showed Himself to His Apostles in great glory and brilliancy in which "His face did shine as the sun and His garments became white as snow."

Q. 374. Who were present at the transfiguration?

A. There were present at the transfiguration -- besides the Apostles Peter, James and John, who witnessed it -- the two great and holy men of the Old Law, Moses and Elias, talking with Our Lord.

Q. 375. What caused Our Lord's agony in the garden?

A It is believed Our Lord's agony in the garden was caused:

1. By his clear knowledge of all He was soon to endure;

2. By the sight of the many offenses committed against His Father by the sins of the whole world;

3. By His knowledge of men's ingratitude for the blessings of redemption.

Q. 376. Why was Christ cruelly scourged?

A. Christ was cruelly scourged by Pilate's orders, that the sight of His bleeding body might move His enemies to spare His life.

Q. 377. Why was Christ crowned with thorns?

A. Christ was crowned with thorns in mockery because He had said He was a King.

Q. 378. Could Christ, if He pleased, have escaped the tortures of His Passion?

A. Christ could, if He pleased, have escaped the tortures of His Passion, because He foresaw them and had it in His power to overcome His enemies.

Q. 379. Was it necessary for Christ to

CHILDREN'S PAGE

suffer so much in order to redeem us?

A. It was not necessary for Christ to suffer so much in order to redeem us, for the least of His sufferings was more than sufficient to atone for all the sins of mankind. By suffering so much He showed His great love for us.

Q. 380. Who betrayed Our Lord?

A. Judas, one of His Apostles, betrayed Our Lord, and from His sin we may learn that even the good may become very wicked by the abuse of their free will.

Q. 381. How was Christ condemned to death?

A. Through the influence of those who hated Him, Christ was condemned to death, after an unjust trial, at which false witnesses were induced to testify against Him.

Q. 382. On what day did Christ die?

A. Christ died on Good Friday.

Q. 383. Why do you call that day "good" on which Christ died so sorrowful a death?

A. We call that day good on which Christ died because by His death He showed His great love for man, and purchased for him every blessing.

Q. 384. How long was Our Lord hanging on the cross before He died?

A. Our Lord was hanging on the Cross about three hours before He died. While thus suffering, His enemies stood around blaspheming and mocking Him. By His death He proved Himself a real mortal man, for He could not die in His divine nature.

Q. 385. What do we call the words Christ spoke while hanging on the Cross?

A. We call the words Christ spoke while hanging on the Cross "the seven last words of Jesus on the Cross." They teach us the dispositions we should have at the hour of death.

Q. 386. Repeat the seven last words or

sayings of Jesus on the Cross.

A. The seven last words or sayings of Jesus on the Cross are:

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," in which He forgives and prays for His enemies.

2. "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise," in which He pardons the penitent sinner.

3. "Woman, behold thy Son" -- "Behold thy Mother," in which He gave up what was dearest to Him on earth, and gave us Mary for our Mother.

4. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" from which we learn the suffering of His mind.

5. "I thirst," from which we learn the suffering of His body.

6. "All is consummated," by which He showed the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning Him and the completion of the work of our redemption.

7. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," by which He showed His perfect resignation to the Will of His Eternal Father.

Q. 387. What happened at the death of Our Lord?

A. At the death of Our Lord there were darkness and earthquake; many holy dead came forth from their graves, and the veil concealing the Holy of Holies, in the Temple of Jerusalem, was torn asunder.

Q. 388. What was the Holy of Holies in the temple?

A. The Holy of Holies was the sacred part of the Temple, in which the Ark of the Covenant was kept, and where the high priest consulted the Will of God.

Q. 389. What was the "Ark of the Covenant"?

A. The Ark of the Covenant was a precious box in which were kept the tablets of stone bearing the written Commandments of God, the rod which Aaron changed into a serpent before King Pharaoh, and a portion of the manna with which the Israelites were miraculously fed in the desert. The Ark of the

Covenant was a figure of the Tabernacle in which we keep the Holy Eucharist.

Q. 390. Why was the veil of the Temple torn asunder at the death of Christ?

A. The veil of the Temple was torn asunder at the death of Christ because at His death the Jewish religion ceased to be the true religion, and God no longer manifested His presence in the Temple.

Q. 391. Why did the Jewish religion, which up to the death of Christ had been the true religion, cease at that time to be the true religion?

A. The Jewish religion, which, up to the death of Christ, had been the true religion, ceased at that time to be the true religion, because it was only a promise of the redemption and figure of the Christian religion, and when the redemption was accomplished and the Christian religion established by the death of Christ, the promise and the figure were no longer necessary.

Q. 392. Were all the laws of the Jewish religion abolished by the establishment of Christianity?

A. The moral laws of the Jewish religion were not abolished by the establishment of Christianity, for Christ came not to destroy these laws, but to make them more perfect. Its ceremonial laws were abolished when the Temple of Jerusalem ceased to be the House of God.

Q. 393. What do we mean by moral and ceremonial laws?

A. By "moral" laws we mean laws regarding good and evil. By "ceremonial" laws we mean laws regulating the manner of worshipping God in Temple or Church.

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(Continued DIVINE FIRE from page 1)

Love. It wants anything which interferes with experiencing that Divine love, to be removed, so that those other things are in the far recesses of the back of your mind, so that you are not aware them - so that they are not in your active perception.

When we receive absolution our sins are forgiven. When our sins are forgiven the eternal punishment which the sins earned is also forgiven. But the sins leave something on or in the soul. It is as if sin is a sticky tar substance which attaches to a brilliantly white cloth. Absolution removes the sticky tar substance, and Holy Communion takes the stain out of the cloth. But something is needed to return the cloth to its brilliant white original state. It is dingy without that "something".

For those who do not go to Hell, but whose souls are dingy from the effects of sin, God's Love for that person is the bleach which burns away any tar which remains on the cloth of the soul, and which enters in between the fibers of the soul so that it cleanses the hidden stains which make the soul dingy white instead of brilliant white.

Truly, the comparison with gold or silver being refined in the furnace, are real comparisons. It is not like iron which has rusted, or brass which has tarnished, for the rust or tarnish are actual chemical changes in the iron or brass. The metals have oxidized - have experienced a "slow" burn - though the ancients did not know this was what was happening, and therefor they used the concepts of rust and tarnish.

But the thoughts and concepts are the same, for fire burns out the rust leaving pure iron; it cleans off the tarnish. More accurately, it refines the impurities from the gold and the silver, leaving only the pure metal. And it removes the impurities from our souls leaving only the pure heavenly substance originally created by God, removing all of the impurities we have added.

This is a painful process, for God's Love must enter into the soul and remove the imperfections. It is like a physician surgeon cutting open a person's body and repairing the damaged interior. The procedure is painful, but well worth the pain for it removes an even greater pain - the loss of God.

The soul wants to be made clean because it can not stand the thought of entering into God's presence in its tarnished state. It knows it can only fully experience God and God's Love and only reciprocate that Love if it is pristine, and it desires that pristine status so that it can be with God.

And it does, it must, experience God and God's Love even in Purgatory - otherwise it could not survive the cleansing process.

If these thoughts are accurate, then, in actuality, while the soul does experience the horrible pain of being cleansed, the experience of God and of God's Love is

so powerful that God's Love overwhelms the horrible pain of the cleansing process. It is not like anesthesia which is applied during surgery, for the pain of cleansing is experienced. It is more like something happening during surgery and that thing which happens makes experiencing the pain so less of an experience that it is experienced and noticed but not noticed because the other thing is so overpoweringly good. The pain of the cleansing of Purgatory is relegated to the far recesses of our perception.

A soul which is in the presence of God can only recognize the experience of God even though it is

in the process of undergoing and experiencing the painful process of cleansing. The experiencing of God and of God's Love makes awareness of anything else impossible even though the knowledge of the pain of cleansing and the experiencing of the pain of cleansing is there.

When a person dies he sees God and God's Love. If at the instant of death he has rejected God, he flees God and God's Love and casts himself into Hell so-as-to avoid God and His Love. But if at the instant of death the person is in even the slightest state of Grace, then the soul cast itself into God and God's Love. Those few souls, the souls of infants which have never been sullied, and those of martyrs which have been cleansed in their martyrdom, and some few others, when they cast themselves into God's Love, find themselves united with God in Heaven for all eternity.

The rest of those souls which cast themselves into God's Love do so

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immediate Satanic oppression of that time.

Ref: 1 Thes. 4:1-7; Mat. 17:1-9

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SIN AND SUCCESS

“My eyes are ever towards the Lord: for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare: look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.” (Ps. 24:15-16) This is a very good summary of what is necessary if we are to become just barely holy enough to eventually attain Heaven. ***“My eyes are ever towards the Lord: for He shall pluck my feet out of the snare: look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.”*** These words are from the Western (Gregorian) Rite entrance antiphon for the Third Sunday in Great Lent, the very first prayer at the Altar itself. And though when these words were first spoken they looked forward to the time of Our Lord’s being made Sacrifice, they also apply to the time since His being made Sacrifice, for each of us needs to be plucked from the snare of sin, the snare of Satan.

We are sinners - we know that we commit sins; and most of us believe that virtually all of our sins are not of sufficient seriousness to condemn us to hell. But Our Lord has told us, (***Luke 11:23.***) ***“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.”*** These are plain words, simple words, words which leave no room for misunderstanding. Every sin we commit places us against Our Lord. It is impossible for anyone to believe they can sin and in that sinning still be on Our Lord’s side. The sins one commits may not be of sufficient severity to sever one from Christ, and may not be of sufficient evil to send the sinner to Hell, but each and every sin, no matter how slight, places the sinner in opposition to Christ. Every sin prevents the sinner from “gathering” with Christ, from being with Christ, and therefore each sin drives the sinner away from Christ. Even though the sin is not sufficiently evil to drive the sinner to Hell, even though it is the slightest of sins, it does drive the sinner away from Christ.

Just because a person seeks to avoid sin,

and seeks to become holy, does not mean that person must be poor or must be a failure according to the world’s standards. We have the examples of a multitude of Saints, including Saint Basil the Great and his Father who was also a Bishop and also is a Saint, and his mother, and several of his siblings, all of whom were considered wealthy, and all of whom are Saints. Saint Joseph of Arimathea, who buried Our Lord, was extraordinarily wealthy. And Saint Feofil was extremely poor. Our Lord has said it is difficult for a rich man to enter Heaven, but a rich man has the same opportunity as a poor man to seek and to obtain God’s assistance in avoiding sin and in attaining eternal union with God. So, especially in the more developed parts of the world, where every day conveniences such as electric lights, would have been considered as either miraculous or magic in the time of Our Lord, attaining riches for the sake of ease in living should not present a spiritual problem. Actually, the conveniences of our modern world can serve to assist us in becoming holy, for we now have more discretionary time, which means we have more time to contemplate, to think, and to pray.

Attaining holiness, acquiring the Holy Spirit, and avoiding sin, is so very simple a procedure that its very simpleness can hide its difficulty. The procedure, in Our Lord’s Own words, is, ***“blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.”***

Because maintaining the status of hearing God’s word and keeping it, is deceptively difficult, because our base inclinations are so strong; because it is difficult, Our Lord provided us with assistance which will always be available if we but seek that assistance.

So do not be shy. Seek God’s assistance in overcoming sin. Talk with God about your sin problems, and ask His assistance in battling against them.

But also remember to tell God that you

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love Him; and especially remember to thank Him for each of the blessings and all of the good things which have been part of your life, and for your very existence. For He is the source of all good. Do these things, and you will be a success in life.

Ref: Ephes. 5:1-9; Luke 11:14-28

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BECOMING AND REMAINING SONS OF GOD

Since we know that any suffering we experience is just, for we justly suffer for our sins, we are completely unable to comprehend the reality of Christ our God being the sin offering for us, and of His accomplishing this offering through His own most horrible suffering. We are unable to comprehend any aspect of His suffering for us, for while our suffering is obviously just, His suffering for us does not come within the application of justice as we understand justice, for Christ did not sin. If we attempt to think of this we are unable to really think of it, for it is beyond our ability to comprehend; yet we meditate on His being the offering by which we are redeemed if we accept redemption and all it entails.

While we can not comprehend how justice applies to Our Lord's suffering for us, we can begin to comprehend another aspect of Our Lord's suffering for our redemption, and that aspect is Charity or agape-love, which is distinct from Love.

Many people think and believe that we all receive this Charity from Our Lord, but they are wrong, for all of us are born of the bondwoman; all of us are born slaves to the flesh. And the sons of the bondwoman can not inherit from the One who is the Master, for only the rightful sons of the Master can inherit from the Master. It is in our accepting this Charity from our Lord that we are made His brothers and therefore able to inherit from the Master, from God the Father.

In order to inherit from the Master, we must therefore become sons of the Master, and must also remain His sons. We become sons of the Father, and brothers of Christ, and sons of the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary, through Baptism with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

We can lose that status of sons by

failing to follow the law which the Master has established for His household. We all know it is very easy to disobey the laws which the Master has established for His household, for it is in our nature to be what we began existence as, and that existence began as sons of the bondwoman. When we lose this status as sons of the Father, we can regain it through Confession and the reception of absolution from a Priest, for through His Apostles and Bishops, God has given Priests the authority to forgive sins.

But it is not our intention as sons of God, to constantly lose that status, and constantly have to regain it through confession. If we are wise, we will use confession to strengthen ourselves against sin.

Think of Baptism and Confession as this: Baptism removes us from being children of the slave woman and therefore from being slaves to sin and the flesh which leads us into sin, and makes us sons of the Father; but we maintain the inclination to sin for that inclination is our original nature and Baptism does not remove that inclination to sin nor does it remove our original nature. If our original nature is to be changed, it will occur upon our death and reception into heaven and our receipt of a glorified body at the resurrection. Confession and absolution is medication which restores us to spiritual life if we are spiritually dead, and it is medication which, if we are spiritually ill, removes the illness and restores us to spiritual health.

But in order to maintain spiritual health we need spiritual food. Without spiritual food we will spiritually weak. When we are spiritually weak, we are inclined to go to places and to do things which spiritually infect us and make us spiritually ill.

That spiritual food, which strengthens us against the spiritual illness of sin, is our Lord and God Jesus Christ Himself. Just as He fed the multitudes with the

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few fish and loaves of bread, so too does He make available to the sons of His Father, His own flesh and blood as food. Just as bread and fish must be assimilated by our physical bodies, so too must our spiritual food be assimilated by the spiritual part of our being. However, while physical food is automatically assimilated by the body, spiritual food must be intentionally assimilated by the spirit, by the soul. This is done by the intentional and prayerful reception of Our Lord. If the reception of the Sacred Elements is not done prayerfully with the intention of receiving Our Lord into ourselves and making us one with Him, then there is little positive effect. The spirits and souls of children and even infants are aware of Our Lord's presence in Holy Communion, and when they receive Our Lord, their spirits and souls commune with Him. But adolescents and adults have grown wise in the ways of the bondwoman and their flesh interferes with their souls and spirits - so they must focus their intention on reception of Our Lord.

The Twelfth Psalm says in part, that I will rejoice at what I have learned about God and the eternity He has provided for those who obey Him, and that we who obey Him will go into His house for all eternity. Let us do all we can to bring our flesh under the control of our spirits and bring our souls into communion with God, so we can continue to be sons of the freewoman, the Ever Virgin Mary, and therefore sons of God, and heirs of Heaven.

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

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THE UNITY OF THE LAST SUPPER, CALVARY, EUCHARIST, AND INCARNATION

There is a very brief but extremely important concept which is not stated very often, but which it behooves us to contemplate. That concept is the connection amongst and union of the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, the Sacred Eucharist, and the Incarnation or conception of our Lord which is celebrated in its culmination as His birth.

At the Last Supper Our Lord changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood, and gave it to His Disciples as the Eternal Sacrifice and as the Eternal Food of Life. The Last Supper was the foreshadowing of the Sacrifice of Calvary in Our Lord's crucifixion and death, and was exactly the same as His crucifixion and death, as an un-bloody sacrifice. The truth of this was confirmed in His resurrection. This is also the same Eternal Sacrifice which takes place through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit as the Priest, in union with Christ, the Eternal High Priest, changes bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ just as Jesus did at the Last Supper. That is why the Priest says, "We", such as in, "We offer Thee O Lord," meaning the eternal offering is made to God the Father by "We"; but that "We" is not the Priest and the people - rather the "We" is the Priest as Christ and Christ the Eternal High Priest making the offering to God the Father for the benefit of the people.

Also, Jesus is I AM, the Eternal One, God, and in His very Incarnation which took place again through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, He is the Eternal Sacrifice.

Our Lord said that the very purpose for which He came into the world, for which He took on a human nature while remaining fully God, was to be the Eternal Sacrifice and thus provide mankind with the opportunity to attain

salvation.

If a person does not accept Our Lord and live in accordance with Our Lord's teachings in every manner and way possible; if a person does not acknowledge the Sacraments and the reality of the forgiveness of sins and the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist; if a person rejects any part or portion of the Creed of Nicea as total reality; such person will find it extremely difficult if not impossible to enter into eternal union with God.

Ref: Heb 9:11-15; John 8:46-59

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SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION

When Longienus stabbed his lance into Our Lord's side, from Our Lord's heart flowed water and blood. That water is the spiritual water of Baptism and that Blood is the spiritual Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Sacred Eucharist, both given to us in Our Lord's Divine Mercy. These Two Sacraments are the foundation for the Sacrament of Forgiveness of Sins, which Our Lord gave to His Priests after showing them the wound in His side which shows His being the eternal sacrifice upon which forgiveness of sins has its foundation.

The Graces and spiritual strength which we receive from going to Confession and receiving Absolution come directly from Our Lord's Heart. Because of this, when we properly receive the Sacrament of Confession, we receive great strength against the sins we have confessed, and against all sins and temptations. Our sins are forgiven in the Sacrament of confession, which enables us to receive the Food of Life which strengthens the body and the soul, the Sacred Eucharist.

Those of us who know we are sinners and who wish to overcome sin and to never sin again find great relief in the Sacrament of Confession, and thank Our Lord for this great gift which enables us to be sons of His Father and Heirs of Heaven.

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

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THE SMALLEST ARE AS BLESSED AS THE GREATEST

The offer of eternal happiness is made by Our Saviour to everyone. But each of us approaches God differently, in accordance with our individual character. Some of us are great and some of us are small, but each of us has the individual uniqueness of what God has made us and of what we have made of ourselves.

Saint Theresa, the little flower, compared herself to a little flower, not a spectacular rose or a large flowering plant, but a little flower of the field, and this is good for us to remember.

We must also remember that the light of God's Grace falls on all, from the trees to the little flowers, and while the light of His Grace falls on all, so too does the gentle misting rain of His Charity, His Divine Love.

The great doctors and theologians of the Church are like the large and mighty trees: the oaks, cedars, pines, hickories, and others. When God looks at them, he has but a short distance to peer, but if one of them falls, it often is destroyed in the fall, though it may sprout anew and be salvaged. One may easily walk in the shade of such trees, but they may diminish the light and the rain, or they may make the light more tolerable and the rain more gentle.

Fruit trees, fruit bearing vines, and the grains, vegetables, and other crops, are like the missionaries, priests, and religious, who nourish us, making their fruit from the nourishment which God gives to us all. But there are those trees and plants who bear fruit which is poisonous, so we should see the effect which the fruit has on those who partake before we can be sure of missionaries, priests, and religious.

God sees the larger flowering plants and enjoys their beauty as their fragrance gives Him pleasure, and though He must stoop to press His

cheek against the smallest of the little flowers, He does this often and finds joy in their bands of beauty flowing in all directions.

But when God rests, He stretches out in the shade of the great trees He has made, and reclines on the lowest of all, on the grasses, and the grasses sigh in happiness at being so specially blessed.

Those who seek greatness are foolish and need our prayers, and those who have responsibility and administration thrust upon them should receive our special prayers. For the greater the person and position, the more the individuals must rely upon themselves, the more is required and expected of them, the greater is the opportunity for eternal failure, the greater is the need they beg God's assistance, and the greater the likelihood they will not continually seek that Divine assistance. But little children who seek to climb the stairs to heaven will have the Father watching and smiling at them, and because they can not even ascend the first step without help, the Father will come and carry them in His arms into His house.

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DIVINE MERCY DIVINE SACRIFICE

If but one person believes Our Saviour became man, taught, established the Sacraments, suffered, died, and was resurrected, to teach man how to live **and to teach us how to have Him give us what we want**, then that is one person too many. It is a condemnation of those who have the responsibility to teach, that not just a few people believe these errors, but that it appears the vast majority of people who have heard about Christ believe these errors.

Jesus Christ did what He did for one purpose and one purpose only. That purpose was to do what the Father had requested of Him - to be the sacrifice of atonement for the sin of Adam and for the sins of all of us. Everything else He did was ancillary, complimentary, and auxiliary to that one purpose. That purpose was founded in His Divine Love, and that Divine Love was expressed in His Divine Mercy to the maximum extent possible for it to be expressed within the limits inherent in the human nature which He acquired while fully retaining His Divine nature.

After He rose from the dead, our Saviour continued expressing His Divine Love and Divine Mercy, by commissioning His Apostles, His human messengers, His human angels, saying: ***As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. (John 20:21)*** He gave them His Divine Love and Divine Mercy, and sent them to all of us to the end of history, so they would give to us His Divine Love and Divine Mercy, and that we likewise would give others His Divine Love and Divine Mercy. In doing this Christ insured He would do the will of the Father, for if His sacrifice atoned for our sins, but none of us did our part in our salvation, then His sacrifice would not have its desired effect. Our participation is one manner in which Christ's sacrifice is perfected in us - and this is done by us. Thus we accept Divine Mercy.

If one is to give Divine Love and Divine

Mercy, one must first receive and accept them, and then, in order to keep them, must give them to all others, everywhere. For these are gifts which man must give if he is to keep them; they are not gifts which can be kept without giving once received for they cease to be possessed if they are not given.

After Our Lord gave the Apostles their commission, He gave them a tool needed because of man's weakness towards sin. He gave them the power to reconcile to Himself those sinners who had deviated from union with Him. ***He breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)*** And this authority and power remains with the successors of the Apostles and the Priests under them to this very day.

Divine Mercy applies only to the living, for everyone who is alive is a member of the group of people who possess the as-of-yet unrealized potential of attaining eternal salvation. Divine Mercy is only concerned with your eternal salvation, and is not concerned with how much money you have or with your health or with anything else. It is possible that in the course of receiving Divine Mercy, your health, financial situation, or other material matters, may be effected, but only in-so-far-as they relate to your eternal salvation. Thus, a person near death may be kept alive by God until the Priest arrives to give him absolution, or even cured sufficiently for him to accomplish some deed which God desires. But these are only ancillary to the prime purpose of the salvation of that soul.

To receive Divine Mercy you must first acknowledge your need to receive it. You must acknowledge you are a sinner, that there is a need for atonement for your sins, that you can not atone for your sins, that you can not stop sinning unless God helps you.

Divine Mercy may possibly be applied by our prayers and by other means to those dead who are undergoing a period of purification in preparation for heaven, but it is extremely important to remember and to realize that Divine Mercy is a gift to the living. It is a gift for the living because once a person dies, the person can no longer engage in the test of life which results in the failure of hell or the passing into heaven. While a person is alive, Divine Justice is tempered with Divine Mercy, but once a person dies, since a person's eternal punishment or reward is determined by his life, there is only Divine Justice for him to receive.

Therefore, pray that you will receive and keep Divine Mercy, and give Divine Mercy to everyone.

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

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CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF TO THE EXTENT ONE IS ABLE TO RECEIVE THAT REVELATION

Why did the Rabbis not recognize Christ as the redeemer? When He was twelve, explaining scripture to them, and they listened, paid attention to what He was saying, and learned from Him. Why did they not recognize Christ for what He is - God?

The reason they did not recognize Him as God is the same reason we do not recognize Him as God. Yes, we acknowledge He is God, we believe He is God, we even have faith he is God, but our faith is more belief than it is Faith. It is faith with a little "f" instead of a capital "F". The learned men of the Temple did not acknowledge Him as God, did not believe He is God, and did not have Faith He is God, not even Faith with a little "f".

Whether it is the learned teachers of the Temple of Christ's time, or people of today, a person will only *recognize* Christ God to the extent one is capable of *receiving* Him. And whether it is the learned teachers of the Temple of Christ's time, or people of today, Christ *reveals* Himself to the extent one is capable of *receiving* Him.

One who has belief does not necessarily have Faith, but one who has Faith does have belief. If one has only belief, he is not capable of receiving Christ and Christ does not reveal Himself to such a person - which is why Protestants have such erroneous theological and dogmatic principals. They have belief that Christ is God, but they do not have true Faith, and therefore they, like the Moslems and the Jews, focus on worldly things, even to the extent that they envision heaven as being a place of worldly happiness.

Again: Christ reveals Himself to the extent one is capable of receiving Him.

He diminishes the *revelation* of His glory to match the capacity and resources of each individual. At the same time He reveals Himself to each individual He also remains totally invisible, totally unknown, because God is unknowable. Yet, when we die, if we go to Heaven, we will be united with that unknowable; we will be one with that unknowable just as Christ and the Father are one. In fact, it possible for us all here to be one just as Christ and the Father are one, because that is one of the things for which Christ Man God prayed to the Father. And He would not have prayed for something which was impossible.

Think of Christ as the the star which lead the Magi. They could see Christ the Star, but they did not really know

But when they saw Christ the Baby Child they saw something which Scripture does not state, but what they saw was similar to what the shepherds saw, for in both instances what they saw made them to understand that this Child is God. What ever it was they saw caused them to have Faith; not belief but Faith with a capital "F".

what they were seeing. But when they saw Christ the Baby Child they saw something which Scripture does not state, but what they saw was similar to what the shepherds saw, for in both instances what they saw made them to understand that this Child is God. What ever it was they saw caused them to have Faith; not belief but Faith with a capital "F".

As man, people could see Christ, yet they could not see Christ because they could only see the Man. They saw the Man do what only God could do. Occasionally a prophet would raise someone from the dead, a battle would be won when it was impossible for it to have been won, food and the necessities of life provided from nothing, the future revealed, and other miraculous things would happen. But miracles happened very rarely. With this Christ Man people saw miracles happen constantly, every day, and in such variety that they stretched from the sublime of raising the dead and casting out devils, to the

commonplace of catching fish.

The people knew only God could do these things, especially in such an abundance, but all they could see was the Man, Christ. They had no Faith.

Even though no one can see the Face of God and live, desire to see God's face. Desire it with all of your heart, just as Moses desired to see His face. Do not be afraid of death, especially if it is death caused by seeing the face of God *when that desire is based in Faith*. If that desire is based in belief, then that desire is based in one's sense of self importance. But if that desire is based in Faith, then it is part of the desire to be one with God, to be God's faithful servant, to be one with the one you love, to give yourself totally and completely

to the one you love. It is the desire to completely merge into the one you love, God, losing yourself in God while

keeping your own individuality in perfection even though totally lost in God.

If you believe you comprehend all of this, then you are totally in error. But if you just think you might have comprehended a little of this, then you just might have actually comprehended a little of this.

If you do actually comprehend just a little of this, then you *can*, not necessarily do but can, comprehend just a little of what the future will be for the faithful servants of Christ, and you can, again not necessarily do but can, comprehend just a little of what Faith, Hope and Charity really are.

Ref: Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:42-52; St. Maximus the Confessor (Five Hundred Chapters)

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DISTINGUISH GOOD AND BAD WINE

The Devil, sin, and what the Devil does are like low grade wine, even like vinegar, pretending to be the best wine. One becomes accustomed to the low grade wine so that it inhibits his taste. His judgment is impaired as he drinks to even slight excess. Then, while under the effects of the low grade wine, when he is offered excellent wine, he does not recognize it because his senses and judgment have been impaired.

Evil is not like a great shark which comes in the water and attacks. It is not like a school of piranha which strips its victims to the bone. It is not like a lion or tiger which pounces and devours.

Evil is like a well mannered dog which comes to you, wagging its tail, head down in supplication, walking somewhat sideways to show you are dominant, licking your hand and begging to be petted. It may even appear to require you coax it to you. It may stink a little, and have fleas, so you give it a bath. You clean it up, feed it so it gets strong, and it finds a place in your home. But all along it has a plan, a purpose - to devour you. But it can not devour you by itself because you are too big and you might destroy it if it acts alone. So when it is ready to attack, it calls its pack. When the pack is ready, your dog bears its fangs in a snarl and bites and the rest of the pack attacks.

If you are strong you may be able to fend off the attacks. But the attacks will continue, and each time you are wounded you become a little more weak, a little less strong, a little less able to resist the next attack. You need spiritual medical attention. Not the band-aid of simple prayer, but the surgery and medication of confession and absolution. And you need the nourishment of Holy Communion, to regain your strength.

Even then, the pack will be waiting for you, seeking another opportunity to devour you, for now it has tasted your

blood and it wants it.

Evil comes in a pretty package which makes it look like what it is not. It waits until it has your trust and has lead you into being comfortable with little deviations from morality. Then it leads you into greater transgressions until it has assisted you into voluntarily walking the path of evil. Once you are fully on the path of evil it is difficult to see or recognize the way to God, and you may be lost forever. Even if you see a signpost which states it leads to goodness, it may have been planted there by those who lead you astray. You must look to the signs which can not be changed to misdirect you. Just as someone lost in the woods, swamp, or mountains, can not trust that a path they come across will lead to a place of refuge, but must rely on their knowledge of the stars and fixed landmarks to guide them to refuge; so too must the soul lost in sin, have a good knowledge of the navigation stars of heavenly life, and know the landmarks of virtue, so that they can find their way back.

The person attacked by a pack of dogs can not rely on being found by an emergency medical team which will bring him to the hospital. The person lost in natural sin can not rely on a rescue team finding him and leading him to safety. It might happen, but it might not.

We need to learn what good wine tastes like, what it does to us, how it makes us feel. Then we must imbibe only good wine, and stay away from low grade wine.

Smell the bouquet of any wine before you indulge in it. If the bouquet is not that of good wine, stay away from it. If you do not smell the bouquet, then linger on the first sip. If it does not taste like good wine, spit it out.

If a stray dog approaches you, be careful. If you accept it, do so carefully. Even after it has been with you for a long time, see what it does, how it acts, if it constantly picks up a stink or fleas; or perhaps it will guard and protect you,

work with you in providing a place of safety and comfort, and prove itself to be worthy over a period of time. If the latter happens, then you have been blessed.

Try to know the signposts to God: the virtues, commandments, corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and the beatitudes. If you become lost, they will lead you to the path to God simply by living them - and you can do that with your eyes closed.

You do not have to know what bad wine tastes like so that you can avoid it. But you do need to know what good wine smells like and tastes like so that you will know what is good wine. Anything which does not have the bouquet and taste of good wine, pour out on the ground. Even if you are dying of thirst, pour it out on the ground, for you can be assured it is poison and will kill you. The good wine will be available when you need it - but you have to know what it tastes like so you do not pour it out thinking it is bad wine.

Ref: Rom 12:6-16; John 2:1-11

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LOVE IN CONCERT WITH FAITH

TEMPORAL PROBLEMS ARE INCONSEQUENTIAL IN COMPARISON WITH SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS

AN EXAMPLE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BELIEF-KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH

When the disciples awoke Jesus in the storm tossed boat, asking Him to save them, before He calmed the storm Jesus asked them: Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?

By this point in their association with Christ the disciples knew and believed that Christ is God, the Son of God, the Saviour and Messiah. But they did not have Faith that

Christ is God, the Son of God, the Saviour and Messiah. Because they knew and believed, but they did not have Faith, their focus was on temporal matters and things rather than on spiritual matters. The disciples thought they had Faith, but they only had belief and knowledge.

So too do many Christians of today have belief, knowledge, but not Faith.

Those who have knowledge and belief but little or no Faith focus mainly on temporal problems matters, and things, and focus little or not at all on spiritual problems, matters, and things. They, like the disciples in the boat, focus too exclusively on the temporal, physical, inconsequential world; neglecting or only giving superficial attention to the spiritual world which is the world of substance and meaning.

When you deeply love someone or something, what is it that you love, why

is it that you love, how do you love, and how do you act or respond to that love? When you face a problem, why is it a problem, how severe a problem do you perceive it to be, and how do you act or respond to that problem? The answers to these questions will indicate whether you have belief or Faith. The answers to these questions will indicate whether your focus is on this temporary, physical world, or on the permanent Kingdom of God.

It is quite possible for a good, spiritually oriented, person of Faith to be overcome by severe, intense problems of this world. This is especially true of immediate problems which are severe and intense. But a person of Faith will eventually apply that very Faith to themselves in that problem situation, and while the problem might not be resolved or go away, and might not lessen in severity, that very Faith in God assists the individual despite the problem.

Newly born Faith often is very fragile and the stress of a severe situation or problem can cause it to wither or shatter if it is not tended to. But a severe situation or problem does not always damage or kill newly born Faith, as we know from the numerous martyrs who were tortured and killed shortly after becoming true Christians

At the time of the storm the disciples were focused mainly on the physical world, and not on the permanent Kingdom of God. Perhaps the severity of the storm, and the immediacy of the danger, caused them to lose focus, or were instrumental in weakening their Faith to the extent they only had belief and little or no Faith.

Newly born Faith often is very fragile and the stress of a severe situation or problem can cause it to wither or shatter if it is not tended to. But a severe situation or problem does not always damage or kill newly born Faith, as we know from the numerous martyrs who were tortured and killed shortly after becoming true Christians; especially those who could have avoided torture and death if they had denied that Faith, but who chose to cling to that Faith.

It may seem that our Faith will be effected by whether we are experiencing good times, normal times, or bad or stress filled times, but all that happens in these differing times is the strong and weak aspects of our Faith are highlighted in different ways. If we are experiencing good times, do we remember God, or do we indulge in the good times? If we are experiencing normal times, do we make time for God, or are we too busy with everyday matters? If we are experiencing bad times, do we: (A) suddenly call on God to help us, or; (B) do we push God to the back of our concerns and: 1) ask why did God do this to us, or, 2) deal with the situation and ignore God, or, 3) wallow in depression which means we have little or no focus on God; or (C) do we put the disaster in proper perspective and focus on God, who should be our main focus, deal with the situation as best we can, and use the situation to assist us in focusing on God and attaining union with God?

If you were in the boat with the disciples, it would have been prudent for you to be

concerned about the boat's sinking and you and your friends drowning. It would have been proper for you to attempt to save your life and those of your friends. But in the back of your mind should also have been the thought that if you died, you would be in God's company shortly thereafter which would mean you had attained your lifetime goal. If you had then awakened Christ, He would have stilled the storm without chastising you.

This does not mean God will rescue us from every bad situation. Perhaps if you had been with the disciples, and your Faith had shown strong, perhaps, just perhaps, Christ Jesus would have smiled upon you, sent you to await His redemption of mankind while He preserved the lives of the others on the

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(Continued BOAT from page 22)

boat, and walked you into heaven with Dismas, the Good Thief, and Moses, Abraham, and Jacob.

If you are in the aftermath of a hurricane, earthquake, flood, death of a loved one, loss of employment especially an unjust loss of employment, betrayal by one whom you had the right to expect would not betray you, or any other, similar, severely bad situation, if you are not upset there is something wrong with you.

But your distress will be tempered by Faith. And, if your Faith is strong enough, you will have distress not just for yourself, but also for all those who are effected by the situation, including anyone who caused it, made it more severe, or failed to lessen its severity when they could have easily so done.

Your distress will also be tempered when your Faith assists you in knowing the bad situation is only temporary. Even though it should last for fifty years it is temporary when compared with eternity and eternity with God is your goal.

Your Faith will activate the love, the Divine Love, which you have for others who are also effected by the bad situation, so that you will do what you can to assist them, even though the only thing you can think of doing is to pray for them. It seems we always place prayer below some physical action such as putting a splint on a broken leg. But if you are a hundred miles away from the

person with the broken leg, and have no means of getting assistance to that person, then prayer is the only thing you can do. If you can send help to the person in need, and so do without also praying for them, then you are not doing all you can because you have focused on the temporal and have omitted the permanent - which indicates your Faith needs a little attention.

Though Faith can strengthen love, Love, Divine Love, Agape Love, is the virtue which activates Faith.

Divine Love is that which is the foundation of God's plan of redemption of mankind; the foundation of Christ's birth and crucifixion. If that same Divine Love is our foundation, then we will view good times, bad times, and normal times, all as aspects of our journey to God. We will live in and through those good, bad, and normal times, in a manner faithful to God, knowing that the temporal things will pass away, but that our good relationship with God is permanent.

Ref: Rom. 13:8-10; Mat. 8:23-27

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THE APOSTASY OF THE CLERGY

The apostasy of the clergy is dimming the light of salvation which had once shone upon mankind in full brilliance. See Apoc. (Rev.) 8:12, below.

Apocalypse Chapter 8

The seventh seal is opened. The angels with the seven trumpets.

8:1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven, as it were for half an hour.

8:2. And I saw seven angels standing in the presence of God: and there were given to them seven trumpets.

8:3. And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God.

8:4. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.

8:5. And the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar and cast it on the earth: and there were thunders and voices and lightnings and a great earthquake.

8:6. And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound the trumpet.

8:7. And the first angel sounded the trumpet: and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood: and it was cast on the earth. And the third part of the earth was burnt up: and the third part of the trees was burnt up: and all green grass was burnt up.

8:8. And the second angel sounded the trumpet: and, as it were, a great mountain, burning with fire, was cast into the

(Continued APOSTASY on page 24)

(Continued APOSTASY from page 23)

sea. And the third part of the sea became blood.

8:9. And the third part of those creatures died which had life in the sea: and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

8:10. And the third angel sounded the trumpet: and a great star fell from heaven, burning as it were a torch. And it fell on the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters:

8:11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood. And the third part of the waters became wormwood. And many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

8:12. And the fourth angel sounded the trumpet: and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars, so that the third part of them was darkened. And the day did not shine for a third part of it: and the night in like manner.

8:13. And I beheld: and heard the voice of one eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice: Woe, Woe, Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the rest of the voices of the three angels, who are yet to sound the trumpet!

Apocalypse Chapter 9

Locusts come forth from the bottomless pit. The vision of the army of horsemen.

9:1. And the fifth angel sounded the trumpet: and I saw a star fall from heaven upon the earth. And there was given to him the key of the bottomless pit.

A star full... This may mean the fall and apostasy of great and learned men from the true faith. Or a whole nation falling into error and separating from the church, not having the sign of God in their foreheads. And there was given to him the key of the bottomless

pit... That is, to the angel, not to the fallen star. To this angel was given the power, which is here signified by a key, of opening hell.

9:2. And he opened the bottomless pit: and the smoke of the pit arose, as the smoke of a great furnace. And the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke of the pit.

9:3. And from the smoke of the pit there came out locusts upon the earth. And power was given to them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

There came out locusts... These may be devils in Antichrist's time, having the appearance of locusts, but large and monstrous, as here described. Or they may be real locusts, but of an extraordinary size and monstrous shape, such as were never before seen on earth, sent to torment those who have not the sign (or seal) of God on their foreheads. Some commentators by these locusts understand heretics, and especially those heretics, that sprung from Jews, and with them denied the divinity of Jesus Christ; as Theodotus, Praxeas, Noetus, Paul of Samosata, Sabellius, Arius, etc. These were great enemies of the Christian religion; they tormented and infected the souls of men, stinging them like scorpions, with the poison of their heresies.

It is quite possible that with the ever increasing loss of those who believe in the Sacraments, especially amongst Western Clergy who in ever increasing numbers do not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, that a third of the light which the Priesthood shone upon mankind is being lost.

In fear we await the knowledge of who is the star in 9:1; a person - who?; a nation - which one?; a church?

CHRIST'S WORK IN US IS COMPLETED BY US IN OUR FREE WILL

The incarnation, birth, death and resurrection of Christ, God, are perfected in us. They are perfected in us because they were done for us and when we immerse ourselves in them to the exclusion of anything which interferes with their purpose so that we comply with their intent to the fullness of our ability, we then work with Christ to form Christ in each of us.

Christ is thus made incarnate in each of us in Baptism. He is born in each of us in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. He strengthens us through Repentance, Confession, Absolution, and Holy Anointing. He guides us in our lives through His Ordained Priests.

But Christ being born in us is no guarantee that we will each keep Him in us. We must work hard to maintain His life in us. Otherwise, that new life can be killed by the cold or the heat: the cold of indifference towards God or the heat of passion for sin.

Because of this it is said that Christ's work in us is not complete; that it must be completed by each of us for ourselves. If it were completed by Christ for us, then we would not be exercising our free will to freely become one with Christ, and Christ would be come one with Himself rather than we become one one with Christ.

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(Continued DIVINE FIRE from page 12)

knowing intuitively that they are also casting themselves into the process of being cleansed. But the attraction they have for God and for His Love is so strong that they gladly cast themselves into that process of cleansing because that process of cleansing is also casting themselves into God's Love and the attraction of God's Love is so strong they desire nothing else - they desire nothing other than God.

Some people will look on this as a license to sin. They will tell themselves they can keep sinning their favorite sins because they will always desire God and God's Love and therefore will at least get to Purgatory. But in telling themselves this, they are admitting they love their favorite sins more than they love God.

Even a person who loves God and wishes to do His will, could, at the instant of death, be engaged in a sin which kills the soul. When a soul which is without Grace, without Divine Life, is separated from the body in death, it instantly is face to face with God in God's judgment, and it flees away from God because its last desire and thought was to engage in the sin and to reject God. It flees from God's Love.

But the soul which leaves the body at death, and has even the smallest spark of Grace, of God's Divine Life, is attracted to the fullness of the Divine Life in the Divine Love it perceives, and throws itself into that Divine Love.

We therefore must do our best to always have God as our heart's desire.

Some think they should love their spouse more than they love God. But if they love their spouse more than they love God, they will be attracted to their spouse at the instant of their own death, and they will not seek to throw themselves into God's Love when they die. This is why Our Saviour said those who love Him will leave everyone for Him. It means if there is a choice of God or someone else, if the choice is not

God, then God will not be the future of the one making the choice unless they change their choice to God.

If you love God more than you love your spouse, but your spouse loves someone other than God first, then your spouse will be jealous because you love God more than them. They will actually love themselves more than they love God. It is impossible that this could allow a happy marriage.

But if a person loves God more than they love their spouse, and if they have married a person who loves God more than them, then both spouses are of like mind, and their love for each other will grow in their love of God and will strengthen their love of God.

This is how strong our love of God must be. That we love God more than anyone else, especially more than we love ourselves.

This will insure we cast ourselves into God's Love at the instant of our death.

**- II -
- IN MARTYRDOM -**

We have the example of Christ God Himself as to what our love must and actually can be.

In the Garden, at the beginning of His passion, Our Saviour asked His father, that if the cup of torture and death He was to endure could pass, please let it pass. He was saying He was afraid of the pain and suffering and that He did not desire to endure it, but He completed the prayer to His Father by saying, "Thy will be done," accepting the pain and suffering.

He accepted the pain, suffering, and death, because of His great love for God the Father, and for God the Holy Spirit, and for us - each individual one of us and all of us; and because He was casting Himself into the Love His Father has for Him.

He experienced each individual and

collective aspect of the torture, pain, suffering, and the rendering of death.

He was able to do this because of the Divine Love He has for the Father, the Holy Ghost, and each of us; and because He was experiencing the great Love the Father and the Holy Spirit have for Him. That Great Divine Love did not take away the pain and suffering, but it is so strong that He gladly, happily, willingly, experienced the pain and suffering and though the pain and suffering were real and beyond measure, yet in comparison to the Love, it was nothing.

We fear pain and suffering because our bodies fear it. Most of us do not want to go to Hell because we fear the pain and suffering. We can not imagine why anyone would want to go to Hell - we can not imagine Satan gladly desiring Hell rather than Heaven.

Those who want to go to Hell are those who love themselves more than they love God - and those who die in the state of mortal sin die loving themselves more than they love God. That is why Satan and his followers desire Hell more than they desire Heaven. They experience pain and suffering beyond anything we can imagine, and they willingly experience it because they love themselves more than they love God.

It is the Love which God has for us which allows us, the living, to become martyrs if that is what we must be to follow Christ.

Ever wonder how, with our innate fear of pain and suffering, the martyrs were able to endure what they endured?

It is because of the great Love God has for them, which they desire, that they were able to endure their suffering on Earth. Just as the souls in Purgatory happily suffer so that the discoloration of their souls can be bleached to brilliant white, so too do the martyrs experience the pain and suffering of

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their martyrdom because their focus on God and their response to His Divine Love approaches perfection of Love in return to God. They desire that Love He gives to them and they desire to respond with Love for Him so that while they experience the pain and suffering of their martyrdom, that Love overwhelms the pain and suffering.

While we are alive, we will try to avoid pain and suffering because our bodies do not like it. It is not pleasant and our bodies prefer what is pleasant rather than that which is painful.

We tolerate a tooth pain only for the length of time that is required for that pain to be stopped.

But in Purgatory, we no longer have bodies which can overpower the desire, will, and wishes of our soul. So our souls gladly hurl themselves into Purgatory, so that each can experience that Divine Love which is in all places, even in Purgatory, and the experience of that Divine Love overcomes the pain and suffering of Purgatory just as Christ's experiencing the Divine Love from His Father and from the Holy Spirit overcame the pain and suffering He fully and totally experienced in His passion.

Sometimes some of us can from time to time perceive this Divine Love from God better than others, or better than at other times.

When this occurs, it behoves us to try to focus on it, to think of it as much as possible, to try to approach it, touch it, hold it, immerse ourselves in it, join it, caress it, hug it, rest in it.

It also behoves us to attempt to communicate about it to others as best we can.

If we are wise, if we comprehend even the littlest part of the experience of Divine Love from God, we will never want it to leave us - we will always desire it be the integral part of our

existence.

With this you should have a glimmer of insight as to the greatness and importance of God's Divine Love for us. It is the essence of the martyrs in their martyrdom, the essence of us ordinary souls in perseverance to holiness.

- III -

- CLEANSING OUR OFFERINGS -

Remember how when a soul responds to God's Divine Love so that it accepts that Love, that it wants to cast itself into that Love? That the martyrs experienced the pain and suffering of martyrdom but that the Divine Love from God overwhelmed the pain and suffering so that the Love was what they fully experienced? How that same Love is what Our Saviour, Jesus Christ God, God Himself, cast Himself into in experiencing His passion and death? How the souls who are to go to Purgatory, at death, cast themselves into Purgatory for that is where they can be in God's Divine Love, and they thus overcome the pain and suffering of the purification process because the experience of God's Divine Love is stronger than anything else?

That same Divine Love can be experienced by us. It can be experienced continuously by us. Not just from time to time, but every instant of every second.

There is no secret formula which enables you to experience it. Jesus in His teachings here on Earth, and God the Father, especially in the Psalms, told us how to experience that Divine Love continuously.

It is in why you do what you do.

We are told that burnt offerings are not what God wants. That He did not eat the flesh of goats and sheep, or drink the blood of bulls, that were offered on the altar by the Israelites. But that a contrite, pure, open, loving heart is the only offering acceptable to Him. The

only offering He takes pleasure in.

So giving up candy, tobacco, meat, lawful delights of the flesh, and other things, are not the best sacrificial offering one can make to God. They can really be sacrifices, but they are sacrifices for the one giving them up.

Likewise, doing things, such as praying The Rule of The Mother of God (The Rosary), helping out at shelters for the homeless, and other similar things, also are not the best offering one can make to God.

This does not mean stop giving things up for Great Lent, or stop praying extra prayers or doing corporal works of mercy.

But it does mean focus on the reason for doing anything you do - even your reason for just existing.

If you are a carpenter framing a house, frame it the best that you know how, and offer all of the energy, mental and physical, all of the talent and knowledge, the work in process and the finished work, offer them to God in Love for Him, in thanksgiving to Him for the ability to do the work, earn a living, and the ability to offer something to Him which no one else can offer.

When you frame that house, do it as though you were doing it for your wife and family. Do it as though you were doing it for your Mother. Do it as though you were doing it for the person you love the most, for whom you want the best house possible, the strongest and most secure and most beautiful house ever built. But do it for God, as a Love offering to God.

Try to do everything you do, from brushing your teeth, bath or shower, eating, cleaning the house, washing the clothes, getting the children ready for school and helping them with the school and home work, even entertainment or simple watching

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television shows, and even sleeping - do everything with the fervor of doing it for the person you love the most. But do it all for God, as an offering which only you can make to God for only you can do what you do, and other people do what they do.

Would you clean the house in a haphazard manner if you were cleaning it for the one you love the most? You might be forced to just do a touch up cleaning of the house if there were not sufficient time to clean it really well, but even that touch up cleaning will be a good one if you are doing it for the one you love the most; but if you were doing it just to get it done it would not be as good.

Remember, anyone can give up candy, or pray an extra prayer. But only you can spruce up the house a little so it is a little more clean and livable and do it in a manner which shows your love and affection - even if another person would not see that you have cleaned up the house a little, you will know, and you will have the secret satisfaction of knowing the one you love is experiencing the benefits without knowing it. This brings warmth to your heart, for if the one you love loves you, you do not need recognition for what you have done. The love the one you love has for you is all the reward you need and you bask in the warmth of that love and desire to love in return.

When you do this for the one you love, do it in love for God, and offer it with your love to God as a loving sacrifice.

Think of this love for the one you love while you are doing what you do, and offer what you are doing to God in love for God because you are snuggled in the love of the one who loves you, and you both are snuggled in the warmth of the love from God.

- IV -

- BEING CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, DYING WITH CHRIST -

If we continue contemplating the cleansing fire of Divine Love, we can better understand what St. Paul means when he says he dies with Christ daily. We can better understand what Christ means when He says we must take up our cross and follow Him.

When St. Paul said he dies with Christ daily, he is saying he throws himself into Christ's Divine Love for him daily. He knows that Divine Love for him is there, and he accepts it daily, lives in it daily, experiences it daily, and that experiencing of the Divine Love God has for him, and his desire to continue experiencing it, is what keeps him faithful to God, and causes a reciprocation of love from him to God.

When Christ God tells us to pick up our cross and follow Him, He is not saying suffer for the sake of suffering. He is telling us to throw ourselves into the unimaginable Divine Love He has for us. He is telling us to experience His Love for us, because when we experience that Love we will desire nothing else, unless we desire to love ourselves more than we desire to experience His love for us.

But since we can not comprehend someone desiring to love themselves more than desiring to experience God's Love for us, we are unable to comment on such a thing. Incomprehensible as it is, it is something which most of us have done, but we have done it because we did not really know, had never really experienced, God's Love for us and reciprocated that Love. Were we too selfish? Probably not. Probably, the cares and stresses of our lives blocked or lessened our capacity or ability to experience God's Love for us.

That is why experiencing the love which another person, another human, has for us, is so important. For we can readily see that love, and can accept and reciprocate that love more easily than we can see, experience, and reciprocate the Divine Love God has for us.

Thus the love between spouses can lead

to a real appreciation of the Divine Love we receive from God, and a loving response from us to God.

When we pick up our cross and follow Christ, if all we pick up is a cross and pain and suffering, then we are not picking up our cross, or we are not following Christ. We are just picking up pain and suffering. When we pick up our true cross, and when we follow Christ God, we pick up the Divine Love God has for us.

Yes, we experience the pain and suffering, but we also experience the wonderfulness of God's Divine Love for us. And the experience of that wonderfulness of Divine Love is much stronger than the pain and suffering. We then gladly experience the pain and suffering and offer it to God for it cleanses us and enables us to experience the wonderfulness of Divine Love even more. The pain and suffering clean the blemishes on our soul, and the cleaner our soul becomes, the more we are able to and do experience the wonderfulness of God's Divine Love for us.

So you can understand how picking up your cross and following Christ God is a joyful thing. And you can also understand how just picking up any old cross and carrying it can not be a joyful thing.

In the Divine Liturgy and the reception of the true Body and Blood of Christ God, we receive the essence of God, God's very self, the most thorough reception of God possible for the living.

There is a link between Sacramental Holy Communion in the Divine Liturgy and Sacramental Confession and Absolution. That link is that we receive the same essence, the same not created energies, of God. The Divine Love and Life which can only be received in Sacramental Holy Communion, by eating Christ's Flesh and drinking His Blood, are true Divine Life. It is unique to Sacramental Holy Communion. But the Divine Love received in Holy

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Communion is the same Divine Love received in Sacramental Confession and Absolution.

The Divine Love received in Holy Communion, and the Divine Love received in Sacramental Confession and Absolution, effect us in similar ways, and in different ways.

In both there is a strengthening of our love for God and the Divine Life in us. But in Sacramental Confession and Absolution there is an additional cleansing of the soul so it receives and experiences Divine Love more than it did before it received the Sacrament. The embarrassment of confessing one's sins is made negligible in comparison to the relief of having the tar of sin removed, and the Divine Love in Sacramental Confession and Absolution strengthens the desire to never sin again, to never reject God's Love even a little, for that Divine Love is so wonderful and desired so much that one wishes nothing to diminish it even just a little.

The same Divine Love received in Sacramental Communion, strengthens the soul so it can overcome temptations, just a good food strengthens the body so it can do its work, and thus the soul can and does experience Divine Love even more completely.

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+ **Paul, S.S.B.**

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SIN CAN HELP US TO PRAY

One of the greatest sorrows about sin, other than that it is an attack against God and "hurts" God, one of the greatest sorrows about sin is that sinners often neglect to take advantage of their sins. Not that the robber fails to enjoy his ill gotten gains, nor that the lust filled fails to obtain pleasure from engaging in lust, but that the sinner fails to seek *lasting* benefit from his or her sins.

There is no permanent benefit which arises from sin. Money whether earned or stolen is either hoarded, to no benefit, or spent, and when spent, is gone. Massive amounts of money may last a lifetime, but when the lifetime is over, the money is of no use to the one who amassed it whether it was earned or stolen.

Lustful pleasures, once engaged, are very soon spent. The memory of them is pale in comparison with the intensity once lived, and it is impossible to permanently live that intensity, although one can die in that intensity. Once spent, there are great periods of time interspersed between the brief periods of intensity, and even these eventually cease.

While there is no permanent benefit which arises from sin, those who have sinned - and that is all of us - can use that fact they have sinned to their benefit. If their contemplation of their sin, if the fact that they have sinned, leads them to sorrow that they have sinned, then they are on the path to squeezing benefit from their sins, just like water can be squeezed from a cactus.

One of the benefits is prayer. Prayer can flow, not be squeezed from but actually flow, from sin, from having sinned. When one contemplates their sins, realization dawns of how stupid the sin is, of how stupid the sinner has been in committing the sin, of how God's Charity, His divine love, has been rejected even if for only a few moments. If one then prays, even if one prays routine,

well known, prayers, the contemplation of the sins can be an inducement to pray more carefully, more thoughtfully, more completely and fully. The sinner can more fully seek forgiveness from God, can seek and acquire a closer relationship with God, can seek to and accomplish the avoidance of sin more forcefully and more fully.

The sinner can thereby achieve sorrow for the sins, for having committed the sins, for having rejected God and all of His goodness.

This contemplation of one's sins can lead the sinner past simple sorrow for sins because of the punishment due to having committed the sins, to sorrow for having committed the sins because they offend God, because they are a rejection of God's Charity.

The sinners who have sorrow for their sins are induced to pray Divine Liturgy more fully and completely, to pray the prayers of the Divine Liturgy with more attention, to receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacred Eucharist with more devotion, with a more full realization of the wonder of what they are doing.

All of this and much more are possible because of a more meaningful prayer life induced by having sinned, and desiring to never sin again.

Ref: 1 John 3:13-18; Luke 14:16-24

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SIN - CHRIST'S PASSION - HIS LOVE OF THE LOST SOUL FOUND THROUGH REPENTANCE

Our Saviour tells us of His love for us in His parables and teachings; and in His deeds of His passion, suffering, and death; and He even gives us an insight to His love for us in his human thoughts through His teachings.

Imagine what He was thinking through His passion. We know that in the Agony in the Garden, His contemplation of the suffering He was to endure caused Him to sweat blood. But imagine His other thoughts.

Not only did Jesus contemplate the suffering He was to endure. He also thought of the effect it would have for all those who had lead basically moral lives and had died before His passion, and all those who would become His followers. In the midst of the agony He experienced, the love He felt and experienced from those whose salvation He made possible, from those who reciprocated His love for them, this love caressed Him through the ages from the creation of the world to the end of time. And the passion of agony was overcome by the passion of His love for us and our love for Him.

In the sorrow of His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, and His denial by Saint Peter, and in the fear for themselves which was part of the impetus for His disciples to run away, Jesus Christ, God, let His pity, founded in His love, flow upon them. His pity for them overcame His sense of desolation and abandonment because the disciples and Saint Peter responded with shame which grew into love for Christ stronger than the love they had before. But we do not know what the response of Judas Iscariot was other than what his actions indicate.

When our Saviour was scourged the pain was real, the scourging more brutal than any human could be expected to sustain; it was a tearing and ripping of

flesh which bruised to the bones which it bared. The brutality of the scourging numbed the brain but not the body. The mind and body flinched in anticipation of each blow as the whips wrapped about His body and tore the flesh from His back, sides, stomach, and all of Him. But with each rendering of His flesh by the scourge, our Saviour's love for us engulfed each and every person. His love poured from every wound. The love for Him which was freely given by those who accepted His love, caressed Him with each stroke of the scourge. That human love for Christ drew Him to the heart and breast of each person redeemed by His passion and death.

When He was crowned with thorns and ridiculed by His oppressors, that ridicule prepared us for the ridicule of the materialists who see nothing beyond their own pleasures and the praise of those of like minds. It prepared us for the ridicule of those who believe man is mankind's salvation, that God is not needed, that God is a figment of the imagination in which the weak of will and weak of mind take and find a false refuge. It prepared us for the proponents of The Age of Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, the Atheistic Communist, the Atheistic Capitalists, and the American Civil Liberties Union - for the ridicule of those who follow Satan into eternal damnation. It made us love Him as our King, and the crown of thorns became more precious for us than a crown of the most precious of gems and metals. It was placed on His head, the seat of thought and of reason - and thus we love Christ with our intellect as well as our hearts and emotions. And as He wore that crown we wish to make it into a pillow of our love upon which He can rest His battered head.

When He carried His cross, our Saviour was carrying each of us on His bruised shoulders. He was carrying each of us from the depths of sin, from the bowels of hell, from the barren fields and slopes where there is no spiritual food or drink and therefore no possibility of life - He carried us to His own home as tenderly as though we each were His own

brother, His own child. He carried us as though we were the ones wounded, as indeed we are by our own sins. He could picture each of us who has accepted Him, being brought on His shoulders to safety. Those who accept the gifts to which He has brought us press close to Him, finding comfort in His touch, and by this overt act of love on our part, His heart wells with love for us. This flowing of love from Christ to us and from us to Christ binds us together into one - each of us one with Christ and Christ one with each of us, and all of us and Christ all one.

As He was being nailed to the cross, and as it was raised for all to see, He anticipated each blow of the hammer and nails, each jerking of the cross as it was settled into place, and the absolute agony of His flesh being further rendered as He hung upon the cross. And as a beacon His love for us shines to this day for us to see the way to His cross as the way to salvation. As His dead human body was lowered from the cross to His virgin mother's bosom, our love for Him bathes the blood from His broken body with our tears. We hold Him close to us, kissing His torn and bloodied feet as did she who anointed His feet and cleansed them with her hair.

Christ God, knowing all things, knew this on the cross, and was satisfied. For His Father would accept this offering of ourselves with His offering of Himself.

Ref: 1 Peter 5:6-11; Luke 15:1-10

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SIN: THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE SIN

One sin in particular is totally incomprehensible.

The news is filled with situations where children are kidnapped, raped, and killed, or kept as sex slaves. Their families are often murdered in the process.

Special laws have been enacted to rescue the children, and to stop the perpetrator, including special sex offender registration laws.

Lead by the news media, the public sings in harmony of how terrible these perpetrators are, and of how tenderly we must treat the victims.

Of course, this is subject to an illogical condition. If the victim is very pretty, the news media will run that story before every other story. But if the victim is not mainstream pretty, the victim's story may never be heard. This illogical condition points to the superficial nature of the concern - for if the concern is only for those who meet certain standards of physical acceptance, then the foundation for the concern is flawed.

Though they give lip service against abuse of children, these same news editors, reporters, directors, and journalists - the term is used very loosely these days - and a large percentage of celebrities and of the general public, advocate and actively support torture and murder of children through abortion.

These two different positions should not be able to be held by one person, but they are. And that is illogical; it is incomprehensible. It is illogical that one would be against abuse of a person immediately after they have been born, but allow abuse of that same person one second before all of their body has cleared the birth canal.

The illogic is caused by a lack of concern for God. These people either do not

believe in God - in God as a real, all powerful, all knowing, unique person who exists solely of His own nature, and who not only created everything else but maintains everything else in existence. Or, these people do not concern themselves with God. In either instance, these people have relegate God to a position of no importance in their lives.

This lack of concern for God can not be comprehended by anyone who is logical. It can not be comprehended by anyone who utilizes their God given ability to think.

Abortion may sometimes be a sin founded in fear, but more often it is a sin of intellect. In all instances the proponents of abortion sin in their intellect as do those who hold the position they are against abortion but will do nothing to prevent a pregnant woman from aborting her unborn child. Those who will do nothing to prevent a pregnant woman from killing her unborn child are in reality advocating killing simply because they will do nothing to stop it - if you will, a sin of omission so severe it is a sin of commission.

Sins of passion, of the flesh, of materialistic instincts, can be comprehended. But sins of the intellect are incomprehensible. They can not be understood for they are illogical and the illogical can not be understood. These are not sins of emotion, nor is the pro abortion position one of emotion - though people who attempt to defend that position often are emotional in their defense. But they are emotional in their defense of abortion because they can not provide a logical defense of their position - and they can not provide a logical defense of their position **BECAUSE IT IS ILLOGICAL.**

So, is abortion the incomprehensible sin?

No. It is an incomprehensible sin; it is *an* incomprehensible sin founded in *the* incomprehensible. *The* incomprehensible sin is the failure to acknowledge God. It can be expressed as denial of

God's existence; as acknowledging His existence but relegating Him to a level of little or no importance in one's life; and most incomprehensible, acknowledging His existence and supremacy in all things and intentionally opposing Him, rejecting Him and preferring to exist through all eternity without Him and in the most horrible of suffering.

This is incomprehensible.

So, again, what is the incomprehensible sin?

Every sin.

Ref: Rom. 8:18-23; Luke 5:1-11

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A MILITARY PERSON'S WAY OF FOLLOWING CHRIST Have you ever wondered what Jesus, Moses, and Elias were discussing? . . . That same soldier who is fighting to free an entire nation from the slavery and oppression of a Satanic dictator is performing the corporal work of mercy of ransoming the captive. 9

The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism Q. 362. Who sought to kill the Infant Jesus? 10

SIN AND SUCCESS Every sin we commit places us against Our Lord. It is impossible for anyone to believe they can sin and in that sinning still be on Our Lord's side. . . Just because a person seeks to avoid sin, and seeks to become holy, does not mean that person must be poor or must be a failure according to the world's standards. . . Saint Joseph of Arimathea 15

BECOMING AND REMAINING SONS OF GOD Since we know that any suffering we experience is just, for we justly suffer for our sins, we are completely unable to comprehend the reality of Christ our God being the sin offering for us, and of His accomplishing this offering through His own most horrible suffering . . . His suffering for us does not come within the application of justice as we understand justice, 16

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SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION When Longienus stabbed his lance into Our Lord's side, from Our Lord's heart flowed water and blood. That water is the spiritual water of Baptism and that Blood is the spiritual Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Sacred Eucharist 18

THE SMALLEST ARE AS BLESSED AS THE GREATEST The offer of eternal happiness is made by

Our Saviour to everyone. But each of us approaches God differently . . the light of God's Grace falls on all, from the trees to the little flowers, and while the light of His Grace falls on all, so too does the gentle misting rain of His Charity 18

DIVINE MERCY DIVINE SACRIFICE If but one person believes Our Saviour became man, taught, established the Sacraments, suffered, died, and was resurrected, to teach man how to live and to teach us how to have Him give us what we want, then that is one person too many. 19

CHRIST REVEALS HIMSELF TO THE EXTENT ONE IS ABLE TO RECEIVE THAT REVELATION Why did the Rabbis not recognize Christ as the redeemer? When He was twelve, explaining scripture to them, and they listened, paid attention to what He was saying, and learned from Him. Why did they not recognize Christ for what He is - God? 20

DISTINGUISH GOOD AND BAD WINE The Devil, sin, and what the Devil does are like low grade wine, even like vinegar, pretending to be the best wine. One becomes accustomed to the low grade wine so that it inhibits his taste. . . **Evil is not like a great shark which comes in the water and attacks. It is not like a school of piranha which strips its victims to the bone. It is not like a lion or tiger which pounces and devours. Evil is like a well mannered dog which comes to you, wagging its tail** 21

LOVE IN CONCERT WITH FAITH - TEMPORAL PROBLEMS ARE INCONSEQUENTIAL IN COMPARISON WITH SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS - AN EXAMPLE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BELIEF-KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH . . . Newly born Faith often is very fragile and the stress of a severe situation or problem can cause it to wither or shatter if it is not tended to. But a severe situation or problem does not always damage or kill newly born

Faith, as we know from the numerous martyrs who were tortured and killed shortly after becoming true Christians 22

THE APOSTASY OF THE CLERGY The apostasy of the clergy is dimming the light of salvation which had once shone upon mankind in full brilliance. 23

CHRIST'S WORK IN US IS COMPLETED BY US IN OUR FREE WILL . . . But Christ being born in us is no guarantee that we will each keep Him in us. 24

SIN CAN HELP US TO PRAY one of the greatest sorrows about sin is that sinners often neglect to take advantage of their sins. 28

SIN - CHRIST'S PASSION - HIS LOVE OF THE LOST SOUL FOUND THROUGH REPENTANCE In the sorrow of His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, and His denial by Saint Peter, and in the fear for themselves which was part of the impetus for His disciples to run away, Jesus Christ, God, let His pity, founded in His love, flow upon them. His pity for them overcame His sense of desolation and abandonment because the disciples and Saint Peter responded with shame which grew into love for Christ stronger than the love they had before. 29

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TOPIC/TITLE Page

THE CLEANSING FIRE OF GOD'S LOVE This Love that God has for us is the strongest Love possible for it comes from God and is therefore perfect. Those who accept that Love immerse themselves in it, and that Divine Love burns away anything which interferes with the soul receiving and immersing

itself in that love. It burns away anything which prevents or hinders the soul being thoroughly saturated with that Love. It burns away the stains left by sin. And the soul wants those things to be taken away so it can fully immerse itself in that Divine Love. 1

NATURAL DISASTERS AND PRAYER In New Orleans and the Gulf Coast we have begun the hurricane season. For over an hundred years there has been a New Orleans tradition of praying what is known as The Hurricane Prayer, where intercessory protection of the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary is sought. And for all of those years, despite Hurricanes Betsy and Camille, people have cknowledged receipt of that protection. But with the occurrence of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, many believe their prayers for protection were not granted. 1

SIN: THE ROOT CAUSE OF CRIME Three young men, ages 18, 17, and 16 years of age, went into the backyard of a house, took a ladder, set it against the back wall of the house, and broke in the second story bedroom win-

dow. The man living in the house took his gun and shot dead the first one through the window. The dead man's mother wailed, "My boy was a good boy. He didn't have to kill my boy. Why didn't the ambulance get there sooner. They could have saved my boy." 5

A MISFORTUNE IS A BLESSING IN DISGUISE If you are going to be a true follower of Christ, you will probably be persecuted for following His teachings. If you do not think this will happen to you, just wait until your employer subtly instructs you to do something immoral or of questionable legality. . . Will your Christianity sustain you and be sustained by you with God's help, or will you discard all or part of the gift of Christianity? 7

CHARITY REQUIRES If Our Lord Jesus Christ had not actually exercised the unlimited Charity which is an aspect of His essence, mankind would never have had redemption made available 9

FASTING FOR SELF-CONTROL
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To those of you who did not experience loss of family or friends because of hurricane Katrina, you are urged to thank God for that blessing. If you do not thank God for that blessing, you are worse than foolish, worse than stupid, worse than ungrateful; you are indescribable.

REUNION

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