



REUNION

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



Volume 16 No. 2

OF THE CHURCH

OF MAN WITH GOD

June 2007 A.D.

~ YOUR REACTION TO THE INJURED IS A MEASURE ~

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

When you observe an injured person does your heart go out to them? If the injury is of the heart, do you wish you could mend their heart? Are you frustrated if you can not determine a means by which you can assist that person?

Does the thought enter your mind, that you may have caused the injury? Does this possibility horrify you? Does your mind seek every possible avenue by which you can help the injured person, and discover prayer is the only known answer but you worry that your prayers will not be sufficient?

How an individual reacts to an injured person is a barometer of that individual. It is a barometer of you and of me. It is a barometer of God - God being the positive and good standard. It is a barometer of the Devil - the Devil being the negative and evil standard.

Some people observe an injured person and think of how they can take advantage of that situation. It is not just the rich who do this, such as land developers who perceive a natural disaster as an opportunity to obtain vast tracts at next to nothing prices - though there probably are some land developers who perceive a natural disaster as an opportunity to do good and then actually do good. No, this is true of all aspects of life. Though there are some good organizations and individuals, how many people are social workers because it provides a reasonable living? How many of these feel disgust and loathing for their clients?

How many people who operate organizations which state their goals are to feed children, provide clothing, medication, and other necessities of life for the needy, how many of these so do for love, and how many so do because they can make a lot of money doing it? And how many of the latter actually provide any assistance to the needy? How many drug rehabilitation centers really exist solely for the purpose of putting money into pockets of their operators?

There are many individuals and organizations which practice Charity for the sake of goodness. But there are many more who pretend to do good so that they can accumulate wealth, luxury, celebrity, and the accolades of men. Any good they do is incidental and accidental.

But not God. God sees us in the pain of sin, in the pains brought by our own sins and the sins of others, and His heart breaks for us. When *our* hearts break for the injured we are bringing God's love for us into ourselves and sharing all of that love with the injured. When this happens God increases His love for us and that increases both our love for the injured and the intensity and level of our heartbreak.

(Continued **INJURED** on page 7)



YOU ARE A GOOD MOTHER, A GOOD FATHER

Who is the most perfect 'doer of the word', to slightly paraphrase Saint James? (*James 1:22*) The Blessed Ever Virgin Mary is the most perfect 'doer of the word'.

Most mothers who make mistakes are just inadequate in that they are receiving "on the job training" as it were.

She knew her Son came forth from God and was the Son of God through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. In her conversation with Saint Gabriel the

The Blessed Virgin had saints for her parents. Many mothers of today have parents who neglected or abused them; from whom they receive abuse even as adults; parents who did not grow in wisdom of parenting but who remained in confusion of parenting primarily due to their own selfishness and lack of godliness and lack of desire to attain holiness.

complete truth of the Blessed Trinity - in-so-far-as it is possible for a human to comprehend - was revealed to her: that God is one God but three Persons, being God the Father, God the Son who is her Son, and God the Holy Ghost. All being eternal and omnipotent, one yet three.

(Continued **GOOD MOTHER** on page 7)

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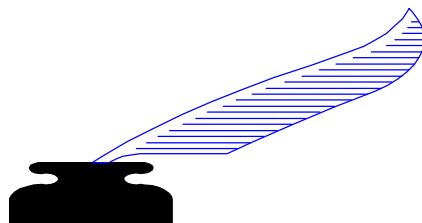
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+ Paul, S.S.B.,
Publisher .

+ *The Basilians - The Basilian Fathers* +

LETTERS

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

**WORLD WIDE WEB:**

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

<http://www.reu.org>
telnet://reu.org

Issues of REUNION, in color, in Adobe PDF and HTML, are available at:

<http://www.reu.org/public/news.htm>



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

**Current Active Mailing Lists
Originating From BasilNet ReuNet
HIOC BBS**

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

Each ML 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)

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

REUNION

Holy Innocents Orthodox Church
311 Hickory Avenue
Harahan, Louisiana 70123

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

(Continued WEB from page 2)

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

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

BIBLE-DAY

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

SERMONS

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

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

STUDIES

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

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

ONE-BODY

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

REU_PUB

This ML sends REUNION (publication) to its subscribers as a file attach in Adobe (PDF) format. The ML does support discussion, and discussions are encouraged. Mainly used for those who desire to receive the Newsletter but to whom we can not afford to 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
Retrieves this information.

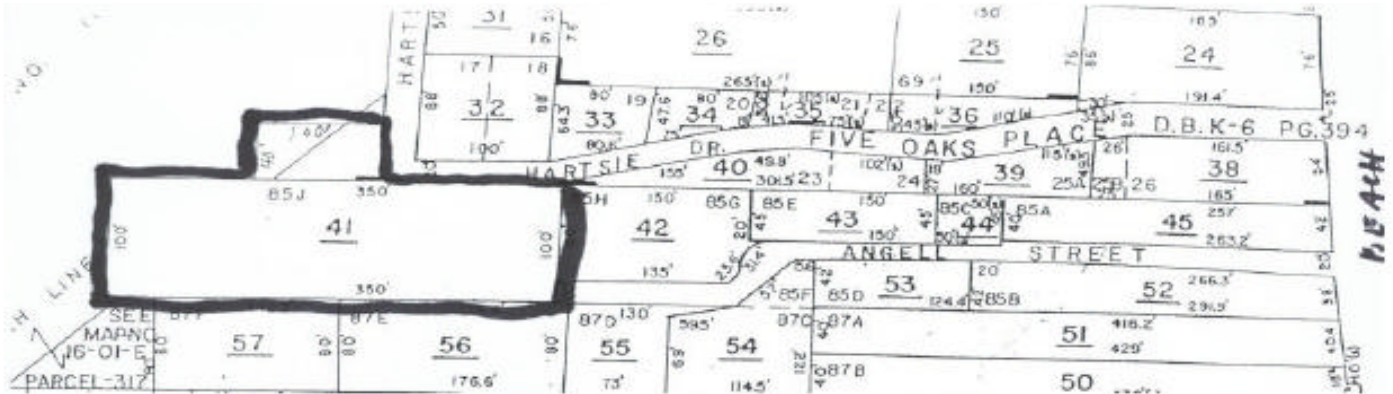
info
Retrieves information on email lists hosted by this server

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

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THE SOCIETY OF CLERKS SECULAR OF SAINT BASIL

(The Basilian Fathers)



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

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

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

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

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

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COMMENTS ON SOME INDICATORS OF OUR TIMES

JAZZ MASS?? During Jazz Fest in New Orleans in late April (2007), a Jazz Mass (Divine Liturgy) was celebrated at Saint Augustan Roman Catholic Church in honor of deceased CBS 60 Minutes commentator Ed Bradley. Mr. Bradley enjoyed attending Jazz Fest and visiting New Orleans. The old Latin Rite Requiem Mass was discontinued many decades ago in favor of a Novus Ordo "Mass" or celebration

which all but canonizes the deceased and expresses little if any prayer for the deceased (the presumption being the deceased went directly to heaven without even the slightest possibility of having gone to hell or being in need of purification), but we were unaware of the Roman Canon which established a Jazz Funeral Mass. A traditional Jazz Funeral in conjunction with a Funeral Mass is one (in the old, old, old tradition) which incorporated the solemnity of the Funeral Divine Liturgy (once upon a time in the Roman Church it was a Requiem Mass) followed by a rau-

cous and joyous departure from the cemetery, celebrating the deceased's departure from this world of tribulation, hopefully into the arms of God. But a Jazz Liturgical Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ . . . ?????!!!!

Attempt to have apes declared persons, but human babies can continue to be killed: Australian organizations are attempting to have apes declared persons so apes will have the rights of persons. This means that unborn human babies can be killed at will, but that apes

(Continued COMMENTS on page 9)

A law or court ruling not based on the law of God may still be good provided it is based on respect for the rights of others,

THE FACES OF MY FAILURES

In Them I See The Face Of Christ

Most Rev. Paul, S.S.B.

Usually I write in the inclusive. This I write mainly in the first person that you may learn from it personally and internalize it personally. There are many who will have the opportunity to read this and will not. Their failure is their loss.

The faces of my failures are constantly before me and the faces of your failures should be constantly before you as well. They should not be before us to drive us to despair, which can easily happen if one has a conscience. They should be before us to drive us to do better.

Our failures are numerous, occurring every waking hour. There are the subtle ones, such as the failure to actively pray when the fleeting opportunity or the need to so do arises. There are the hard, undeniable ones, the worst of them being when we fail to help or fail in helping; when we fail some one person or many persons. These are the failures which have faces; faces which I see constantly, active in my mind, active in my memory.

The most severe of my failures is the one in which I assisted someone to find, learn about, believe in, love, and to follow Christ. Where the person was strengthened and learned some measure of self respect, self confidence, self reliance. The qualities of giving, of love, of compassion were already there, having been born in the desire to be loved and respected yet subconsciously knowing love and respect had never really been given even though they had been earned.

That cry for love and respect blazed as though the sun were captured in a cave far below the earth, readily apparent if one but looked; yet I apparently was the first and only one who looked.

Though I had helped that person to grow and become strengthened over several

years, I did not comprehend how fragile the person was due to decades of subtle abuse and disrespect. And when the crisis of a lifetime occurred I was not available. With just a little forethought, just a little consideration, I could have easily made myself available.

But not only was I not available, I also did not comprehend, and I continue to not really comprehend, the murky border overlapping free will and properly guiding without interfering with free will. I have a childhood acquired aversion to interfering with another person's free will. In my mind discussion and presentation of one's perspective and beliefs and the reasons therefore is proper but anything which approaches an attempt to impose my will on another is improper. Because of this I am not as good a guide as I should be. I could have been more of a guide, a better guide for the person I failed, and that person would have followed, and would have easily survived the crisis had I been a better guide, and had I made myself available as I could have done.

That person did not fail, even though that person crumbled. I failed that person and their face is constantly before me, reminding me of my failure and its terrible consequences.

For so long as I keep that face before me I will desperately try to rectify my failure and to never again fail, for the harm which my failure caused may well leave the person I failed in worse condition than when we began.

For so long as I remember that face, keep it before me, committing sin, even the slightest of sins, is even more abhorrent than it was before, for sin interferes with my relationship with Christ, weakens my prayers, their efficacy and strength, thus lessening the potential they may assist the one I failed.

Sin is the only true failure.

The face of the person I failed merges with the face of Christ, making me very aware that I failed Christ as well; making me know that my failure to do all of which I was capable was a sin. That sin has terrible consequences.

Business successes and failures I have had are inconsequential, the successes have been God given and few. The failures have been neither too many nor too few. But the business failures are really of no consequence for in each I did the best I knew how to do with that with which I had to work.

Like every person who has ever done anything, some of those things which I have done have been successful and some have not - they have been failures simply because they were not successful. Failures of this nature do not weigh heavily upon me provided I did what I knew to do within my abilities. Especially they do not weigh heavily upon me if they were caused by someone else or conditions beyond my control or ability with which to deal.

So the bookcase that did not come out as good as it could, or the button sewed slightly askew, do not weigh heavily upon me, if they are even remembered.

The persons who ignored the teachings of Christ, or who modified them to accommodate their favorite sins, or engaged in sin as part of their business or employment activities, or for "fun", all against what I have presented, none of these are my failures for the tools were provided and their choices were freely made. Unless I did not properly provide the tools. If I did not properly provide the tools, then, the failures are mine.

I fervently attempt to have every sermon and every article I write be good ones, and most of them are even though many people may not find them of interest. When I do write an article or sermon which is not as good as it could have been, and I become aware of that fact (usually I am aware of it immediately), I

(Continued FAILURE on page 6)

(Continued FAILURE from page 5)

know that is a failure. And I know that failure is a sin which can be undone if I have the time and ability to re-write.

Some things are "works in progress" which are made available because they are needed immediately, to be corrected and improved when possible. These are not failures, just as an imperfectly constructed shelter constructed in a storm is not a failure - especially if that shelter is later rebuilt into a good and proper home.

But when I do not pray with the focus of which I am capable, especially when I do not pray Divine Liturgy as well as I could, even though I have prayed I have at least partially failed. Such failures are sins; sins I could have easily avoided. These failures are compounded because those for whom I prayed did not receive my best effort and therefore my prayers did not appeal to God with the same efficacy of my best prayers. I therefore, at least partially, fail each person for whom I was praying - and that is each and every one of you as well as the one or ones for whom the prayers were made or Divine Liturgy was being offered.

I keep these failures before me and in so doing I place your faces before me merging with the face of Christ whom I also fail. For in each of my failures, my true failures which are sins, I cause Christ to suffer more in His passion and death. I reject at least some bit of Grace which He has offered to me. He reaches His hand out to me to pull me from the pit and when I fail it is as though instead of grasping His hand so we may both pull me from the pit I grasp His hand and attempt to pull Him into the pit.

When I have been discourteous I have failed. Especially when I have "cut someone off" when they were talking or explaining something. There are times when someone wishes to speak with me and I simply do not have the energy to engage in the conversation. In such instances I customarily attempt to inform the person of my exhaustion, but occasionally my weariness is my own fault.

When it is my own fault, I have failed. Especially considering who and what I am, I should attempt to always have sufficient energy in reserve so that I may fulfill the who and the what of me. Occasionally my guidance is crucial - a lesson I have sadly learned in failure, in sin.

If I am very tired and really do not wish to teach, am I tired because I have been working very hard at something which is good. If so, perhaps I should better schedule what I am doing. If that is possible, then I have at least partially failed, and have sinned. But if it is not possible, there is no failure, no sin; there is just not enough of me to go around. But if I am tired because I was engaged in activity which can not bear good fruit - such as mindlessly watching a play or meaningless television - then even the most materialistic and jaded would agree that I have sinfully failed to properly apportion my time. Relaxation is necessary if one it to function for relaxation recharges the body, mind, and soul. It gives them the opportunity they need to "sort things out". But there is are differences amongst rest, relaxation, and mindless activities, and between them and the potentially sinful one, meaningless activities.

When I do not present The Way taught by Christ in manner which activates one's desire to learn, or in a manner which is not clear, then I have failed. If the reality is that one does not wish to follow the better path, that one intentionally rejects Christ, or intentionally modifies what He has taught to suit one's own desires, then I have not failed. But if one is open to the Truth and I have not done my best to present it in as interesting, understandable, and complete a manner possible within my talents, then I have failed.

The face of my failure makes the eternal salvation of each individual very personal to me. I do not wish to see any face in that torment which I have seen as a result of my failure. I wish that torment to be removed and replaced with happiness and joy which I know is possible.

If I could keep the faces of my failures constantly before me I would be incapable of another failure and incapable of sin. But I can not keep the faces of all of my failures constantly before me for they are too numerous. So I attempt to always keep before me that failure where I did not guide to my capabilities, where I was not readily available in that crisis, where I failed so miserable and with such terrible consequences. For so long as that person's face is before me I will pray better, even perhaps to my capability. I may even live an hour or two without sin.

When I think of myself I attempt to think first and last of my failures. When I think of my desires I attempt to think first and last of my failures. I must always attempt to correct my failures and to avoid any additional failures, but this can not be done by inactivity, for inactivity is a failure - a failure to be successful in God's Way. What I desire must always be to have Godly successes and no failures, and to change my past failures into successes.

Learn from this that you too may keep the face of your failures always before you, always united with the face of Christ, helping you to attain the fullness of your abilities at any instant in time, making sin so repugnant to you that you want nothing to do with it. Learn not despair, but Hope. Learn not just belief but Faith. Learn not just love, and not just Love, but Charity. Learn not to fail. Learn to succeed.

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(Continued INJURED from page 1)

It is not just parents who in their love for their children are frustrated at their inane conduct, especially the inane conduct of their adult children. We all experience frustration at our own inane conduct, usually it is our sinful conduct, and at the inane conduct of others. But the most inane thing a person can do is reject love when it is offered or given. Especially when it is love and the positive effects of love which those who are suffering really seek.

When a person who is suffering, whether it is due to a physical or mental ailment, or lack of the necessities of life, or because of a wrong done against them or a wrong they have committed, when the suffering person does not accept the love offered to them, or does not take the step necessary to accept what love may be being offered to them; this is a tragedy. It is especially tragic when the suffering person does not take the step necessary because they fear rejection, or when the loving person does not make their love known because they also fear rejection.

If we observe just our own lives we will constantly observe these tragedies and these inanities just as God observes them. And our own heart will break just as God's heart breaks. The heart breaks because the love is there but it can not be forced upon the would be recipient. It can only be accepted, but so often it is not. This is one of the manners in which we join Christ in suffering; when our love, like His love, is rejected. We are living sacrifices joined with Christ not just when we offer our sorrows and our joys in union with His, but especially when we offer our heart breaks and our broken hearts. For only those who love with the Divine Love they receive from God can truly suffer a broken heart or a heartbreak. Anything else is just an emotion.

Perhaps those in need have been abused so often they do not believe love is real when it is offered. Or perhaps they feel they are unworthy to accept that love.

Much courage is required for those who have been injured to accept love or to seek to receive it. Even though their desire for love is like a cry echoing over the face of the world, many have been harmed so severely they fear to hope. Often they fear to hope because they have been taken advantage of so often they can not number the times. And most often they have been hurt by those whom they should have been able to trust.

Hunger, illness, and physical and mental distress are but the observable injuries people suffer. The true injuries are founded in love, and the lack of love.

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+ Paul, S.S.B.

Ref: James 1:17-21; John 16:5-14

(Continued GOOD MOTHER from page 1)

The Theotokos is the repository of all Dogma for to her was revealed all of the truth of God, His intentions and desires for mankind, the operation and functioning of the Church and each individual, the Sacraments and their use, functions, and necessity, what we are to do and what we are to avoid and the why thereof. She did not just have belief, she had and has Faith, and with that Faith she has Hope and Charity, all in perfection.

When her Son was being tortured and murdered she did not ask the Father in the name of her Son to stop the Passion and Death of her Son for if she had requested this in her perfect Faith, Hope, and Charity her request would have been granted. But if she had requested it, she would not have possessed perfect Faith, Hope, and Charity, for she would not have been in perfect harmony with the will of the Father in making such a request. The most she was able to request is what her Son requested, that if it were possible, the cup would be passed from His lips that He would not have to drink thereof.

In her perfection she experienced perfect agony at the Passion and Death of her Son, and at the same time perfect joy. Agony at His suffering and death, joy at the redemption of mankind and the establishment of the possibility that each person could attain eternal salvation if they but follow The Way taught by her Son. She experienced the same agony and joy, within the limits of perfected human nature, as did the Father, her Son, and the Holy Ghost.

What better mother could a child have than the Mother of God? No matter how old the child, such a mother always loves her child, without regard as to what the child does or what happens to or with the child. Though she never had to correct her Child, the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary did instruct her Child, and He was obedient unto her and Saint Joseph.

(Continued GOOD MOTHER on page 8)

(Continued **GOOD MOTHER** from page 7)

It may seem that very few mothers of today can even begin to compare with her, but this is not true except for those very few evil persons who intentionally, abusively use their children. Most mothers who make mistakes are just inadequate in that they are receiving "on the job training" as it were. If possible, they would correct their mistakes if given the opportunity to re-live those portions of their lives wherein they were not adequate.

This love for their children is seen in the numerous instances where a child steals from its parents or abuses them in some severe manner, and yet the parents, especially the mother, continue to love the child and seek its betterment.

The Blessed Ever Virgin Mary never had to be concerned with any evil emanating from her Son. She had to be concerned with something totally different. She had to be concerned with His complete and total goodness, and the great evil to which He would be subjected. Even knowing her Son would triumph over evil and be restored to her could not diminish her sorrow and suffering due to the evils to which He would be and was subjected.

Today, when a mother has to endure her child being jailed for crimes the child has committed, the mother continues to love the child and desire to mitigate the child's suffering. Was the Ever Virgin Mother of God different, especially since her Son was totally innocent, the only totally innocent?

The Blessed Virgin had saints for her parents. Many mothers of today have parents who neglected or abused them; from whom they receive abuse even as adults; parents who did not grow in wisdom of parenting but who remained in confusion of parenting primarily due to their own selfishness and lack of godliness and lack of desire to attain holiness.

But these persecuted mothers continue

to love their children, and to love their parents, exhibiting the most profound Godliness in the face of total adversity.

Most people can not comprehend the torture of the good mother who has inadequate parents for most people do experience the maturing of their parents into better parents. But for the mother whose parents do not mature the torture is beyond comprehension.

We should always remember we have not just one virtually perfect set of parents whom we can emulate, the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, but we also have Saints Joachim and Anna, parents of the Theotokos, and Saint Jacob and his wife, parents of Saint Joseph, as well as our true parents, the Blessed Trinity.

Let those of us whose parents matured in God count our blessings, and let us also never forget those who are not as blessed as are we. And let us never forget those who have matured but who continue to suffer under parents who have not.

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Ref: James 1:22-27; John 16:23-30

WE MUST JOIN WITH CHRIST AS PART OF THE SACRED ELEMENTS

**We must become part of Holy Communion.
Have You Ever Seen A Lamb?**

In the original Sacrifice of Our Saviour there was but one grain of wheat and but one grape from the vineyard. Yet that one grain and that one grape, Jesus Christ, was sufficient for the salvation of all of mankind.

As we each follow Christ, and join with Him, we each become part of that original Sacrifice of Calvary in that original Sacrifice which is repeated in thousands of Divine Liturgies every day throughout all of creation. We call it the original sacrifice merely to distinguish the event where the sacred Body and Blood were in human form, from the same event in which the sacred Body and Blood are in the form of Bread and Wine - wherein that which appears to be bread and wine have been changed in substance into the Body and Blood of Christ - from the event of the Last Supper to the event of each Divine Liturgy of today. When we truly follow Christ we each are a grain of wheat, milled and ground in Christ's Passion, swelled with the essence of the Holy Spirit in the waters of Baptism which make us into one substance with Christ, leavened and formed by the hands of the Father, purified and changed into the final acceptable sacrifice by fire. We each are a grape allowed to sweeten, selected from the vine and held to maximum flavor, fermented from the coating which we have each acquired in our own measure and increased while joined with the blood from Christ. And then we are brought as the acceptable offering by the hands of Christ God, God's Holy Angel, to God the Father.

This is how we join as the Sacrifice to the Father. If we are not willing to be separated, milled, sifted, baked, plucked, pressed, emptied, joined, fermented, changed, and offered, then we are without usefulness, not even to our-

(Continued **ELEMENTS** on page 9)

(Continued **ELEMENTS** from page 8)
selves.

If we do not become part of the Sacrifice we will rot on the stalk and shrivel to be dropped on the rocks and seen no more or we will become fodder for the dumb beasts plodding their way to nowhere.

But if we become part of the Sacrifice we will have the eternity of Jesus Christ God, of which there can be nothing better.

Have you ever seen, really looked at, watched, and studied a lamb? Have you ever followed a new born lamb through its life into maturity in becoming a sheep? Though they herd they are each individuals. They will respond to the shepherd in the manner in which he treats them, each responding differently yet in manners similar to each other - though some will reject the shepherd and some even seek to leave the flock.

When they are lambs they play, jumping awkwardly, curious about everything they perceive. Again, they each establish their own response to the shepherd. Again, often the responses are similar, yet each is different. As they mature their comfort with the presence of the shepherd matures. And when he is not present they are aware of his absence and they become unsettled. When they stray and find themselves alone or with just a few of the members of the flock, then see the shepherd, some may play and flee or pretend to flee - but never far - and others may await his direction, but all are relieved he has appeared to lead, protect, and care for them.

The shepherd who tends the flock; the one who tills the soil, sows the wheat, tends the field, harvests the wheat, mills it and bakes the bread; and the one who clears the field, plants the vines, prunes them, harvests and presses the grapes and makes the wine; these are three and these are one.

Just as the shepherd, the farmer, and vineyard owner clearly are separate, so

too is each person of the Trinity different. Yet, just at the Master who is the shepherd and the farmer and the vineyard owner is one so too is God - not One with different roles but each separate and different yet One. And so too are the sheep each different, and each grain of wheat different, and each grape different, yet the sheep, wheat, and grapes are all one for the sheep are the flock, the wheat the bread, and the grapes the wine. And the flock, bread, and wine are all one and the same in God.

This mystery, that each which is so different, all become one through the Sacrifice of Christ, is simple and easy to know, yet impossible to describe or explain. One can see the sun and stars and know them yet can not adequately describe or explain them, yet one can describe and explain them more adequately then one can describe and explain God and that which comes from being with and of God.

In this manner is the difficulty of the Sacrifice of Christ. In this manner is the difficulty of our union with Christ wherein we become part of the Sacrifice. But in this manner is the clarity of the reality of the Sacrifice when we join as part of it.

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(Continued **COMMENTS** from page 4)
will be able to elect our public officials. Oh, guess they are doing that already.

Torture There seems to be a great debate in the U.S. regarding torture, especially torture of those with knowledge of imminent terrorist attack. God has already made it clear that it is immoral to torture. The ends never justifies the means. Abortion also is against God's commands. This indicates people, through their organized government, will do what ever they desire, including torture - for now anyway.

Some Chinese food additives and products used in animal feed and food processing are banned in the U.S.A. but the Chinese have been using them in products exported to the U.S.A. This has resulted in numerous deaths in the United States. Some of the additives are designed to appear to be protein, so the products will appear to have higher protein levels than they actually contain. Basically, this is stealing from the end user, for the Chinese are pretending to sell a high quality product but are actually selling a low quality - and often a dangerous - product. Are U.S. manufacturers are envious?

Presidential candidate Barack Obama said we must attack evil. Hmm, since he is pro abortion and abortion is evil he must be advocating he attack himself. This could be interesting.

Numerous newspaper and magazine articles and broadcast media "bits" have explored the potential for Mr. Obama's election, the focus being his being at least part Negro and therefore classified by the media as being Negro. The articles and pieces set up his potential defeat as being founded in his being a Negro, without regard to his beliefs, politics, policies, experience, and qualifications. If he is defeated, and if that defeat takes place during the Democrat Party convention, does that mean Democrats are racists?

Sex Slave Trade: Those with InterNet
(Continued **COMMENTS** on page 31)

CHILDREN'S PAGE

The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism

Q. 638. How is Baptism given?

A. Whoever baptizes should pour water on the head of the person to be baptized, and say, while pouring the water: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Q. 639. If water cannot be had, in case of necessity, may any other liquid be used for baptism?

A. If water cannot be had, in case of necessity or in any case, no other liquid can be used, and the baptism cannot be given.

Q. 640. If it is impossible, in case of necessity, to reach the head, may the water be poured on any other part of the body?

A. If it is impossible, in case of necessity, to reach the head, the water should be poured on whatever part of the body can be reached; but then the baptism must be given conditionally; that is, before pronouncing the words of baptism, you must say: "If I can baptize thee in this way, I baptize thee in the name of the Father," etc. If the head can afterward be reached, the water must be poured on the head and the baptism repeated conditionally by saying: "If you are not already baptized, I baptize thee in the name," etc.

Q. 641. Is the baptism valid if we say: "I baptize thee in the name of the Holy Trinity," without naming the Persons of the Trinity?

The baptism is not valid if we say: "I baptize thee in the name of the Holy Trinity," without naming the Persons of the Trinity; for we must use the exact words instituted by Christ.

Q. 642. Is it wrong to defer the baptism of an infant?

A. It is wrong to defer the baptism of an infant, because we thereby expose the child to the danger of dying without the Sacrament.

Q. 643. Can we baptize a child against the wishes of its parents?

A. We cannot baptize a child against the wishes of its parents; and if the parents are not Catholics, they must not only consent to the baptism, but also agree to bring the child up in the Catholic religion. But if a child is surely dying, we may baptize it without either the consent or permission of its parents.

Q. 644. How many kinds of Baptism are there?

A. There are three kinds of Baptism: Baptism of water, of desire, and of blood.

Q. 645. What is Baptism of water?

A. Baptism of water is that which is given by pouring water on the head of the person to be baptized, and saying at the same time, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Q. 646. In how many ways was the baptism of water given in the first ages of the Church?

A. In the first ages of the Church, baptism of water was given in three ways, namely, by immersion or dipping, by aspersion or sprinkling, and by infusion or pouring. Although any of these methods would be valid, the method of infusion or pouring is most common in the Church.

Q. 647. What are the chief ceremonies used in solemn baptism, and what do they signify?

A. The chief ceremonies used in solemn baptism are:

1. A profession of faith and renouncement of the devil to signify our worthiness;
2. The placing of salt in the mouth to signify the wisdom imparted by faith;
3. The holding of the priest's stole to signify our reception into the Church;
4. The anointing to signify the strength given by the Sacrament;
5. The giving of the white garment or

cloth to signify our sinless state after baptism; and

6. The giving of the lighted candle to signify the light of faith and fire of love that should dwell in our souls.

Q. 648. Should one who, in case of necessity, has been baptized with private baptism, be afterwards brought to the Church to have the ceremonies of solemn baptism completed?

A. One who, in case of necessity, has been baptized with private baptism should afterwards be brought to the Church to have the ceremonies of solemn baptism completed, because these ceremonies are commanded by the Church and bring down blessings upon us.

Q. 649. Is solemn baptism given with any special kind of water?

A. Solemn baptism is given with consecrated water; that is, water mixed with holy oil and blessed for baptism on Holy Saturday and on the Saturday before Pentecost. It is always kept in the baptismal font in the baptistry -- a place near the door of the Church set apart for baptism.

Q. 650. What is Baptism of desire?

A. Baptism of desire is an ardent wish to receive Baptism, and to do all that God has ordained for our salvation.

Q. 651. What is Baptism of blood?

A. Baptism of blood is the shedding of one's blood for the faith of Christ.

Q. 652. What is the baptism of blood most commonly called?

A. The baptism of blood is most commonly called martyrdom, and those who receive it are called martyrs. It is the death one patiently suffers from the enemies of our religion, rather than give up the True Faith faith or virtue. We must not seek martyrdom, though we must endure it when it comes.

Q. 653. Is Baptism of desire or of

(Continued CATECHISM on page 11)

CHILDREN'S PAGE

(Continued CATECHISM from page 10)

blood sufficient to produce the effects of Baptism of water?

A. Baptism of desire or of blood is sufficient to produce the effects of the Baptism of water, if it is impossible to receive the Baptism of water.

Q. 654. How do we know that the baptism of desire or of blood will save us when it is impossible to receive the baptism of water?

A. We know that baptism of desire or of blood will save us when it is impossible to receive the baptism of water, from Holy Scripture, which teaches that love of God and perfect contrition can secure the remission of sins ; and also that Our Lord promises salvation to those who lay down their life for His sake or for His teaching.

Q. 655. What do we promise in Baptism?

A. In Baptism we promise to renounce the devil, with all his works and pomps.

Q. 656. What do we mean by the "pomps" of the devil?

A. By the pomps of the devil we mean all worldly pride, vanities and vain shows by which people are enticed into sin, and all foolish or sinful display of ourselves or of what we possess.

Q. 657. Why is the name of a saint given in Baptism?

A. The name of a saint is given in Baptism in order that the person baptized may imitate his virtues and have him for a protector.

Q. 658. What is the Saint whose name we bear called?

A. The saint whose name we bear is called our patron saint -- to whom we should have great devotion.

Q. 659. What names should never be given in baptism?

A. These and similar names should never be given in baptism:

1. The names of noted unbelievers,

heretics or enemies of religion and virtue;

2. The names of heathen gods, and
3. Nick-names.

Q. 660. Why are godfathers and godmothers given in Baptism?

A. Godfathers and godmothers are given in Baptism in order that they may promise, in the name of the child, what the child itself would promise if it had the use of reason.

Q. 661. By what other name are godfathers and godmothers called?

A. Godfathers and godmothers are usually called sponsors. Sponsors are not necessary at private baptism.

Q. 662. Can a person ever be sponsor when absent from the baptism?

A. A person can be sponsor even when absent from the baptism, provided he has been asked and has consented to be sponsor, and provided also some one answers the questions and touches the person to be baptized in his name. The absent godfather or godmother is then said to be sponsor by proxy and becomes the real godparent of the one baptized.

Q. 663. With whom do godparents, as well as the one baptizing, create a relationship?

A. Godparents, as well as the one baptizing, create a spiritual relationship with the person baptized (not with his parents), and this relationship is an impediment to marriage that must be made known to the priest in case of their future marriage with one another. The godfather and godmother contract no relationship with each other.

Q. 664. What questions should persons who bring a child for baptism be able to answer?

A. Persons who bring a child for baptism should be able to tell:

1. The exact place where the child lives;
2. The full name of its parents, and, in particular, the maiden name, or name

before her marriage, of its mother;

3. The exact day of the month on which it was born;
4. Whether or not it has received private baptism, and
5. Whether its parents be members of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Sponsors must know also the chief truths of our religion.

Q. 665. What is the obligation of a godfather and a godmother?

A. The obligation of a godfather and a godmother is to instruct the child in its religious duties, if the parents neglect to do so or die.

Q. 666. Can persons who are not members of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church be sponsors for children who are to be Baptized into the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church?

A. Persons who are not members of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church cannot be sponsors for children who are to be Baptized into the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, because they cannot perform the duties of sponsors; for if they do not know and profess the True Faith themselves, how can they teach it to their godchildren? Moreover, they must answer the questions asked at baptism and declare that they believe in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church and in all it teaches; which would be a falsehood on their part.

Q. 667. What should parents chiefly consider in the selection of sponsors for their children?

A. In the selection of sponsors for their children parents should chiefly consider the good character and virtue of the sponsors, selecting model members of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church to whom they would be willing at the hour of death to entrust the care and training of their children.

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ICON # 4



ICON # 7



ICON # 11



ICON # 19

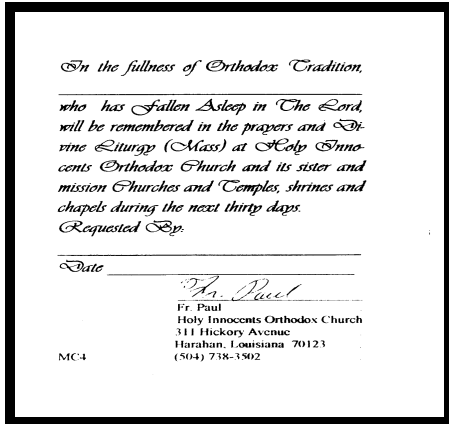


ICON # 26

DIVINE LITURGY CARDS

These 4 1/4” by 5 1/2 “ (folded) Icon cards feature the above Icons, and open to reveal prayer intentions for the living and for those who have Fallen Asleep in The Lord.

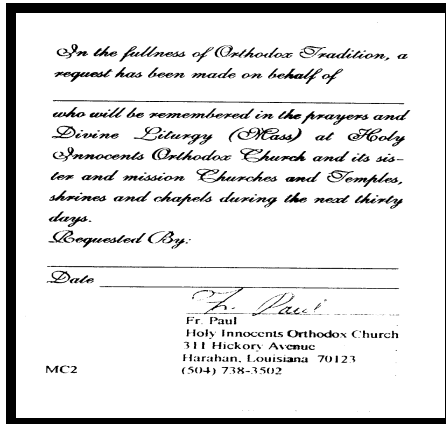
For those who have Fallen Asleep in The Lord, Icon # 19 graces the cover, with the following text (reduced here to fit in this



column) inside:

General Intentions For the Living, for weddings, illnesses, general need, and for the sake of prayer itself, etc., cards, have Icons nos. 4, 7, 11, and 26 are available on the covers. All the Icons are full color printed cards.

The text on the inside of the cards for the living is given above, again reduced here to fit inside the column.



These cards are very beautiful, bamboo or light gray in color, but they are only a product - some-

thing to induce you to make a donation which we use to support the various works we provide, including publication of **REUNION**.

To have a person included in our prayers and at Divine Liturgy, send us a note, or fill out the form in the right column of this page and send it to us. There is no fee for the prayers and Liturgies, that would be Simony.

Like Monasteries which obtain donations for their Icons, or sell Icons

and other items, the donations we receive from these cards are of great use to us. Your help is always appreciated.

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If special date enter MM/DD: _____ / _____
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Whether it is the Church, a nation, an organization, or an individual, perception of surrender or loss of power makes the

DON'T BE STUPID - WE ARE ALL SPECIAL, BUT NONE OF US IS GOD

We are all special, for God has created us and keeps us in existence. But He has not created everyone whom He has contemplated creating, and because He is God, He has contemplated everyone who could possibly have been created. If we each contemplate those who could have been created, those who could have existed, we can each contemplate hundreds, thousands, and even millions of people. God contemplates all of those people and more, yet he created only you and me. We therefore must be very special.

But that does not mean we have the right, ability, power, or authority, to set our own agendas if those agendas conflict with God's agenda.

The world is filled with people who seek only their own agendas, and care nothing of God's agenda. In this such people, though they be very learned, are very stupid. For if one does not at least attempt to determine how to avoid doing that which angers the most powerful entity, then that one is stupid. And from observation we know the world is therefore filled with stupid people for the world is filled with people who have no concern for God and for His will. Their only concern is for what ever pleases them at any one instant in time, and for the long term objective of something of which they will no longer have the pleasure once they die.

Stupid is a very good word, for it expresses the main characteristic of this very large per centage of the population of this world.

In many ways we are responsible for this stupidity, for many of us once were just as stupid, and we directly or indirectly taught that stupidity to the next generation, primarily by our own acts and negligences. But with the realization of this stupidity on our own parts, we no longer need be stupid.

Indeed, the height of stupidity would be to realize our own stupidity, and to not become and be wise. If one who was not religious, suddenly becomes wise, and becomes religious - and by this we mean truly religious and not just seeking to manipulate God - then such a person will be viewed by the stupid as suddenly becoming irrational. But in the mind of the stupid there will also be at least an element of curiosity about this transformation. And that is all that is needed to begin a questioning in the mind of the stupid. With such questioning comes the potential for wisdom. And if we are not overbearing, but gentle, in living in wisdom, in reforming ourselves into children of God, and especially in becoming good examples to those who are without God in their lives, then the potential for their reformation through our example exist.

There is always a danger of our seemingly becoming wise, but remaining stupid, through attributing success, talents, and any good thing which happens in our lives, to ourselves or as being justly deserved by us. This can easily occur in relation to our talents and abilities, for even though we may have honed and developed out talents, all of our talents and abilities come from God - they were created by God and given to us. We must acknowledge the primacy of God even in our own talents and abilities. The more celebrity in nature is the talent or ability, the more inclined is the possessor to attribute the talent or ability to his or her self. Yet all talents and abilities are gifts from God. Thus a surgeon who has an extremely good touch and extraordinary technique, or an actor or actress who is able to make the audience believe in that which is being played, or a writer who engrosses his readers, may have honed the talents which they display, but were it not for God's having given them those talents, there would be no talent. Such celebrity talents gain public acclaim and therefore can easily become a trap for the possessor. More quiet talents, such as in the arena of agricultural, culinary abilities, carpentry, teaching, learning,

and even cleansing one's teeth, normally do not receive celebrity acclaim, but they are equally dependant on God for they would not be possessed had they not been created by God and given to the possessor. And such talents are of equal importance to the celebrity talents, for what good is it to be a great actor or actress, if there is no food for there is no one with the God given talent to engage in agriculture, or cooking that which must be cooked before eating?

If we attribute these abilities and talents to our selves and our own hard work in honing them, then we have regained the position of being stupid. But if we acknowledge them as gifts from God, and the opportunity to utilize them as also being gifts from God, and that we have developed these gifts from God only with the help of God, then we have avoided stupidity.

Only if one can attribute their own existence to their self, and their talents and abilities to their self, can one have the right to consider their own desires as having primacy without being stupid. Since this is impossible, it behooves us to give primacy to the one responsible for our existence and our talents, and that one is God.

Ref: Rom. 11:33-36; Mat. 28:18-20

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**THE FACE OF DIVINE
LOVE IS A FACE IN AGONY
AT THE PROSPECT OF
REJECTION WHICH IS THE
LOSS OF A SOUL**

The Love which Christ has is sometimes called Charity, is sometimes known as Divine Love, and is technically known as Agape Love. If a person does not have this love of Christ, then the only form of love which they can have lacks the elements of the Divinity. That non-Divine form of love can be functional, but it is by definition, self-centered and selfish, because in lacking the essence of God it lacks the element necessary for being focused on others.

When persons who lack this Divine Love encounter those who do have it, the ones without it do what is natural to them. They attack the ones who do have it, and they attack more viciously than they do when they attack others who also lack Agape Love.

The ones without Divine Love can not help but attack those who have Divine Love, for the ones without it, in not knowing the Charity of God, also do not have the inclination to lay down their lives for their brethren. They do not have the inclination to put the good things about which they speak into practice and actually do good. The only acts of which they are capable are self-serving acts. While these acts may on occasion be of benefit to others, such acts are intended by the non-Charitable, to be for their own benefit. Any benefit to someone other than themselves is incidental.

But those who do possess Charity, even in the smallest measure, find themselves doing good. They do not find themselves just talking about what good should be done. They do it. Not all that they do is good. But unlike those without Charity, those who do have Charity do good acts for the sake of goodness, and not as something incidental to their own interests.

The One who gave the great supper gave the great supper out of the goodness of His heart. Since His heart is the Divine Heart, it is filled with Agape Love. Those to whom He made invitation and who rejected the invitation, rejected His love in favor of their own temporary self-interests. They had no thought to their permanent self-interests because ordinary love is concerned with selfish and temporal matters. But those who accepted the invitation saw the pleading face of Divine Love begging to be allowed to Divinely Love and to receive Divine Love in response - and they said yes.

When we have Agape Love, we perform acts which emanate that Agape Love. In the very performance of acting in accordance with Agape Love is a benefit to others and simultaneously is an attack on those without Agape Love. This is because the relationship of those with Charity and those without Charity is the relationship which exists between Good and Evil.

When a school board superintendent attempts to educate the children of his district, and is opposed by members of the school board who have traditionally used their positions for their own benefit and only incidentally benefited the children, then there exists the classic confrontation between Good and Evil; between those who possess and therefore act in accordance with Divine Love, and those who do not possess Divine Love and therefore act in accordance with the selfish love of self interest and desire for the meaningless things of this world.

If we possess Charity then we have a horror for the spiritual welfare of those who lack it. We desire their entry into the banquet of eternal life. We know we must do something to assist them out of the desert of sin and into the cleansing waters of life; but what can we do? We can not live their lives for them, nor can we interfere with their free will. But we can give them good example. We can also pray for them. And we can also fast and sacrifice and offer this on their be-

half to God in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy (Calvary and the Last Supper) as that which is pleasing to God the Father.

And as ones who possess Divine Love, we find we are impelled to these acts, for that same Divine Love aches at our hearts. It gives us God's pleading face of Divine Love, a face in agony at the prospect of rejection which is in reality the loss of a soul.

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

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WHAT DOES OUR SIN DO TO GOD WHO IS OUR GOOD NEIGHBOR, AND TO US

Sin has an effect on God as well as on the sinner, and on everyone else in the world both living and dead. But that effect is very difficult to explain for it is somewhat different in each instance and for each of the persons effected. But a generalized example can give us an insight to the sin relationships.

You had a neighbor. Both of you were reasonably successful in life and family. Your neighbor's three children were all doing well in college, but his wife had a medical condition which would be life threatening but for her medication.

There were fences which separated your homesteads, and there was a gate in the fence between you houses. Your neighbor had a swimming pool, and you had a two year child who was just then getting into everything.

One afternoon, while his wife and children were bringing meals they had prepared to needy people who were unable to fend for themselves, your neighbor came to your house and asked if it would be OK for him to leave open the gate in the fence between your homes, because he had to make some adjustments to some equipment inside his house. He said he would close the gate when he finished, but that he had to have it open to make the adjustments. You granted his request.

A little while later that day you were in your back yard and saw the gate open. You completely recalled your conversation with your neighbor, but after a few minutes you closed the gate. The reason you closed it is immaterial. The fact that you closed it despite your agreeing to leave it open and that your neighbor would close it is important.

Your neighbor had the gate open so that he could make an adjustment to the alarm system surrounding his swim-

ming pool. The alarm system was not configured so that it would detect your two year child crawling under the gate, and your neighbor was re-configuring the alarm so that it would detect the child.

When you closed the gate, you activated the alarm system. The sound part of the alarm was disabled so it would not work during the adjustments, but activating the system caused your neighbor to be electrocuted and set on fire so that parts of his body were burned to the bone. Some of his bones were even burned to charcoal. Your neighbor remained conscious but unable to move so that he just lay on the floor, watching the fire spread over his clothing and body and experiencing the jolting electricity and his body's slow burning. Eventually the alarm re-set, and the electricity stopped flowing through him, and eventually his burning body just smoldered.

Several hour later his wife and children returned, and found him lying there, conscious, but barely alive.

The doctors were able to save his life, but he was forever unable to earn a living. Because of their lack of income, your neighbor had to sell his house to provide for his wife's medication, but eventually those funds were used up, and his wife died for lack of the needed medication. His children had to leave college, and he eventually died, immersed in his own bodily waste, in a non-caring charity nursing home.

And your two year old child crawled under the gate and drowned in the swimming pool. Your own life and your family life were devastated.

All because you did not keep your agreement - you closed the gate.

Your neighbor was such a good person that had you gone to him and expressed sorrow for your actions he would have readily forgiven you, as would have his family. Did you go to him and express your sorrow for your action? In acknowledging your responsibility you

would have also acknowledged your responsibility to your spouse for the death of your child. Your spouse, loving you, would have forgiven you and treated you with gentle kindness, realizing the continuing agony you experienced because of your action of closing the gate and its resulting effect on your neighbor, his family, and on your child and your spouse and on you yourself.

This is very analogous to what happens when you sin.

The good neighbor is God. He does things for our benefit without our even requesting. When we commit a sin, what ever the reason, it has a devastating effect on God. If you think God is not effected by our sin, that it is impossible to cause God to suffer, then remember that the suffering Our Saviour Jesus Christ experienced was because of the sin of Adam and also because of our sins. And that suffering was devastatingly horrible.

If you take the position that your neighbor should have explained what he was doing, and the danger involved, then you are attempting to relieve yourself of responsibility for your own actions. There was no need for your neighbor to explain what he was doing, nor of the consequences should you act otherwise. It was not necessary that he explain he was doing something for your well-being and that of your family and your two year old child. It was just necessary that you abstain from a particular action, that you abstain from sinning.

Every sin we commit has a similar devastating effect on God and on every person whether living or dead. If we acknowledge we are the root cause of our own sins, and contemplate the effect of our sins, then and only then can we have sorrow for our sins. Then and only then can we truly ask that our sins be forgiven. And in seeking forgiveness, we will realize that we must do something to correct the horrible effects of our sin.

(Continued SIN EFFECTS on page 18)

(Continued SIN EFFECTS from page 17)

If we acknowledge closing the gate was wrong, and that we are responsible for all that results from that act, then we also acknowledge we must do what we can to take care of our neighbor and his family. We will use our abilities and our assets to make sure his children remain in college, and that his wife receives her medication. We will search for and provide every means for our neighbor to be made well and able to function and live as normally as possible. We can never undo what we have done, and we can never make our neighbor and his family whole, but we can do the best we can.

If we do this as a grudging obligation, then our attitude will be obvious, and God and His family of angels and saints will be alienated. But if we have true sorrow, we can begin to have a growing love and tender appreciation for our God and His family. And this will soothe and strengthen our relationship with God.

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

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GIVING TESTIMONY OF CHRIST THROUGH GOD'S BREATH

Our Lord Jesus Christ said, that when the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Breath of Truth which comes from the God the Father, when He comes, that Holy Breath will give testimony of Christ, and we, the followers of Christ, will give testimony of Christ.

Does this mean the Holy Ghost will talk about Jesus, or that we will talk about Jesus? Only if testimony is restricted to verbalization. If testimony is restricted to verbalization, then Satan, the Devil, and his followers, can and have given testimony of Christ, and continue to give testimony of Christ.

If all one can do is talk, then when such people talk about Christ they are doing the most they can do. In talking about Christ these people of limited abilities are giving testimony of Christ. But the Holy Spirit, the Holy Breath of God, can do and does much more than talk about Christ. He enables us to do what Christ taught, to comprehend what God desires *and to desire that ourselves*, to pursue the actualization of what God wants. The Holy Spirit enables us to want to make ourselves to be in union with God rather than separated from Him, and to be in union with God.

In this the Holy Ghost gives testimony of Christ, and in our working for these we too give testimony of Christ.

When the Holy Spirit gives testimony of Christ He provides us with the tools we need to follow Christ, to follow His teachings, to become that which is able to be in union with God the Blessed Trinity.

When the Holy Spirit enables us to give testimony of Christ, we become able to follow Christ, to follow His teachings, to become that which is able to be in union with God the Blessed Trinity.

And in following Christ, in following His teachings, we become in union with

God the Blessed Trinity, and give testimony of Christ through following Christ, His teachings, and in that union.

The Holy Spirit also gives testimony of Christ by working miracles, and by giving some very selected people the ability to occasionally work miracles when that is the desire of the Holy Spirit - but not when working miracles is for the self engrandizement of the "miracle worker" human, unless that falls within the desires of the Holy Spirit. Working of overt miracles is totally within the purview of the Holy Spirit, and not within the purview of the human through whom the miracle is worked.

But more important than the spectacle of overt miracles, is the enabling which the Holy Spirit gives us. Without His enabling breath of holy life which He breathes from Himself into us, we would have to rely only on our natural, innate talents and abilities. These may suffice for us to have sustenance in this world, but for most of us these natural and innate talents and abilities would be taxed beyond their limits were they our sole source by which we attain holiness.

Look at the opposition others make to your attempts to become holy, to give testimony of Christ. Unless a great feast or holy day of obligation falls on a Sunday or a secular holiday, your employer and employer's management over you will almost always pressure you to work and to miss Divine Liturgy. They will even pressure you to work on Sunday, the Lord's day, even to the extent of missing Divine Liturgy. They do this because they are concerned with Satan's testimony, with worldly and materialistic matters, and not with their eternal salvation. And they desire you to go to hell with them. They will pressure you to contribute to The United Way, which directly or indirectly gives money to abortion clinics and supports homosexual organizations and activities. This pressure is made so the company can have an acceptable corporate "correctness" status; and so that the corporation's evil and sadistic spiritual

(Continued TESTIMONY on page 19)

(Continued TESTIMONY from page 18)

tendencies can salivate in joy at the prospect of this person, who is attempting to be a good follower of Christ, supporting that which is opposed to Christ's teachings.

The same can be said of government supported abortion made possible through taxes, and mandated through law in health care insurance policies funded by your premiums.

Every time we attempt to give testimony of Christ in these and similar circumstances, we risk loss of employment, imprisonment for failure to pay taxes, and loss of needed and even necessary or mandated insurance coverage. Extortion is a favorite tool of Satan and his followers, and we experience it every day of our lives if we give testimony of Christ.

We are ridiculed and attacked by false "Christians" who invent their own morality and attempt to impose it upon us as being from God - when we already have God's morality from the mouth of God and not from the mouths of those who rebelled against God's Church.

Give testimony of Christ. The reward for giving testimony of Christ is God's reward, the only reward worth receiving.

Ref: 1 Peter 4:7-11; John 15:26-27; 16:1-4

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THE BREATH OF GOD

But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.

The Holy Ghost, The Holy Breath of God, has a multitude of effects in us. But He is the one who has effects in us. He has them in accordance with His will. He may decide to answer our prayers with an effect which we did not request, or He may even reject our request - especially if we request something which is not good. But there are two prayers which He seems to answer in abundance: First, for self control to accordance with God's will; Second, that He help us love God.

When we seek self control in accordance with God's will, we are implicitly acknowledging our sinfulness, and expressing our repentance for our sins. We are acknowledging we can not be holy without God help, and that we desire to be holy and desire God's help. When we ask that He help us love God, He makes God our focus, and all else is seen through that focus. Slowly, with our constant request that He help us love God, we begin to love God, and to love God more and more. But it is a slow process for most people, because love for worldly things impedes the growth of our love for God.

When we acquire the Holy Spirit, we are in reality breathing in the Breath of God, and He, like the air we breathe, permeates every part of us - not just every spiritual part of us but every part of our complete human being. The more we breathe in the Breath of God, the more we change into becoming more and more Godlike.

For some strange reason there are people who desire to have all the dramatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. They want to cast our devils; raise up mountain ranges and move them to different places; bring the dead back to life; and do spectacular things. If God gives you

those gifts, then you have the responsibility of using those gifts in the perfection of God's intentions, and this you can never do until you are united with God in Heaven. In failing to use those gifts in the perfection of God's will, you may condemn yourself for and in your failure.

But if you seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit which simply and quietly assist us to attain union with God, if you seek your own redemption and that of others, then you will receive those gifts and in receiving them will be assisted in attaining your own redemption and that of others.

Ref: Acts 2:1-11; John 14:23-31

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THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE

BOOK THREE

CHAPTER IV

7. Among such as these, in that unstable period of my life, I studied the books of eloquence, for it was in eloquence that I was eager to be eminent, though from a reprehensible and vain-glorious motive, and a delight in human vanity. In the ordinary course of study I came upon a certain book of Cicero's, whose language almost all admire, though not his heart. This particular book of his contains an exhortation to philosophy and was called Hortensius. Now it was this book which quite definitely changed my whole attitude and turned my prayers toward thee, O Lord, and gave me new hope and new desires. Suddenly every vain hope became worthless to me, and with an incredible warmth of heart I yearned for an immortality of wisdom and began now to arise that I might return to thee. It was not to sharpen my tongue further that I made use of that book. I was now nineteen; my father had been dead two years, and my mother was providing the money for my study of rhetoric. What won me in it [i.e., the Hortensius] was not its style but its substance.

8. How ardent was I then, my God, how ardent to fly from earthly things to thee! Nor did I know how thou wast even then dealing with me. For with thee is wisdom. In Greek the love of wisdom is called "philosophy," and it was with this love that that book inflamed me. There are some who seduce through philosophy, under a great, alluring, and honorable name, using it to color and adorn their own errors. And almost all who did this, in Cicero's own time and earlier, are censored and pointed out in his book. In it there is also manifest that most salutary admonition of thy Spirit, spoken by thy good and pious servant: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and

not after Christ: for in him all the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily." Since at that time, as thou knowest, O Light of my heart, the words of the apostle were unknown to me, I was delighted with Cicero's exhortation, at least enough so that I was stimulated by it, and enkindled and inflamed to love, to seek, to obtain, to hold, and to embrace, not this or that sect, but wisdom itself, wherever it might be. Only this checked my ardor: that the name of Christ was not in it. For this name, by thy mercy, O Lord, this name of my Saviour thy Son, my tender heart had piously drunk in, deeply treasured even with my mother's milk. And whatsoever was lacking that name, no matter how erudite, polished, and truthful, did not quite take complete hold of me.

CHAPTER V

9. I resolved, therefore, to direct my mind to the Holy Scriptures, that I might see what they were. And behold, I saw something not comprehended by the proud, not disclosed to children, something lowly in the hearing, but sublime in the doing, and veiled in mysteries. Yet I was not of the number of those who could enter into it or bend my neck to follow its steps. For then it was quite different from what I now feel. When I then turned toward the Scriptures, they appeared to me to be quite unworthy to be compared with the dignity of Tully. For my inflated pride was repelled by their style, nor could the sharpness of my wit penetrate their inner meaning. Truly they were of a sort to aid the growth of little ones, but I scorned to be a little one and, swollen with pride, I looked upon myself as fully grown.

CHAPTER VI

10. Thus I fell among men, delirious in their pride, carnal and voluble, whose mouths were the snares of the devil -- a trap made out of a mixture of the syllables of thy name and the names of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Paraclete. These names were never out of their mouths, but only as sound and the

clatter of tongues, for their heart was empty of truth. Still they cried, "Truth, Truth," and were forever speaking the word to me. But the thing itself was not in them. Indeed, they spoke falsely not only of thee -- who truly art the Truth -- but also about the basic elements of this world, thy creation. And, indeed, I should have passed by the philosophers themselves even when they were speaking truth concerning thy creatures, for the sake of thy love, O Highest Good, and my Father, O Beauty of all things beautiful.

O Truth, Truth, how inwardly even then did the marrow of my soul sigh for thee when, frequently and in manifold ways, in numerous and vast books, [the Manicheans] sounded out thy name though it was only a sound! And in these dishes -- while I starved for thee -- they served up to me, in thy stead, the sun and moon thy beauteous works -- but still only thy works and not thyself; indeed, not even thy first work. For thy spiritual works came before these material creations, celestial and shining though they are. But I was hungering and thirsting, not even after those first works of thine, but after thyself the Truth, "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Yet they still served me glowing fantasies in those dishes. And, truly, it would have been better to have loved this very sun -- which at least is true to our sight -- than those illusions of theirs which deceive the mind through the eye. And yet because I supposed the illusions to be from thee I fed on them -- not with avidity, for thou didst not taste in my mouth as thou art, and thou wast not these empty fictions. Neither was I nourished by them, but was instead exhausted. Food in dreams appears like our food awake; yet the sleepers are not nourished by it, for they are asleep. But the fantasies of the Manicheans were not in any way like thee as thou hast spoken to me now. They were simply fantastic and false. In comparison to them the actual bodies which we see with our fleshly sight, both celestial and terrestrial, are far more certain. These

(Continued AUGUSTINE on page 21)

(Continued AUGUSTINE from page 20)

true bodies even the beasts and birds perceive as well as we do and they are more certain than the images we form about them. And again, we do with more certainty form our conceptions about them than, from them, we go on by means of them to imagine of other greater and infinite bodies which have no existence. With such empty husks was I then fed, and yet was not fed.

But thou, my Love, for whom I longed in order that I might be strong, neither art those bodies that we see in heaven nor art thou those which we do not see there, for thou hast created them all and yet thou reckonest them not among thy greatest works. How far, then, art thou from those fantasies of mine, fantasies of bodies which have no real being at all! The images of those bodies which actually exist are far more certain than these fantasies. The bodies themselves are more certain than the images, yet even these thou art not. Thou art not even the soul, which is the life of bodies; and, clearly, the life of the body is better than the body itself. But thou art the life of souls, life of lives, having life in thyself, and never changing, O Life of my soul.

11. Where, then, wast thou and how far from me? Far, indeed, was I wandering away from thee, being barred even from the husks of those swine whom I fed with husks. For how much better were the fables of the grammarians and poets than these snares [of the Manicheans]! For verses and poems and "the flying Medea" are still more profitable truly than these men's "five elements," with their various colors, answering to "the five caves of darkness" (none of which exist and yet in which they slay the one who believes in them). For verses and poems I can turn into food for the mind, for though I sang about "the flying Medea" I never believed it, but those other things [the fantasies of the Manicheans] I did believe. Woe, woe, by what steps I was dragged down to "the depths of hell" -- toiling and fuming because of my lack of the truth, even when I was seeking after

thee, my God! To thee I now confess it, for thou didst have mercy on me when I had not yet confessed it. I sought after thee, but not according to the understanding of the mind, by means of which thou hast willed that I should excel the beasts, but only after the guidance of my physical senses. Thou wast more inward to me than the most inward part of me; and higher than my highest reach. I came upon that brazen woman, devoid of prudence, who, in Solomon's obscure parable, sits at the door of the house on a seat and says, "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." This woman seduced me, because she found my soul outside its own door, dwelling on the sensations of my flesh and ruminating on such food as I had swallowed through these physical senses.

CHAPTER VII

12. For I was ignorant of that other reality, true Being. And so it was that I was subtly persuaded to agree with these foolish deceivers when they put their questions to me: "Whence comes evil?" and, "Is God limited by a bodily shape, and has he hairs and nails?" and, "Are those patriarchs to be esteemed righteous who had many wives at one time, and who killed men and who sacrificed living creatures?" In my ignorance I was much disturbed over these things and, though I was retreating from the truth, I appeared to myself to be going toward it, because I did not yet know that evil was nothing but a privation of good (that, indeed, it has no being); and how should I have seen this when the sight of my eyes went no farther than physical objects, and the sight of my mind reached no farther than to fantasies? And I did not know that God is a spirit who has no parts extended in length and breadth, whose being has no mass -- for every mass is less in a part than in a whole -- and if it be an infinite mass it must be less in such parts as are limited by a certain space than in its infinity. It cannot therefore be wholly everywhere as Spirit is, as God is. And I was entirely ignorant as to what is that principle within us by which we are like

God, and which is rightly said in Scripture to be made "after God's image."

13. Nor did I know that true inner righteousness -- which does not judge according to custom but by the measure of the most perfect law of God Almighty -- by which the mores of various places and times were adapted to those places and times (though the law itself is the same always and everywhere, not one thing in one place and another in another). By this inner righteousness Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and Moses and David, and all those commended by the mouth of God were righteous and were judged unrighteous only by foolish men who were judging by human judgment and gauging their judgment of the mores of the whole human race by the narrow norms of their own mores. It is as if a man in an armory, not knowing what piece goes on what part of the body, should put a greave on his head and a helmet on his shin and then complain because they did not fit. Or as if, on some holiday when afternoon business was forbidden, one were to grumble at not being allowed to go on selling as it had been lawful for him to do in the forenoon. Or, again, as if, in a house, he sees a servant handle something that the butler is not permitted to touch, or when something is done behind a stable that would be prohibited in a dining room, and then a person should be indignant that in one house and one family the same things are not allowed to every member of the household. Such is the case with those who cannot endure to hear that something was lawful for righteous men in former times that is not so now; or that God, for certain temporal reasons, commanded then one thing to them and another now to these: yet both would be serving the same righteous will. These people should see that in one man, one day, and one house, different things are fit for different members; and a thing that was formerly lawful may become, after a time, unlawful -- and something allowed or commanded in one place that is justly prohibited and punished in another. Is justice, then, variable and

(Continued AUGUSTINE on page 22)

(Continued AUGUSTINE from page 21)

changeable? No, but the times over which she presides are not all alike because they are different times. But men, whose days upon the earth are few, cannot by their own perception harmonize the causes of former ages and other nations, of which they had no experience, and compare them with these of which they do have experience; although in one and the same body, or day, or family, they can readily see that what is suitable for each member, season, part, and person may differ. To the one they take exception; to the other they submit.

14. These things I did not know then, nor had I observed their import. They met my eyes on every side, and I did not see. I composed poems, in which I was not free to place each foot just anywhere, but in one meter one way, and in another meter another way, nor even in any one verse was the same foot allowed in all places. Yet the art by which I composed did not have different principles for each of these different cases, but the same law throughout. Still I did not see how, by that righteousness to which good and holy men submitted, all those things that God had commanded were gathered, in a far more excellent and sublime way, into one moral order; and it did not vary in any essential respect, though it did not in varying times prescribe all things at once but, rather, distributed and prescribed what was proper for each. And, being blind, I blamed those pious fathers, not only for making use of present things as God had commanded and inspired them to do, but also for foreshadowing things to come, as God revealed it to them.

CHAPTER VIII

15. Can it ever, at any time or place, be unrighteous for a man to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind; and his neighbor as himself? Similarly, offenses against nature are everywhere and at all times to be held in detestation and should be punished. Such offenses, for example, were those of the Sodomites; and, even

if all nations should commit them, they would all be judged guilty of the same crime by the divine law, which has not made men so that they should ever abuse one another in that way. For the fellowship that should be between God and us is violated whenever that nature of which he is the author is polluted by perverted lust. But these offenses against customary morality are to be avoided according to the variety of such customs. Thus, what is agreed upon by convention, and confirmed by custom or the law of any city or nation, may not be violated at the lawless pleasure of any, whether citizen or stranger. For any part that is not consistent with its whole is unseemly. Nevertheless, when God commands anything contrary to the customs or compacts of any nation, even though it were never done by them before, it is to be done; and if it has been interrupted, it is to be restored; and if it has never been established, it is to be established. For it is lawful for a king, in the state over which he reigns, to command that which neither he himself nor anyone before him had commanded. And if it cannot be held to be inimical to the public interest to obey him -- and, in truth, it would be inimical if he were not obeyed, since obedience to princes is a general compact of human society -- how much more, then, ought we unhesitatingly to obey God, the Governor of all his creatures! For, just as among the authorities in human society, the greater authority is obeyed before the lesser, so also must God be above all.

16. This applies as well to deeds of violence where there is a real desire to harm another, either by humiliating treatment or by injury. Either of these may be done for reasons of revenge, as one enemy against another, or in order to obtain some advantage over another, as in the case of the highwayman and the traveler; else they may be done in order to avoid some other evil, as in the case of one who fears another; or through envy as, for example, an unfortunate man harming a happy one just because he is happy; or they may be done by a prosperous man against

someone whom he fears will become equal to himself or whose equality he resents. They may even be done for the mere pleasure in another man's pain, as the spectators of gladiatorial shows or the people who deride and mock at others. These are the major forms of iniquity that spring out of the lust of the flesh, and of the eye, and of power. Sometimes there is just one; sometimes two together; sometimes all of them at once. Thus we live, offending against the Three and the Seven, that harp of ten strings, thy Decalogue, O God most high and most sweet. But now how can offenses of vileness harm thee who canst not be defiled; or how can deeds of violence harm thee who canst not be harmed? Still thou dost punish these sins which men commit against themselves because, even when they sin against thee, they are also committing impiety against their own souls. Iniquity gives itself the lie, either by corrupting or by perverting that nature which thou hast made and ordained. And they do this by an immoderate use of lawful things; or by lustful desire for things forbidden, as "against nature"; or when they are guilty of sin by raging with heart and voice against thee, rebelling against thee, "kicking against the pricks"; or when they cast aside respect for human society and take audacious delight in conspiracies and feuds according to their private likes and dislikes.

This is what happens whenever thou art forsaken, O Fountain of Life, who art the one and true Creator and Ruler of the universe. This is what happens when through self-willed pride a part is loved under the false assumption that it is the whole. Therefore, we must return to thee in humble piety and let thee purge us from our evil ways, and be merciful to those who confess their sins to thee, and hear the groanings of the prisoners and loosen us from those fetters which we have forged for ourselves. This thou wilt do, provided we do not raise up against thee the arrogance of a false freedom -- for thus we lose all through craving more, by loving our

(Continued AUGUSTINE on page 23)

(Continued AUGUSTINE from page 22)

own good more than thee, the common good of all.

CHAPTER IX

17. But among all these vices and crimes and manifold iniquities, there are also the sins that are committed by men who are, on the whole, making progress toward the good. When these are judged rightly and after the rule of perfection, the sins are censured but the men are to be commended because they show the hope of bearing fruit, like the green shoot of the growing corn. And there are some deeds that resemble vice and crime and yet are not sin because they offend neither thee, our Lord God, nor social custom. For example, when suitable reserves for hard times are provided, we cannot judge that this is done merely from a hoarding impulse. Or, again, when acts are punished by constituted authority for the sake of correction, we cannot judge that they are done merely out of a desire to inflict pain. Thus, many a deed which is disapproved in man's sight may be approved by thy testimony. And many a man who is praised by men is condemned -- as thou art witness -- because frequently the deed itself, the mind of the doer, and the hidden exigency of the situation all vary among themselves. But when, contrary to human expectation, thou commandest something unusual or unthought of -- indeed, something thou mayest formerly have forbidden, about which thou mayest conceal the reason for thy command at that particular time; and even though it may be contrary to the ordinance of some society of men -- who doubts but that it should be done because only that society of men is righteous which obeys thee? But blessed are they who know what thou dost command. For all things done by those who obey thee either exhibit something necessary at that particular time or they foreshow things to come.

CHAPTER X

18. But I was ignorant of all this, and so I mocked those holy servants and

prophets of thine. Yet what did I gain by mocking them save to be mocked in turn by thee? Insensibly and little by little, I was led on to such follies as to believe that a fig tree wept when it was plucked and that the sap of the mother tree was tears. Notwithstanding this, if a fig was plucked, by not his own but another man's wickedness, some Manichean saint might eat it, digest it in his stomach, and breathe it out again in the form of angels. Indeed, in his prayers he would assuredly groan and sigh forth particles of God, although these particles of the most high and true God would have remained bound in that fig unless they had been set free by the teeth and belly of some "elect saint"! And, wretch that I was, I believed that more mercy was to be shown to the fruits of the earth than unto men, for whom these fruits were created. For, if a hungry man -- who was not a Manichean -- should beg for any food, the morsel that we gave to him would seem condemned, as it were, to capital punishment.

CHAPTER XI

19. And now thou didst "stretch forth thy hand from above" and didst draw up my soul out of that profound darkness [of Manicheism] because my mother, thy faithful one, wept to thee on my behalf more than mothers are accustomed to weep for the bodily deaths of their children. For by the light of the faith and spirit which she received from thee, she saw that I was dead. And thou didst hear her, O Lord, thou didst hear her and despised not her tears when, pouring down, they watered the earth under her eyes in every place where she prayed. Thou didst truly hear her. For what other source was there for that dream by which thou didst console her, so that she permitted me to live with her, to have my meals in the same house at the table which she had begun to avoid, even while she hated and detested the blasphemies of my error? In her dream she saw herself standing on a sort of wooden rule, and saw a bright youth approaching her, joyous and smiling at her, while she was grieving

and bowed down with sorrow. But when he inquired of her the cause of her sorrow and daily weeping (not to learn from her, but to teach her, as is customary in visions), and when she answered that it was my soul's doom she was lamenting, he bade her rest content and told her to look and see that where she was there I was also. And when she looked she saw me standing near her on the same rule.

Whence came this vision unless it was that thy ears were inclined toward her heart? O thou Omnipotent Good, thou carest for every one of us as if thou didst care for him only, and so for all as if they were but one!

20. And what was the reason for this also, that, when she told me of this vision, and I tried to put this construction on it: "that she should not despair of being someday what I was," she replied immediately, without hesitation, "No; for it was not told me that 'where he is, there you shall be' but 'where you are, there he will be'?" I confess my remembrance of this to thee, O Lord, as far as I can recall it -- and I have often mentioned it. Thy answer, given through my watchful mother, in the fact that she was not disturbed by the plausibility of my false interpretation but saw immediately what should have been seen -- and which I certainly had not seen until she spoke -- this answer moved me more deeply than the dream itself. Still, by that dream, the joy that was to come to that pious woman so long after was predicted long before, as a consolation for her present anguish.

Nearly nine years passed in which I wallowed in the mud of that deep pit and in the darkness of falsehood, striving often to rise, but being all the more heavily dashed down. But all that time this chaste, pious, and sober widow -- such as thou dost love -- was now more buoyed up with hope, though no less zealous in her weeping and mourning; and she did not cease to bewail my case before thee, in all the hours of her supplication. Her prayers entered thy pres-

(Continued AUGUSTINE on page 24)

(Continued **AUGUSTINE** from page 23)

ence, and yet thou didst allow me still to tumble and toss around in that darkness.

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IMITATION OF CHRIST By Thomas a Kempis

BOOK THREE

The Fourteenth Chapter

Consider the Hidden Judgments of
God
Lest You Become Proud of Your Own
Good Deeds

The Disciple

You thunder forth Your judgments over me, Lord. You shake all my bones with fear and trembling, and my soul is very much afraid. I stand in awe as I consider that the heavens are not pure in Your sight. If You found wickedness in the angels and did not spare them, what will become of me? Stars have fallen from heaven, and I -- I who am but dust -- how can I be presumptuous? They whose deeds seemed worthy of praise have fallen into the depths, and I have seen those who ate the bread of angels delighting themselves with the husks of swine.

There is no holiness, then, if You withdraw Your hand, Lord. There is no wisdom if You cease to guide, no courage if You cease to defend. No chastity is secure if You do not guard it. Our vigilance avails nothing if Your holy watchfulness does not protect us. Left to ourselves we sink and perish, but visited by You we are lifted up and live. We are truly unstable, but You make us strong. We grow lukewarm, but You inflame us. Oh, how humbly and lowly should I consider myself! How very little should I esteem anything that seems good in me! How pro-

foundly should I submit to Your unfathomable judgments, Lord, where I find myself to be but nothing!

O immeasurable weight! O impassable sea, where I find myself to be nothing but bare nothingness! Where, then, is glory's hiding place? Where can there be any trust in my own virtue? All vainglory is swallowed up in the depths of Your judgments upon me.

What is all flesh in Your sight? Shall the clay glory against Him that formed it? How can he whose heart is truly subject to God be lifted up by vainglory? The whole world will not make him proud whom truth has subjected to itself. Nor shall he who has placed all his hope in God be moved by the tongues of flatterers. For behold, even they who speak are nothing; they will pass away with the sound of their words, but the truth of the Lord remains forever.

The Fifteenth Chapter

How One Should Feel and Speak on
Every Desirable Thing

The Voice of Christ

My child, this is the way you must speak on every occasion: "Lord, if it be pleasing to You, so be it. If it be to Your honor, Lord, be it done in Your name. Lord, if You see that it is expedient and profitable for me, then grant that I may use it to Your honor. But if You know that it will be harmful to me, and of no good benefit to the welfare of my soul, then take this desire away from me."

Not every desire is from the Holy Spirit, even though it may seem right and good. It is difficult to be certain whether it is a good spirit or a bad one that prompts one to this or that, and even to know whether you are being moved by your own spirit. Many who seemed at first to be led by a good spirit have been deceived in the end.

Whatever the mind sees as good, ask and desire in fear of God and humility of heart. Above all, commit the whole

matter to Me with true resignation, and say: "Lord, You know what is better for me; let this be done or that be done as You please. Grant what You will, as much as You will, when You will. Do with me as You know best, as will most please You, and will be for Your greater honor. Place me where You will and deal with me freely in all things. I am in Your hand; turn me about whichever way You will. Behold, I am Your servant, ready to obey in all things. Not for myself do I desire to live, but for You -- would that I could do this worthily and perfectly!"

A Prayer that the Will of God Be Done

Grant me Your grace, O most merciful Jesus, that it may be with me, and work with me, and remain with me to the very end. Grant that I may always desire and will that which is most acceptable and pleasing to You. Let Your will be mine. Let my will always follow Yours and agree perfectly with it. Let my will be one with Yours in willing and in not willing, and let me be unable to will or not will anything but what You will or do not will. Grant that I may die to all things in this world, and for Your sake love to be despised and unknown in this life. Give me above all desires the desire to rest in You, and in You let my heart have peace. You are true peace of heart. You alone are its rest. Without You all things are difficult and troubled. In this peace, the selfsame that is in You, the Most High, the everlasting Good, I will sleep and take my rest. Amen.

The Sixteenth Chapter

True Comfort Is to Be Sought in God
Alone

The Disciple

Whatever I can desire or imagine for my own comfort I look for not here but hereafter. For if I alone should have all the world's comforts and could enjoy all its delights, it is certain that they could not long endure. Therefore, my soul,

(Continued **KEMPIS** on page 25)

(Continued KEMPIS from page 24)

you cannot enjoy full consolation or perfect delight except in God, the Consoler of the poor and the Helper of the humble. Wait a little, my soul, wait for the divine promise and you will have an abundance of all good things in heaven. If you desire these present things too much, you will lose those which are everlasting and heavenly. Use temporal things but desire eternal things. You cannot be satisfied with any temporal goods because you were not created to enjoy them.

Even if you possessed all created things you could not be happy and blessed; for in God, Who created all these things, your whole blessedness and happiness consists -- not indeed such happiness as is seen and praised by lovers of the world, but such as that for which the good and faithful servants of Christ wait, and of which the spiritual and pure of heart, whose conversation is in heaven, sometime have a foretaste.

Vain and brief is all human consolation. But that which is received inwardly from the Truth is blessed and true. The devout man carries his Consoler, Jesus, everywhere with him, and he says to Him: "Be with me, Lord Jesus, in every place and at all times. Let this be my consolation, to be willing to forego all human comforting. And if Your consolation be wanting to me, let Your will and just trial of me be my greatest comfort. For You will not always be angry, nor will You threaten forever."

The Seventeenth Chapter

All Our Care is to Be Placed in God

The Voice of Christ

My child, allow me to do what I will with you. I know what is best for you. You think as a man; you feel in many things as human affection persuades.

The Disciple

Lord, what You say is true. Your care

for me is greater than all the care I can take of myself. For he who does not cast all his care upon You stands very unsafely. If only my will remain right and firm toward You, Lord, do with me whatever pleases You. For whatever You shall do with me can only be good.

If You wish me to be in darkness, I shall bless You. And if You wish me to be in light, again I shall bless You. If You stoop down to comfort me, I shall bless You, and if You wish me to be afflicted, I shall bless You forever.

The Voice of Christ

My child, this is the disposition which you should have if you wish to walk with Me. You should be as ready to suffer as to enjoy. You should as willingly be destitute and poor as rich and satisfied.

The Disciple

O Lord, I shall suffer willingly for Your sake whatever You wish to send me. I am ready to accept from Your hand both good and evil alike, the sweet and the bitter together, sorrow with joy; and for all that happens to me I am grateful. Keep me from all sin and I will fear neither death nor hell. Do not cast me out forever nor blot me out of the Book of Life, and whatever tribulation befalls will not harm me.

The Eighteenth Chapter

Temporal Sufferings Should Be Borne Patiently,
After the Example of Christ

The Voice of Christ

My child, I came down from heaven for your salvation and took upon Myself your miseries, not out of necessity but out of love, that you might learn to be patient and bear the sufferings of this life without repining. From the moment of My birth to My death on the cross, suffering did not leave Me. I suffered great want of temporal goods. Often I heard many complaints against Me.

Disgrace and reviling I bore with patience. For My blessings I received ingratitude, for My miracles blasphemies, and for My teaching scorn.

The Disciple

O Lord, because You were patient in life, especially in fulfilling the design of the Father, it is fitting that I, a most miserable sinner, should live patiently according to Your will, and, as long as You shall wish, bear the burden of this corruptible body for the welfare of my soul. For though this present life seems burdensome, yet by Your grace it becomes meritorious, and it is made brighter and more endurable for the weak by Your example and the pathways of the saints. But it has also more consolation than formerly under the old law when the gates of heaven were closed, when the way thereto seemed darker than now, and when so few cared to seek the eternal kingdom. The just, the elect, could not enter heaven before Your sufferings and sacred death had paid the debt.

Oh, what great thanks I owe You, Who have shown me and all the faithful the good and right way to Your everlasting kingdom! Your life is our way and in Your holy patience we come nearer to You Who are our crown. Had You not gone before and taught us, who would have cared to follow? Alas, how many would have remained far behind, had they not before their eyes Your holy example! Behold, even we who have heard of Your many miracles and teachings are still lukewarm; what would happen if we did not have such light by which to follow You?

The Nineteenth Chapter

True Patience in Suffering

The Voice of Christ

What are you saying, My child? Think of My suffering and that of the saints, and cease complaining. You have not yet resisted to the shedding of

(Continued KEMPIS on page 26)

(Continued **KEMPIS** from page 25)

blood. What you suffer is very little compared with the great things they suffered who were so strongly tempted, so severely troubled, so tried and tormented in many ways. Well may you remember, therefore, the very painful woes of others, that you may bear your own little ones the more easily. And if they do not seem so small to you, examine if perhaps your impatience is not the cause of their apparent greatness; and whether they are great or small, try to bear them all patiently. The better you dispose yourself to suffer, the more wisely you act and the greater is the reward promised you. Thus you will suffer more easily if your mind and habits are diligently trained to it.

Do not say: "I cannot bear this from such a man, nor should I suffer things of this kind, for he has done me a great wrong. He has accused me of many things of which I never thought. However, from someone else I will gladly suffer as much as I think I should."

Such a thought is foolish, for it does not consider the virtue of patience or the One Who will reward it, but rather weighs the person and the offense committed. The man who will suffer only as much as seems good to him, who will accept suffering only from those from whom he is pleased to accept it, is not truly patient. For the truly patient man does not consider from whom the suffering comes, whether from a superior, an equal, or an inferior, whether from a good and holy person or from a perverse and unworthy one; but no matter how great an adversity befalls him, no matter how often it comes or from whom it comes, he accepts it gratefully from the hand of God, and counts it a great gain. For with God nothing that is suffered for His sake, no matter how small, can pass without reward. Be prepared for the fight, then, if you wish to gain the victory. Without struggle you cannot obtain the crown of patience, and if you refuse to suffer you are refusing the crown. But if you desire to be crowned, fight bravely and bear up patiently. Without labor there is no rest, and with-

out fighting, no victory.

The Disciple

O Lord, let that which seems naturally impossible to me become possible through Your grace. You know that I can suffer very little, and that I am quickly discouraged when any small adversity arises. Let the torment of tribulation suffered for Your name be pleasant and desirable to me, since to suffer and be troubled for Your sake is very beneficial for my soul.

The Twentieth Chapter

Confessing Our Weakness in the Miseries of Life

The Disciple

I will bring witness against myself to my injustice, and to You, O Lord, I will confess my weakness.

Often it is a small thing that makes me downcast and sad. I propose to act bravely, but when even a small temptation comes I find myself in great straits. Sometimes it is the merest trifle which gives rise to grievous temptations. When I think myself somewhat safe and when I am not expecting it, I frequently find myself almost overcome by a slight wind. Look, therefore, Lord, at my lowliness and frailty which You know so well. Have mercy on me and snatch me out of the mire that I may not be caught in it and may not remain forever utterly despondent.

That I am so prone to fall and so weak in resisting my passions oppresses me frequently and confounds me in Your sight. While I do not fully consent to them, still their assault is very troublesome and grievous to me, and it wearies me exceedingly thus to live in daily strife. Yet from the fact that abominable fancies rush in upon me much more easily than they leave, my weakness becomes clear to me.

Oh that You, most mighty God of Israel, zealous Lover of faithful souls,

would consider the labor and sorrow of Your servant, and assist him in all his undertakings! Strengthen me with heavenly courage lest the outer man, the miserable flesh, against which I shall be obliged to fight so long as I draw a breath in this wretched life and which is not yet subjected to the spirit, prevail and dominate me.

Alas! What sort of life is this, from which troubles and miseries are never absent, where all things are full of snares and enemies? For when one trouble or temptation leaves, another comes. Indeed, even while the first conflict is still raging, many others begin unexpectedly. How is it possible to love a life that has such great bitterness, that is subject to so many calamities and miseries? Indeed, how can it even be called life when it begets so many deaths and plagues? And yet, it is loved, and many seek their delight in it.

Many persons often blame the world for being false and vain, yet do not readily give it up because the desires of the flesh have such great power. Some things draw them to love the world, others make them despise it. The lust of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life lead to love, while the pains and miseries, which are the just consequences of those things, beget hatred and weariness of the world.

Vicious pleasure overcomes the soul that is given to the world. She thinks that there are delights beneath these thorns, because she has never seen or tasted the sweetness of God or the internal delight of virtue. They, on the other hand, who entirely despise the world and seek to live for God under the rule of holy discipline, are not ignorant of the divine sweetness promised to those who truly renounce the world. They see clearly how gravely the world errs, and in how many ways it deceives.

The Twenty-first Chapter

Above All Goods and All Gifts We Must Rest in God

(Continued **KEMPIS** on page 27)

(Continued KEMPIS from page 26)

The Disciple

Above all things and in all things, O my soul, rest always in God, for He is the everlasting rest of the saints.

Grant, most sweet and loving Jesus, that I may seek my repose in You above every creature; above all health and beauty; above every honor and glory; every power and dignity; above all knowledge and cleverness, all riches and arts, all joy and gladness; above all fame and praise, all sweetness and consolation; above every hope and promise, every merit and desire; above all the gifts and favors that You can give or pour down upon me; above all the joy and exultation that the mind can receive and feel; and finally, above the angels and archangels and all the heavenly host; above all things visible and invisible; and may I seek my repose in You above everything that is not You, my God.

For You, O Lord my God, are above all things the best. You alone are most high, You alone most powerful. You alone are most sufficient and most satisfying, You alone most sweet and consoling. You alone are most beautiful and loving, You alone most noble and glorious above all things. In You is every perfection that has been or ever will be. Therefore, whatever You give me besides Yourself, whatever You reveal to me concerning Yourself, and whatever You promise, is too small and insufficient when I do not see and fully enjoy You alone. For my heart cannot rest or be fully content until, rising above all gifts and every created thing, it rests in You.

Who, O most beloved Spouse, Jesus Christ, most pure Lover, Lord of all creation, who shall give me the wings of true liberty that I may fly to rest in You? When shall freedom be fully given me to see how sweet You are, O Lord, my God? When shall I recollect myself entirely in You, so that because of Your love I may feel, not myself, but You

alone above all sense and measure, in a manner known to none? But now I often lament and grieve over my unhappiness, for many evils befall me in this vale of miseries, often disturbing me, making me sad and overshadowing me, often hindering and distracting me, alluring and entangling me so that I neither have free access to You nor enjoy the sweet embraces which are ever ready for blessed souls. Let my sighs and the manifold desolation here on earth move You.

O Jesus, Splendor of eternal glory, Consolation of the pilgrim soul, with You my lips utter no sound and to You my silence speaks. How long will my Lord delay His coming? Let Him come to His poor servant and make him happy. Let Him put forth His hand and take this miserable creature from his anguish. Come, O come, for without You there will be no happy day or hour, because You are my happiness and without You my table is empty. I am wretched, as it were imprisoned and weighted down with fetters, until You fill me with the light of Your presence, restore me to liberty, and show me a friendly countenance. Let others seek instead of You whatever they will, but nothing pleases me or will please me but You, my God, my Hope, my everlasting Salvation. I will not be silent, I will not cease praying until Your grace returns to me and You speak inwardly to me, saying: "Behold, I am here. Lo, I have come to you because you have called Me. Your tears and the desire of your soul, your humility and contrition of heart have inclined Me and brought Me to you."

Lord, I have called You, and have desired You, and have been ready to spurn all things for Your sake. For You first spurred me on to seek You. May You be blessed, therefore, O Lord, for having shown this goodness to Your servant according to the multitude of Your mercies.

What more is there for Your servant to say to You unless, with his iniquity and vileness always in mind, he hum-

bles himself before You? Nothing among all the wonders of heaven and earth is like to You. Your works are exceedingly good, Your judgments true, and Your providence rules the whole universe. May You be praised and glorified, therefore, O Wisdom of the Father. Let my lips and my soul and all created things unite to praise and bless You.

The Twenty-Second Chapter

Remember the Innumerable Gifts of God

The Disciple

Open my heart, O Lord, to Your law and teach me to walk in the way of Your commandments. Let me understand Your will. Let me remember Your blessings -- all of them and each single one of them -- with great reverence and care so that henceforth I may return worthy thanks for them. I know that I am unable to give due thanks for even the least of Your gifts. I am unworthy of the benefits You have given me, and when I consider Your generosity my spirit faints away before its greatness. All that we have of soul and body, whatever we possess interiorly or exteriorly, by nature or by grace, are Your gifts and they proclaim Your goodness and mercy from which we have received all good things.

If one receives more and another less, yet all are Yours and without You nothing can be received. He who receives greater things cannot glory in his own merit or consider himself above others or behave insolently toward those who receive less. He who attributes less to himself and is the more humble and devout in returning thanks is indeed the greater and the better, while he who considers himself lower than all men and judges himself to be the least worthy, is the more fit to receive the greater blessing.

He, on the other hand, who has received fewer gifts should not be sad or impatient or envious of the richer man.

(Continued KEMPIS on page 28)

(Continued **KEMPIS** from page 27)

Instead he should turn his mind to You and offer You the greatest praise because You give so bountifully, so freely and willingly, without regard to persons. All things come from You; therefore, You are to be praised in all things. You know what is good for each of us; and why one should receive less and another more is not for us to judge, but for You Who have marked every man's merits.

Therefore, O Lord God, I consider it a great blessing not to have many things which human judgment holds praiseworthy and glorious, for one who realizes his own poverty and vileness should not be sad or downcast at it, but rather consoled and happy because You, O God, have chosen the poor, the humble, and the despised in this world to be Your friends and servants. The truth of this is witnessed by Your Apostles, whom You made princes over all the world. Yet they lived in this world without complaining, so humble and simple, so free from malice and deceit, that they were happy even to suffer reproach for Your name and to embrace with great affection that which the world abhors.

A man who loves You and recognizes Your benefits, therefore, should be gladdened by nothing so much as by Your will, by the good pleasure of Your eternal decree. With this he should be so contented and consoled that he would wish to be the least as others wish to be the greatest; that he would be as peaceful and satisfied in the last place as in the first, and as willing to be despised, unknown and forgotten, as to be honored by others and to have more fame than they. He should prefer Your will and the love of Your honor to all else, and it should comfort him more than all the benefits which have been, or will be, given him.

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THERE SHOULD BE DISGUST AT THAT WHICH SEPARATES THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE TRUE CHURCH

Consider very carefully the implications of this press release.

ADMISSION TO EUCHARIST BETWEEN CHALDEAN, ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF EAST

VATICAN CITY, OCT 25, 2001 (VIS) - Made public today were the "Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East," prepared by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in agreement with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

The document responds to the "great distress of many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful, in their motherland and in the diaspora, which impedes many of them (from leading) a normal sacramental life according to their own tradition, and in the ecumenical context of the bilateral dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, the request has been made to provide for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East."

"When necessity requires," the guidelines state, "Assyrian faithful are permitted to participate and to receive Holy Communion in a Chaldean celebration of the Holy Eucharist; in the same way, Chaldean faithful for whom it is physically and morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, are permitted to participate and to receive Holy Communion in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist."

"In both cases, Assyrian and Chaldean ministers celebrate the

Holy Eucharist according to the liturgical prescriptions of their own tradition."

The various Orthodox Jurisdictions and the Roman Jurisdiction are or can be much more flexible than this, but that is not what is disgusting.

What is disgusting is the implicit acknowledgment of mutual validity: Apostolic succession - Priesthood, Sacraments, and of necessity - *Dogma!* because one can not give the Eucharist (Holy Communion) to a heretic. What, therefore, is it that is keeping us apart?

Not one of us would even consider allowing a Protestant to receive the Sacred Eucharist for Protestants do not believe the bread and wine have been changed into God. They believe that at most it represents God, or in some manner is a re-enactment of the Last Supper.

But under certain circumstances members of the true Church can give the Sacred Eucharist to other members of the true Church who are separated by jurisdictional problems.

Reception of the Sacred Eucharist is being used as a sign of membership and therefore obedience to a particular Church Jurisdiction, and that is not a holy practice.

Unholy is everything concerned with the schisms which hold apart the different parts of The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Unholy is everything which continues to divide The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

And perhaps those who maintain those divisions are also unholy.

Reunification must happen quickly, primarily so Rome can regain that which was lost in the past forty years before it is too late.

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ALL SIN IS IDOLATRY AND IDOLATRY IS STUPID

Biblical proof that human life begins at the instant of conception is in the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, mother of Saint John the Forerunner (the Baptist). Jesus had just been conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, when Mary traveled a very short distance to visit Elizabeth, who was a few months pregnant. Saint John, in his mother’s womb, and able to be killed by abortion by today’s man made laws, recognized the just conceived Jesus Christ God in Mary’s womb, who was also able to be killed by abortion by today’s man made laws, and Saint John leapt for joy. All those who call themselves Christians, and who allow for abortion, are therefore liars, heretics, murderers, and very stupid, for the ability to recognize and be recognized can only be possessed by the living.

But this is not a new situation.

After Joshua died the Jews started worshipping Baal (who is Satan), idols, and other false gods. We think they were stupid, for we know there is only one true God, and we have ample reason to believe the ancient Jews also knew there is only one true God - the One Who lead their grand-parents out of Egypt.

So, why did the Jews worship Baal, idols, and other false gods? They worshiped Baal, idols, and other false gods because they wanted to sin. In actuality, every time anyone sins, the sinner is worshipping a false god. Sometimes they are worshipping Baal, sometimes an idol, and sometimes they are worshipping themselves.

If we lust we worship the object of our lust and the pleasure we anticipate and experience. If the object of our lust is a person physically present, we are worshipping someone whom we know is a creature and is not God, and we are worshipping a fleeting physical experience, instead of God. Lust, therefore, is

stupid.

If we get drunk on alcohol or drugs, we are worshipping the experience of induced by the drugs, and perhaps we are worshipping oblivion from problems. We worship this instead of God, who will always be here, while the experience induced by the alcohol or drugs will soon pass away as will the oblivion. Abusing alcohol and drugs, therefore, is stupid.

When use falsehoods usually it is to increase our self esteem or the esteem others have for us, or to gain an advantage over someone. Thus we are worshipping our self esteem, or the esteem others have for us, or the advantage we anticipate, instead of worshipping God. But we are not God, and we never will be God. The esteem we obtain is without foundation so it is worthless. And what ever advantage we actually do obtain will too pass away, while God will remain. So this too is therefore stupid.

When we neglect to worship God so that we can do something else, or even so that we can do nothing, we are giving up a relationship that will last for all eternity, for something which will last for a few minutes. Just like the Jews who worshiped images they had carved instead of worshipping the true God, neglecting to worship God is stupid.

Everything which is not at least related in some manner to worshipping God, is associated with something which is not permanent happiness. That means that everything, absolutely everything, which is not at least associated with or related to worshipping God, is stupid.

If we do not attempt to pervert this thought, it is possible to truthfully state that everything imaginable can be worship of God, or related to worship of God, if done in a Godly manner. By way of example, the most basic natural instinct may be sex, nourishment, or self preservation, or even something else. Sex as an expression of love in the loving relationship of a man and an woman joined in holy matrimony can lead both to a closer relationship with

God. But sex with a male or female prostitute, a friend, or the image in pornography, is idolatry of the other person and the anticipated and experienced transitory pleasure - which we know is stupid. Likewise nourishment enables us to do that which God desires, and gives pleasure to the palate in the process. But gluttony not only is worship of something which will not last, which is stupid; but it also will leave a bad taste in your mouth which will remove any memory of the good taste experienced while eating. And we know this is stupid.

In every instance where we choose sin instead of God, we are worshipping something other than God. This makes us unable to enter into union with God because we would always be straying from that union and would be bringing distraction and disruption into the God relationship. It makes us unable to enter into relationship with God because we ourselves, as sinners, are unable to focus on God and God alone - and that focus is required if we are to enter into union with God. It is like attempting to grasp a straw from amongst many straws without disturbing the other straws. This requires consecration if it is to be successful, as does a relationship with God.

Sin, therefore, not only is idolatry. It also is a distraction from God. And anything which interferes with establishing a good relationship with God, with being with God for all eternity, is stupid.

The most viable advice anyone can give, and which anyone can follow, advice which every good Priest and good person should give to himself very often, is: Don’t be stupid.

Ref: Cant. 2:8-14; Luke 1:39-47

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THE WONDERFULNESS OF GOD

One of the verses prayed on the Feast of the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus is from *Zacharias 9:17*. *“For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins?”*

And at the very beginning of the Introit for a Sunday soon following that feast we pray from *Psalms 26:1*. *“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?”* And again, from *Psalms 78:9* *“Help us, O God, our saviour: and for the glory of thy name, O Lord, deliver us: and forgive us our sins for thy name's sake: 78:10. Lest they should say among the Gentiles: Where is their God?”* Think about this . . . *Forgive us our sins, O Lord, lest the gentiles should at any time say, Where is their God?*

If we remember that corn refers not just to the grain that grows on a cob and is often eaten boiled and buttered, but also refers to all grain, we can understand that the corn of the elect is the bread of finest wheat. It is the Bread of Life - the Eucharist.

And even though we have made our souls so emaciated that they can be compared to people dying of starvation; with confession, absolution, and the nourishment of that most excellent gift, the Bread of Life, we can become virgins rising from the consecrated wine, the Blood of Christ.

Our culture thinks of virgins as being women who have not experienced sexual intercourse. But it applies to men as well.

So for all of us, no matter how sinful our lives have been, with confession, absolution, and the gift of the Sacred Eucharist; the wine, the Blood of Christ, will spring us forth as virgins.

In our lives here we can each be much more holy than we have ever been. It is

possible. We may fall and get dirty from time to time, but if we constantly seek cleansing, and seek the nourishment which strengthens us so that we may stand and not fall, we will become dirtier less and less often, and remain clean for longer and longer periods of time. We will be sinful less and less, and more and more holy.

Then, one day, we will experience our final cleansing at death, and attain perfect eternal happiness.

Of course this is not the reward which will be given to everyone. It is only the reward for those who truly follow Christ and not themselves. Remember, not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” will be saved, but only those who acknowledge Christ through their lives and not just their lips.

But just having this offer made to us by the One Whom we offend is an extraordinary gift. Since our accepting this offer is accomplished through God’s Grace, our very acceptance is also an extraordinary gift. When someone constantly hurts you, no matter how much you love them, your natural inclination is to avoid the hurt and at the same time (concurrent with that inclination) is the inclination (desire) to be with that person. Every time we sin we, in a very real way, hurt God. But God continues to make this offer to us, and then enables us to accept the offer. He does not even have an inclination to avoid us, and only permanently avoids us when we have permanently avoided Him in spiritual and physical death. But even then He does not hate us, still loves us, and still desires that we would be with Him even though that can not happen.

The wonderfulness of what God does for us is something which has no limits; not even limits imposed by the imagination. Remember that from Zacharias we know that from the wine which is the Blood of Christ, virgins will spring forth, and that we, both male and female, can become such virgins in the Blood of the Lamb? Well, it is also true that just as the Son of God was begotten

of Mary, the ever virgin, so too can new members of the Body of Christ be begotten of us as virgins in the Blood of the Lamb of God.

By our example and by our words, by our attitude and by our prayers, we will lead others to Christ, to realize His great love for us and to accept and reciprocate that love. We will rest our heads on his chest and hear His heart beat for us, and will love Him and lead others to likewise rest their heads and hear His heart beat for them . . . and they will love Him. In this manner will we, male as well as female, physically give birth to our own new brothers and sisters in Christ.

Who amongst the living in this life can say what is the greatest gift from God? No one. For though we may think we know, since we are not yet amongst the living in the next life, we have not yet experienced the length and breadth and depth and height. We can only know that the gifts of this life are gifts of service, while the gifts of the next life are gifts beyond our present ability to know.

The one thing which we can know, and which we can say in truthful knowledge, is that God is wonderful.

Ref: Eph. 3:8-19; Rom. 8:18-23; Luke 22:15-20; Luke 5:1-11

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(Continued CONTENTS from page 32)

WHAT DOES OUR SIN DO TO GOD WHO IS OUR GOOD NEIGHBOR, AND TO US Page 17

GIVING TESTIMONY OF CHRIST THROUGH GOD’S BREATH Our Lord Jesus Christ said, that when the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, the Holy Breath of Truth which comes from the God the Father, when He comes, that Holy Breath will give testimony of Christ, and we, the followers of Christ, will give testimony of Christ. Does this mean the Holy Ghost will talk about Jesus, or that we will talk about Jesus? Only if testimony is restricted to verbalization. Page 18

THE BREATH OF GOD *But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.* The Holy Ghost, The Holy Breath of God, has a multitude of effects in us. But He is the one who has effects in us. He has them in accordance with His will. Page 19

THE CONFESSIONS OF SAINT AUGUSTINE BOOK THREE CHAPTER IV - XI Page 20

IMITATION OF CHRIST By **Thomas a Kempis** BOOK THREE The Fourteenth Chapter - The Twenty-Second Chapter Page 24

THERE SHOULD BE DISGUST AT THAT WHICH SEPARATES THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE TRUE CHURCH Consider very carefully the implications of this press release. **ADMISSION TO EUCHARIST BETWEEN CHALDEAN, ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF EAST** Page 28

ALL SIN IS IDOLATRY AND IDOLATRY IS STUPID Page 29

THE WONDERFULNESS OF GOD Page 30

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(Continued COMMENTS from page 9)

should review the Apne Aap web site at: <http://www.apneaap.org/>

According to the web site, Apne Aap Women Worldwide (Apne Aap means self-help in Hindi) began as a community-based initiative of women in prostitution in the Khetwadi/ Kamatipura red light area of Mumbai in 1998. Twenty-two women in prostitution, who had worked with Emmy award-winning journalist Ruchira Gupta, to make a documentary “The Selling of Innocents,” decided to start this organization. Their aim was to lead the end of their own exploitation and prevent their sisters from being exploited through sex trafficking.

The headline screamed “2 U.S. Soldiers Die” in Iraq. The reader commented, “we had more people killed in New Orleans last night.”

Reunification of the Church: Back in 1961, while in New Orleans, Benedictos I, Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, called for reunification of the Church, saying, “The Orthodox Church wishes to see all churches united.” In 1964, he arranged the first meeting in five hundred years between leaders of the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church. Memory eternal in 1980 at age 91, but in 1982, the Ever Virgin Theotokos appeared to Mirna Nazour and with her Son has continued to appear to her calling for reunification. If this is not done by man, her Son will do it Himself. Once it was thought if God did the reunification Himself it would be by some overtly dramatic means. Perhaps those considering this possibility have been thinking too theatrically. The current state of the Roman Church, its change of its Divine Liturgy into a meaningless string of words, possible invalidation of the Sacraments as conducted in its new system, make some wonder whether or not there will be anything left with which to reunite. The traditional nationalistic antagonisms of the Orthodox, combined with the fracturing of Orthodox Jurisdictions in the Americas, make some shudder at the

force necessary to cause fusion or at very least, melding.

Genetically Playing God: Usually the genetically playing God stories focus on people who desire to have children who possess all of what are considered by society to be the classic positive physical attributes combined with massive intellects: tall, perfectly formed, modern movie actors and actresses with brains. (This is also known as wishful thinking).

But there also are individuals with “genetic defects” who desire to perpetuate their “defects”. And those without such “defects” who perceive potential use thereof.

It makes sense. If there are those who would kill their unborn baby because it has brown eyes instead of blue, it makes sense there will also be those who will kill their unborn baby because it does not have a cleft pallet.

If there are those who will change the genes in their child so that it will have some physical attribute, why should the physical attribute be limited to being tall - being real short could be a preference.

There also is usefulness: why limit manipulation to being super intelligent - having a few weak minded people around makes it easier to find people to harvest crops and clean the streets; or having personnel genetically designed to help reform prisoners or genetically designed parents who know how to properly guide and discipline their children - having a few Quasimodos around to scare the daylights out of miscreants could solve the problem.

Why, a whole new slave industry awaits!

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CONTENTS

~ YOUR REACTION TO THE INJURED IS A MEASURE ~ *From Metropolitan Archbishop Paul, S.S.B. To the flock entrusted into my care:* When you observe an injured person does your heart go out to them? If the injury is of the heart, do you wish you could mend their heart? Are you frustrated if you can not determine a means by which you can assist that person? Does the thought enter your mind, that you may have caused the injury? Does this possibility horrify you? Does your mind seek every possible avenue by which you can help the injured person, and discover prayer is the only known answer but you worry that your prayers will not be sufficient? Page 1

YOU ARE A GOOD MOTHER, A GOOD FATHER Who is the most perfect 'doer of the word', to slightly paraphrase Saint James? (*James 1:22*) The Blessed Ever Virgin Mary is the most perfect 'doer of the word'. Page 1

PUBLICATION NOTICE Page 2

WORLD WIDE WEB: Page 2

LETTERS (none) Page 2

ST. MARY MAGDALENE NEWS property for sale Page 4

COMMENTS ON SOME INDICATORS OF OUR TIMES Page 4

THE FACES OF MY FAILURES In Them I See The Face Of Christ Most Rev. Paul, S.S.B. Usually I write in the inclusive. This I write mainly in the first person that you may learn from it personally and internalize it personally. There are many who will have the opportunity to read this and will not. Their failure is their loss. The faces of my failures are constantly before me and the faces of your failures should be constantly before you as well. They should not be before us to drive us to despair, which can easily happen if one has a conscience. They should be before us to drive us to do better. . . . That person did not fail, even though that person crumbled. I failed that person and their face is constantly before me, reminding me of my failure and its terrible conse-

quences. Page 5

WE MUST JOIN WITH CHRIST AS PART OF THE SACRED ELEMENTS We must become part of Holy Communion. Have You Ever Seen A Lamb? In the original Sacrifice of Our Saviour there was but one grain of wheat and but one grape from the vineyard. Yet that one grain and that one grape, Jesus Christ, was sufficient for the salvation of all of mankind. Page 8

The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism Page 10

PRODUCTS Page 13

DON'T BE STUPID - WE ARE ALL SPECIAL, BUT NONE OF US IS GOD Page 15

THE FACE OF DIVINE LOVE IS A FACE IN AGONY AT THE PROSPECT OF REJECTION WHICH IS THE LOSS OF A SOUL Page 16

(Continued CONTENTS on page 31)

When any Bishop or Priest says that those who are pro abortion or pro choice should voluntarily abstain from receiving Holy Communion it is as if these same Clerics are saying the Devil should refrain from trying to tempt people, or should have refrained from promoting the torture and crucifixion of Jesus Christ, God. Such remarks are imbecilic. The Devil will always tempt people, always oppose God, and pro choice and pro abortion people must be forbidden to receive Holy Communion for their house is filthy and not fit to receive God.

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