



REUNION

Volume 20 No. 3

OF THE CHURCH

OF MAN WITH GOD September, 2010 A.D.

~ **DRAMATIC AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES** ~

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

I rarely write in the personal in this column but this topic requires the personal.

This may be the last time I use the above title, and I only use it on this occasion for the sake of formality.



**A CHURCH JURISDICTION
MUST HAVE TWO BISHOPS
AT THE VERY LEAST,
OTHERWISE IT WILL
CEASE TO EXIST**

Small Jurisdictions which have only one bishop must seek a bishop from outside its jurisdiction to consecrate another bishop. While this is not uncommon, it opens the requesting church jurisdiction to the request it reciprocate, without the ability to determine the worthiness of the person to be made bishop - a "quid pro quo".

If a jurisdiction has but one bishop, should he fall ill or die, the priest under his authority are unable to function since a priest may only function under the authority of a bishop.

While consecration of a bishop by just one other bishop is possible, it creates canonical problems and violates tradition. Consecration of a bishop usually is by one bishop consecrator and two co-consecrators, though just one co-consecrator is often acceptable.

Divine honor therefore requires no bishop abandon his jurisdiction without adequate provisions, and that a bishop who suddenly finds himself the only bishop of his jurisdiction immediately attempt to provide for his priest and laity.

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**THE DESIRABLE
NECESSITY OF THE HOLY
GHOST IN YOUR LIFE**

When we anticipate the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost we anticipate something different from manifestations of the Holy Ghost which occurred prior to Pentecost.

It is quite proper to think of the events of Great Flood and Noah, The Exodus and Moses, securing the Promised

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**PARAMETERS OF "LOST"
AND THEREFORE OF
"FOUND**

Well . . . a few of them.

Rejoicing because that which had been lost has been found is a concept all normal people are able to comprehend. All normal people are also able to comprehend the desire to find or reacquire that which has been lost, and likewise understand and relate to the various mental and physical activities in which a person will engage to find or reacquire that which they have lost.

The value which a person places on

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For many years I have been seriously concerned with how to protect the clergy and the laity of our jurisdiction, to provide for their ecclesiastical needs upon the event of my becoming incapacitated or my death. This concern has been not just for those in The United States, but also for those in Guatemala, Mexico, and elsewhere.

That serious concern has now been resolved.

Archbishop Andres, now Archimandrite Andres, and Bishop Fernando, now Archimandrite Michael, were instrumental in bringing the jurisdiction under and within the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The reception states in part, "the OCCG which was received in its entirety, including their former clergy, seminarians, lay ministers, catechists and affiliated membership into the canonical

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

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Fr. Lee Mc Colloster,
Publisher

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 Holy Innocents Orthodox Church, is Holy Innocents Orthodox Church BBS (HIOC BBS):

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

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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 HIOC BBS**

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

PRAYERS

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

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

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

BIBLE-DAY

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

SERMONS

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

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

STUDIES

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

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

ONE-BODY

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

REU_PUB

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

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

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Saint Basil - The Basilian Fathers**

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[automatic subscription page](#)

This will bring you to a page entitled:

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InterNet Mailing List Support**

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

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

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

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

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as appropriate. Send separate messages for each subscription.

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family of the Orthodox Church."

The then Archbishop, now Archimandrite Andres, and I worked together in the same Church jurisdiction, as both Priests and as Bishops, for almost twenty years, he being one of my co-consecrators, those of us who reside in The United States therefore being at least "affiliated membership".

As background of which some may not be aware, in March of 2006, I formally resigned and retired as Superior General of The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil, and Metropolitan Primate of The Orthodox Catholic Church of the Americas, in writing to the then Archbishop Andres, at the time of the consecration of then Bishop Fernando. Together they exercised all ability and authority, with the corresponding responsibility, regarding the Church, as it pertained to me, the other clergy, and the laity, simply by being the majority of the Synod. I remained an Archbishop, but the only reason I maintained to the public, a leadership role, was at the request of Archbishop Andres.

It would have been simple and easy to abandon any semblance or even the slightest indication of being in the or a leadership position, but due to the request of Archbishop Andres, and having observed first hand the results and effects of the Superior General / Primate abandoning his position without adequate time to prepare for his replacement, I continued to

maintain a public presence.

The new, current, relationship and situation automatically places Archimandrite Andres (and Archimandrite Michael) in the position of total responsibility for me, the other clergy, and the laity.

It is my intention therefore to no longer actively function as a bishop, nor to receive donations on behalf of the jurisdiction. Not that we ever received many donations.

But also, please know that I am delighted and happy with this, for we are now secure under and within the Ecumenical Patriarchate. I know Archimandrite Andres has prayed for this, as have I.

You may not know, so I will straight forwardly state, I am not in good health. I do not expect to die within the next few minutes, but I would not be surprised if that would happen. I may easily live for many years, but, again, I would be surprised if that would happen.

My knowing that everyone for whom I have had any level of responsibility is now received as clergy or laity, respectively, under and within the Ecumenical Patriarchate, removes a great worry from my soul, mind, and heart.

If you look closely you will observe that this issue of REUNION newsletter does not have the jurisdiction, association, or organizations references and

headings which have been standard since approximately the year 1998. Prior to the year 1998, REUNION was simply my publication in association with Holy Innocents Orthodox Church, which is my parish. REUNION will now return to that status.

As a brief historical or background note: Within two years of my ordination as a priest I was made a Mitered Archpriest (Mitered Archimandrite), Chancellor, and Synodal Notary. In 1998, with the abrupt resignation of the Metropolitan / Superior General, the then Archbishop Andres and the Synod decided to consecrate me Bishop, then install me in the position of Archbishop, Metropolitan, and Superior General. I accepted the position and task because I was advised by the then Archbishop Andres that it was necessary.

In my time in this position I have provided as many of the liturgical texts as I could, there having been no single book in English for use on the Altar for the Western or Gregorian Rite. I also provided many other liturgical texts which were needed by our clergy. My duties, of course, encompassed much more than that, and I can truthfully state I have faithfully attempted to fulfill my responsibilities.

At the end of the year 2001, two years after being requested to accept the position I now happily, totally, relinquish and vacate, I suffered several heart attacks in

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one day. Between February and May of 2002, I underwent several cardiovascular procedures, including two open heart surgeries. The last open heart surgery was to close a pseudoaneurysm of the exterior wall of my heart which had ruptured, the blood being temporarily held by the pericardial sack. In plain language, a hole as big as a man's thumb opened in the exterior wall of my heart and had the sack around my heart not held the blood for a few days I would have died in forty-five seconds. A piece of synthetic fabric was grafted over the hole. I also have lost a significant portion of the heart itself - it is simply gone.

The amount of energy I have is virtually nil. What once required a few minutes or an hour of my attention may require several days, or even weeks. This letter to you has required several days for me to compose.

All should therefore understand the current developments are something for which I have prayed for two reasons: First, to provide for our clergy and laity; Second, that I may return as much as possible to simply being a priest.

I hope to continue publishing REUNION, simply as a publication of Holy Innocents Orthodox Church. But it has been in regular publication for twenty years. Perhaps after the next issue it will be time to close it down. We will examine that subject at a later date.

Our web site will also undergo a multitude of changes. I hope to retain all of the material available on the web site, and in the message areas, and files areas. But the references to jurisdiction will gradually be removed. This will require time to accomplish because the Internet web pages are written in "hypertext code" requiring more time to make changes than simply deleting or adding words.

I have been honored to ordain priest, consecrate bishop, Baptize and Chrismate babies and converts, sacramentally marry, pray Divine Liturgy and provide the Sacred Eucharist, anoint the living, dying, and dead, teach, instruct converts, and even exercise the sad honor of burying the dead including one whom I ordained.

Now I look forward to a period, however brief or long, of praying Divine Liturgy, contemplative prayer, engaging in further study of dogma and theology, occasionally writing, and most important and delightful in my mind, of seeking holiness, to operate divinely.

Known and acknowledged validity in America in the lineage of the Russian Orthodox Church is a tumultuous matter. Being under and within the Ecumenical Patriarchate brings ecclesiastical peace.

I sign my name below as a Bishop only for the purpose of this communication.

May you find protection in the Lord Jesus Christ, and may His grace be

with you and all who are yours,



+ Paul, S.S.B.

God, please help me love You

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Land, the activities of Elias and other Prophets, the Incarnation, the Baptism of Jesus, and similar events, as being wrought through or by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost has always been with us, involved in the daily lives of men and the events of human history.

But Pentecost heralded something different: different, expanded, and multifaceted manifestations and energies of the Holy Ghost applicable and available to every human and every group of people who and which prepare themselves to receive the Holy Ghost and to think and act in conformity with God.

One need not even be Baptized to receive the Holy Ghost, as is evident by the reception and functioning of the Holy Ghost, as related in the Acts of the Apostles, in people who were Christians but had not yet been Baptized. In those instanced disciples were immediately dispatched to Baptize those people, and to more properly teach them the Gospel.

When salvation was made available to mankind, direct interaction with, reception of, and actual acquisition of the Holy Ghost became possible for every human being. The Holy Ghost also became the principal operative Person of the Blessed Trinity as relates to the human race once salvation was made available to mankind by Jesus Christ. And at Pentecost the Holy Ghost made His initial major manifestation to mankind and has pervaded mankind ever since; manifesting His energies most consistently and strongly in association with those who most strongly and consistently operate divinely - who think and act in accordance with God's instructions, will, and desires, who think and act in accordance with Faith - and increasing His manifestations in a manner correlating to the measure to which an individual increases his operating divinely.

One actually increases his acquisition of the Holy Ghost by increasing the measure to which he operates divinely, and the measure to which a person increases his operating divinely increases his ability to increase his acquisition of the Holy Ghost.

But those who seek to acquire the Holy Ghost for their own purposes will find acquisition of the Holy Ghost impossible.

When a person attempts to operate divinely because that is the path to eternal salvation, because Faith creates an impetus which is accepted, that person at least has the beginning of a good and proper start. But when a person attempts to operate divinely because so doing is attempting to do what God wants simply because it is God's desire and that person wishes to do what God desires simply because God desires it, when a person attempts to operate divinely because that is the holy thing to do, because Charity prompts and the person accepts that prompt, that person invites and activates participation by the Holy Ghost in their life and their existence in ever increasing measure.

And if you wish to love God as much as it is possible for a creature to love God, then having the Holy Ghost participate in your life in ever increasing measure is a very good thing.

It also results in one being in a very favorable position to attain eternal salvation - and that also is a very good thing.

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

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that which they have lost often is accurately indicated by the efforts in which that person engages to reacquire that which they have lost.

It may be that one is unable to find the original that has been lost but that a replacement or a substitute is acceptable, or that a replacement or a substitute is not acceptable.

Two other factors, amongst many, which are intrinsic in seeking that which has been lost are: One must have possessed or acquired "it"; One must be aware that "it" is lost.

It also is not uncommon for a person to believe they have something when in actuality they do not have it, and may have never had it. And it also is not uncommon for someone to have lost something without being aware they have lost it, or ever being aware that they had it.

There also is that which we are designed to have, to possess, to exercise, which we do not have, possess, or are unable to exercise. This may be so because we have not accepted it or because it has been withheld from us. Often when that to which we have a right has been withheld from us the withholding has been done unjustly, even immorally.

It also is possible to lose a part of something without losing the whole.

There also are measures which we take to assist us in not losing something.

These concepts may be applied to matters of all levels of importance, providing insight in some instances, and diversion or a form of entertainment in other instances.

Apply these common sense concepts to your every day life, observe and consider how you apply these concepts to your every day life, how they function in your every day life. In so doing you may awaken a new, better, more realistic, more accurate perception of yourself, of others; and of the world, the here and now, and the hereafter.

By way of example:

Many people believe they are "saved". This is a short hand term meaning they believe they have attained eternal salvation. They believe they have something, but their belief is in error - for one does not attain eternal salvation until death, or one's personal judgment by Christ; and of those who die or who experience Christ's judgment a significant percentage do not receive

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eternal salvation - they go to hell.

That one may also lose just a portion of something occurs every time someone loses coins in the sofa cushions. They probably have not lost all of their money, just some of their loose change.

Some things are susceptible to being portioned, as is money. Holiness itself is subject to diminution and to increase, and thus most individuals are at different "levels" of holiness even during the course of one day. But other things are not susceptible to being portioned or having various levels. Honor is one such which is not susceptible to variation - one either is honourable or one is not.

There are those who believe humans are evil by nature. While that belief has some merit, it paints with too broad a brush. Human nature is a fallen nature. Before its fall human nature was able to perceive God and to interact with God much more easily than after its fall. But every human is created with the ability to perceive God's energies, and to interact with God through God's energies. Every human is created with an intuitive acknowledgment of God, of God's superiority to everyone and everything, of God's omnipotence, of everything including human's being subject to God, and of God's ability to and His actual and continual enforcement of that authority and subjection.

The wise person will use every tool possible to establish or when necessary to reestablish a good relationship with God. The wise person will examine their own situation to ascertain what is lacking in their relationship with God and seek to complete what is missing. The metaphysical tools which have been presented here are extremely useful in such a quest. While they are not dogma, not dogmatic, nor theology, nor theological, they are easy to use, useful, thought process tools.

Through use of these tools, should

someone realize they are a lost sheep, if they are wise they will seek to be found by the Good Shepherd, simultaneously seeking to avoid both the wolf and the thief. They will seek what they have lost, and in obtaining what they had lost they, all of Heaven, and God will rejoice.

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

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THE FALLACY OF IDOLIZING THE "NATURAL" MAN

Or, if one desires to be politically correct, the "natural" person

The philosophy of idolizing the human unchanged by civilization, of the human "in communion with nature" un-effected by anything that does not naturally occur in "nature", and especially un-effected by any form of technology or of societal influence, has steadily gained adherents and followers, especially in the period between the early nineteenth century and today.

This philosophy leads its adherents to discount or disregard the miracles of Christ as not being supernatural in origin, but, rather, as either being fables or as evidence that Christ knew a secret means of manipulating nature, which means of course that such manipulation is available to everyone who is able to discover the means. But for the most part such people simply disregard the miracles of Christ, and promote what they term "the natural man" or, for the more politically correct, "humans in the natural state".

Such people idolized the American Indian, especially the plains Indians - or should we say, "Native Americans"? - and the Indian Nations of the American Northeast. These various tribes were considered to be noble savages, for they lived in harmony with nature and were not influenced by the restraints imposed by a Christian, civilized, society. When spreading this philosophy its adherents would refer to the influence of civilization, carefully omitting any reference to Christianity

because most of those whom they wished to influence were, and are, or consider themselves to be, Christians.

Today we see the same idolization applied to what are variously termed "indigenous peoples", and "aboriginals", these generally being cultures which lack significant industrialization, and similar societies.

But examine this idolization of the "Natural Man" carefully - and remember it is an idolization and not an idealization. Especially examine the concept of the "Natural Man" as promoted by adherents of this and similar philosophies. According to its proponents, the "Natural Man" is not restrained by conventional and especially Christian morality; particularly and especially is he or she not restrained sexually, nor is he or she restrained in the pursuit of any pleasure available in "nature" or in any manner associated with any natural function - or even ability - of the human body.

The proponents of this philosophy not only are in gross error, not only are liars, but also are rather stupid and totally illogical.

First, briefly examine a few realities regarding the "Noble Savage":

Attempt to seduce or to rape his daughter and you might find yourself examining an ant nest from ground level, or possibly examining a camp fire being kindled in your stomach or with the pertinent parts of your body being used for kindling. The "Noble Savage" can easily make Vlad the Impaler seem to be the embodiment of kindness.

In good weather and game conditions he was reasonably but only rarely well nourished. In adverse weather, especially winter, he died of starvation and malnourishment.

Next, briefly examine various realities regarding those born into today's

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civilized society or societies.

Those who advocate bring up children in the “natural state” seem to forget that children are born ignorant, illiterate, unable to communicate - unable to either issue communication, or to receive communication, and so totally self focused as to exclude all and everyone else; these being just a few of the more obvious deficiencies or inabilities. A child which remains in the “natural state” quickly dies.

If one proceeds from the “natural state” to that of the “Noble Savage” one quickly discovers recognition of the need to communicate, the need to teach and eradicate ignorance, the need to teach literacy as known in the instant or subject culture, and amazingly the need and desirability of teaching and embedding in the child’s personality those moral values practiced by the child’s culture.

When we allow slogans, platitudes, appearances, or “feel good” sayings and concepts, to take the place of, supplant, or replace logic, the use of our God given intellect, or our analytical abilities, we are diminished and we become less able to deal with or work in reality.

Any level of examination of any or any accumulation of aspects or factors of the universe reveals the necessity of their being a God, there being but one God, of God being unknowable by any other than God except to the extent God reveals and explains God to those who are not God.

Any level of examination of any, or any factors of any, or any, accumulation of systems of belief in God, loosely known as religions, reveals the reality that Christianity is the true and accurate religion.

And examination of Christianity, its history, and current condition, establishes the reality that the Orthodox Church and its various Jurisdictions

exclusively assure adherence to true Christianity.

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

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LOVE UPHOLDS FREE WILL

Love is such an unusual, forceful, and unique “thing” that the wise person will or will at the very least attempt to begin and to end every day by telling God they love Him, and attempting to make that statement reality.

Love is much more than an emotion, more than a logical progression or expression, more than a force, certainly much more than a mere emotion, and more than a quality, characteristic, or even a way of life.

While it can not be said that love is the exclusive source of everything, or even the source of life, it is the source of everything, including life - for it is the foundation of the reason for God’s having created and the operative factor of His creating, remembering that God creates in the eternal now.

Theologians, philosophers, poets, historians, and the common, everyday man, have attempted to describe, define, and clarify love, what love is, what is love, and that for which love is responsible.

Love has been qualified as the essential element of the Divine Nature, but what information does that impart as to comprehending, defining, or explaining love? Or the Deity, for that matter.

Therein lies not the problem, but the understanding of love.

There are no extraneous or superfluous aspects to the Divine Nature, nor is any one or combination of aspects more or less essential to the Divine Nature than any other one or combination of aspects. The Divine Nature is the ultimate in simplicity of essentials - love

being such an essential.

Man, being made in the image and likeness of God, therefore possesses the potential for love. When men attempt to explain or define love, man is attempting to explain or define man’s experience of a Divine essential; actually man is then attempting to explain the Divine Nature or an aspect of the Divine Nature. Experience has taught us that it is best to simply follow God’s explanations and descriptions of Himself, and to comprehend them as best we individually are able, seeking guidance in this from the sources which God has established.

Love, being a Divine Essential, we have been endowed with the ability to both receive and to give, is the activator of free will, the expression of free will, and the exercise of free will - always remembering there are consequences concurrent with the exercise and even the lack of exercise of free will - for even the lack of exercise of free will often is an exercise of free will.

Love promotes the exercise of free will, hoping that such exercise will be in accordance with and lead to union with the Divinity. Free will, after all, is a hallmark of the Divine Nature with which angels and man have been endowed, along with love - angels in their angelic nature, man in his human nature made in the image and likeness of God.. Incidentally, God has not informed us as to whether or not angels are also made in God’s image and likeness. Interesting, is it not?

To the extent one attempts to control another or others in a manner which *inappropriately* impinges, restricts, or denies free will or its exercise, to that extent the controller not only lacks love, and lacks holiness, but also embraces, practices, exercises, and is, *evil*. One should not confuse situations or matters such as parental control of a minor especially in training the minor to be good, or the establishment of those societal laws which are human applications

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of divine law and instructions - which mostly promote the refraining of committing evil - with control of another in a manner which is inappropriate. Such impingement of free will is in accordance with the divine parameters, for do not those who exercise their free will immorally suffer the divine consequences thereof?

But those who attempt to impinge, control, or deny another's exercise of free will seldom so do in an attempt to establish moral or spiritual benefits. They so do in an attempt to exercise power, control, and to act evilly towards those whom they would deny the exercise of free will.

God, the ultimate in power, exercises that power as relates to humans and angels in a multitude of ways, including that of in application of reward. Those who seek to operate divinely, to love God, receive from God the reward of eternal joy and eternal union with God. Those who seek to ignore, transgress, or otherwise oppose God, receive from God the reward of eternal unhappiness and eternal severance from God.

The dictators, enslavers, controllers, totalitarians, robbers, thieves, murderers, abusers of authority, and other practitioners of evil who improperly impinge the free will of others, in relation to the measure they so do, lack love.

It is normal for a member of the military to impose his life to protect a fellow military member, or members, and this is normal because of the love which has been built amongst the members of his unit, branch of service, and forces.

But the self seeking, and those who seek to exercise power and in so doing seek to impinge unjustly or immorally on the free will of others, will never possess, exhibit, or exercise the honor of such member of the military, or such members of the communion of saints, for they lack love.

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

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COMPARING YOUR MORALITY TO ANOTHER'S IS USUALLY ILL ADVISED

It would truly be an extraordinary person who could *truthfully* state, "Lord God I thank Thee that I am not an adulterer, thief, murderer, liar, unjust, and that I do regularly give alms, assist the poor and needy, fast, and pray." Notice, our imaginary, extraordinary person does not state, "like other men," nor does he or she compare themselves with other people. That person would truly be extraordinary if all those things were true of that person, and even more nearly unique if that person did not compare themselves with the sinfulness of others. But what would catapult such a person into the rarest of heights, perhaps into uniqueness, would be if such a person then said, "But O' Lord God, I remain a sinner. I beg you to have mercy upon me, and help me to become holy."

People have a strong inclination to compare themselves with other people. That inclination covers every subject, every aspect of life. Very often our satisfaction with a possession or a relationship is determined in part by how well what we have compares with what others have. People will compare their employment, where they live, mode of transportation, clothing or attire, spouse - especially how attractive or handsome their spouse is, children, pets, and even their apparent goodness or holiness. Their satisfaction often is determined by their perspective of the comparison. That not only is foolish and irrelevant, but also, while it may be determinative of their satisfaction, is immaterial as to the viability of what ever it is that is being compared.

If your spouse is not as attractive as the spouse of someone else, but that other spouse is not faithful but yours is, and that other spouse is not loving but yours is, you would be a fool to desire the other spouse or desire your spouse were

more like that other spouse.

The reality regarding your spouse is determined solely by your spouse, and, of course, by you.

Similarly, your goodness, holiness, sinfulness, and place or status in eternity, is solely dependant on and determined by you, you alone in your response to God's assistance, without any comparison to any other human being. In short, God does not grade on a bell curve, or any curve. God judges you and each of us individually, without argument, discussion, or comparison, according to His own very merciful and just Self - one may be inclined to use the term standards instead of Self, but Divine mercy and Divine Justice are Divine energies and it is in these energies, unique to God, and in the Divine Essence, that we are judged.

We actually have a better opportunity of attaining eternal joys in union with God through being judged by God rather than by anyone else because God obviously factors in what might be called "postmortem purification" of which we are assured by Saint Peter and by Saint Paul when they refer to their own deaths being followed by a brief period of purification prior to receiving their eternal reward of union with God.

While our holiness and sinfulness are assessed by God without comparison to others, comparison may sometimes be a useful tool to us if we use that tool sparingly in a manner which assists us to determine those areas wherein we should attempt self improvement, self correction; those aspects of our lives which we should attempt to remove in part or in their entirety, and those aspects of our lives which we should attempt to strengthen.

But we can not determine our holiness or our sinfulness by comparing ourselves to another. What good does it do us to be able to state we never did what the Boogey Man did? God judges the Boogey Man and judges you, separately.

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism

Q. 1122. Was any special promise made in favor of the united prayers of two or more persons?

A. A special promise was made in favor of the united prayers of two or more persons when Our Lord said: "Where there are two or three gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." Therefore, the united prayers of a congregation, sodality or family, and, above all, the public prayers of the whole Church, have great influence with God. We should join in public prayers out of true devotion, and not from habit, or, worse, to display our piety.

Q. 1123. What is the most suitable place for prayer?

A. The most suitable place for prayer is in the Church - the house of prayer - made holy by special blessings and, above all, by the Real Presence of Jesus dwelling in the Tabernacle. Still, Our Lord exhorts us to pray also in secret, for His Father, who seeth in secret, will repay us.

Q. 1124 For what should we pray?

A. We should pray (1) For ourselves, for the blessings of soul and body that we may be devoted servants of God; (2) for the Church, for all spiritual and temporal wants, that the true faith may be everywhere known and professed; (3) for our relatives, friends and benefactors, particularly for those we may in any way have injured; (4) for all men, for the protection of the good and conversion of the wicked, that virtue may flourish and vice disappear; (5) for our spiritual rulers, our Patriarchs, Primates, our bishops, priests and religious communities, that they may faithfully perform their sacred duties; (6) for our country and temporal rulers, that they may use their power for the good of their subjects and for the honor and glory of God.

LESSON TWENTY-NINTH:

On the Commandments of God

Q. 1125. Is it enough to belong to God's Church in order to be saved?

A. It is not enough to belong to the Church in order to be saved, but we must also keep the Commandments of God and of the Church.

Q. 1126. Are not the commandments of the Church also commandments of God?

A. The commandments of the Church are also commandments of God, for they are made by His authority and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost; nevertheless, the Church can change or abolish its own commandments, while it cannot change or abolish the commandments given directly by God Himself.

Q. 1127. Which are the Commandments that contain the whole law of God?

A. The Commandments which contain the whole law of God are these two:
1st. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; 2nd. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Q. 1128. Why do these two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God?

A. These two Commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the whole law of God because all the other Commandments are given either to help us to keep these two, or to direct us how to shun what is opposed to them.

Q. 1129. Explain further how the two commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the teaching of the whole ten commandments.

A. The two commandments of the love of God and of our neighbor contain the teaching of the whole ten commandments because the first three of the ten commandments refer to God and oblige us to worship Him alone, respect His

name and serve Him as He wills, and these things we will do if we love Him; secondly, the last seven of the ten commandments refer to our neighbor and forbid us to injure him in body, soul, goods or reputation, and if we love him we will do him no injury in any of these, but, on the contrary, aid him as far as we can.

Q. 1130. Which are the Commandments of God?

A. The Commandments of God are these ten:

1st. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them. 2nd. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. 3rd. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day. 4th. Honor thy father and thy mother. 5th. Thou shalt not kill. 6th. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 7th. Thou shalt not steal. 8th. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 9th. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. 10th. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Q. 1131. What does the first commandment mean by a "graven thing" or "the likeness of anything" in heaven, in the earth or in the waters?

A. The first commandment means by a "graven thing" or "the likeness of anything" in heaven, in the earth or in the waters, the statue, picture or image of any creature in heaven or of any animal on land or in water intended for an idol and to be worshipped as a god.

Q. 1132. Who gave the Ten Commandments?

A. God Himself gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and Christ our Lord confirmed them.

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CHILDREN'S PAGE

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Q. 1133. How and when were the Commandments give to Moses?

A. The Commandments, written on two tables of stone, were given to Moses in the midst of fire and smoke, thunder and lightning, from which God spoke to him on the mountain, about fifty days after the Israelites were delivered from the bondage of Egypt and while they were on their journey through the desert to the Promised Land.

Q. 1134. What do we mean when we say Christ confirmed the Commandments?

A. When we say Christ confirmed the Commandments we mean that He strongly approved them, and gave us by His teaching a fuller and clearer knowledge of their meaning and importance.

Q. 1135. Was anyone obliged to keep the Commandments before they were given to Moses?

A. All persons, from the beginning of the world, were obliged to keep the Commandments, for it was always sinful to blaspheme God, murder, steal or violate any of the Commandments, though they were not written till the time of Moses.

Q. 1136. How many kinds of laws had the Jews before the coming of Our Lord?

A. Before the coming of Our Lord the Jews had three kinds of laws:
1st. Civil laws, regulating the affairs of their nation; 2nd. Ceremonial laws, governing their worship in the temple; 3rd. Moral laws, guiding their religious belief and actions.

Q. 1137. To which of these laws did the Ten Commandments belong?

A. The Ten Commandments belong to the moral law, because they are a compendium or short account of what we must do in order to save our souls; just as the Apostles' Creed is a compendium of what we must believe.

Q. 1138. When did the civil and ceremonial laws of the Jews cease to exist?

A. The civil laws of the Jews ceased to exist when the Jewish people, shortly before the coming of Christ, ceased to be an independent nation. The ceremonial laws ceased to exist when the Jewish religion ceased to be the true religion; that is, when Christ established the Christian religion, of which the Jewish religion was only a figure or promise.

Q. 1139. Why were not also the moral laws of the Jews abolished when the Christian religion was established?

A. The moral laws of the Jews could not be abolished by the establishment of the Christian religion because they regard truth and virtue and have been revealed by God, and whatever God has revealed as true must be always true, and whatever He has condemned as bad in itself must be always bad.

**LESSON THIRTIETH:
On the First Commandment**

Q. 1140. What is the first Commandment?

A. The first Commandment is: I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt not have strange gods before me.

Q. 1141. What does the commandment mean by "strange gods"?

A. By strange gods the commandment means idols or false gods, which the Israelites frequently worshipped when, through their sins, they had abandoned the true God.

Q. 1142. How may we, in a sense, worship strange gods?

A. We, in a sense, may worship strange gods by giving up the salvation of our souls for wealth, honors, society, worldly pleasures, etc., so that we would offend God, renounce our faith or give up the practice of our religion for their sake.

Q. 1143. How does the first Commandment help us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God?

A. The first Commandment helps us to keep the great Commandment of the love of God because it commands us to adore God alone.

Q. 1144. How do we adore God?

A. We adore God by faith, hope, and charity, by prayer and sacrifice.

Q. 1145. By what prayers do we adore God?

A. We adore God by all our prayers, but in particular by the public prayers of the Church, and, above all, by the Holy Sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy (Mass).

Q. 1146. How may the first Commandment be broken?

A. The first Commandment may be broken by giving to a creature the honor which belongs to God alone; by false worship; and by attributing to a creature a perfection which belongs to God alone.

Q. 1147. What is the honor which belongs to God alone?

A. The honor which belongs to God alone is a divine honor, in which we offer Him sacrifice, incense or prayer, solely for His own sake and for His own glory. To give such honor to any creature, however holy, would be idolatry.

Q. 1148. How do we offer God false worship?

A. We offer God false worship by rejecting the religion He has instituted and following one pleasing to ourselves, with a form of worship He has never authorized, approved or sanctioned.

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What good does it do us to be able to state we do some thing which is good which Holy Neighbor does not do, when God judges Holy Neighbor and judges you separately?

While each of us must be concerned not only with our own eternal salvation but also with the eternal salvation of every other person, and this may on occasion require our assessing the moral status of another, such assessment serves only to assist us in determining in what manner we may be able to assist the other person in improving their moral life. Invariably, that other person will only rarely request our assistance. One should be filled with fear if someone makes such a request of them. Again, invariably, the best methods of assisting others in their moral lives is by praying for them specifically, and for their general moral success, as well as that they overcome temptation and sin as well as obstacles to holiness; combined with our own good, our own holy, example.

These activities on our own part will also serve to assist us in avoiding sin and attaining holiness. They will assist us in operating divinely and thus in attaining eternal salvation, and quite possibly some extent of happiness in God here in this life - even though such happiness may be precarious - as well as complete happiness with God in the next life.

But anyone who even begins to think they need no improvement, or very little improvement, especially because of their position in life, in the Church, and in comparison with known, slimy, sinners, may well be sealing their own doom in eternal damnation. It therefore is best to never compare your moral status with that of another, except as a measure of your own need for improvement.

Ref: 1 Cor. 12:2-11, Luke 18:9-14

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MIRACLES: JESUS, AND OTHERS

A miracle can validly be considered as, basically, an event which violates or is contrary to the laws of nature, physics, chemistry, or something similar, for which there is and can be no explanation other than the event being at the direction and will of God.

The devil often seems to work miracles, but his works are not true miracles for they are at best merely a manipulation of what exists, and though the devil is very strong and powerful, he is not capable of working miracles. The devil can, with God's permission, block a person's ability to hear, but he has not made that person deaf. He, again with God's permission or, in some instances, at the invitation of the person themselves, can possess a human and make their body appear to do impossible things, but it is only an appearance and the possessed person is not doing those things - the devil is doing them.

When God works a miracle, be it directly or through one of us, the situation is completely different from the fake miracles of the devil.

God works miracles out of love for us and in an expression of mercy to us.

The miracles Christ worked served to validate His teaching. The miracles were each an explicit statement that what Christ taught was true, and that He had the right to teach what He taught because He is God and God has that right.

The miracles the Apostles and Disciples worked were also each an explicit statement that what they taught was true, and that they had the right to teach what they taught because they derived that authority from God, and that what they taught was in conformity with what Christ taught and with God's will.

Miracles should not be confused with the mysteries of Christ, though many - perhaps all - of the mysteries of Christ

were also miracles. The Incarnation - the Conception of Christ in the womb of the Ever Virgin Mary by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost - is a miracle, and it also is a mystery. What is this overshadowing? How is it possible for a Virgin to give birth and remain Ever Virgin? The answers are far beyond this subject, have been well examined, and that examination is available to the curious. The Baptism of Christ is a mystery accompanied by the miracle of God the Father speaking and the Holy Ghost appearing in the form of a dove. Part of the mystery has been lost to the modern times because of lack of familiarity with ancient mystical beliefs and symbolism common through all of the earth. Water, especially sweet water, in every place on Earth, has been considered to be a means of purification, but there was held to be a danger in using it because water also was believed to be sometimes under the domain of evil spirits, the devil, the great dragon, or an evil monster. Therefore one ran a risk in purifying themselves in water, and exercised caution. In being Baptized Christ crushed any spiritual evil that wished to lurk in the water, and rendered it fit without special blessing to be used to receive individuals into the Body of Christ - giving each such individual the opportunity to attain eternal salvation through reception of the other Sacraments and their grace which enables one to operate divinely. With special blessings water becomes a sacramental, an instrument to oppose evil and to foster holiness - and in those special blessings the water is specifically exorcised.

But enough of mysteries, as interesting as they are.

When Christ wrought His first public miracle it was at the wedding at Cana, at the beginning of His public life but not in conjunction with His having given an overt teaching and therefore it could be said to have been premature. But it was at the bequest of His mother, it declared the Sacramental nature of marriage, and it gave a clarion call to

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the whole world of the presence of God made Man - Jesus Christ. For it is impossible to change water into wine - but Christ did it.

Jesus worked miracles excessively when He was in the presence of at least one person whose heart was open to His teachings, to the dogma He presented. He preferred that there were many such people when He wrought miracles. And He refused to work miracles when in the presence of those who were of hearts closed to His dogma, to truth. He especially refused to work miracles when in the presence of those whose hearts were closed to God and divine truth, who were self seeking, and who desired to witness a miracle so they could attack some aspect of it. Remember the man He cured on the Sabbath, and the thoughts of the Jews condemning Him because He worked that miracle on the Sabbath? He worked that miracle because the man and his friends believed in Christ, were open to receive His dogma, and as an opportunity to teach a lesson to the Pharisees, the Jews, and others of like mind - a lesson which many of them ignored.

The Apostles and Disciples most often worked miracles almost in passing. While walking Saint Peter's shadow would fall on the sick and cure them.

Even today miracles continue to occur. And each time they occur they confirm that God has declared something in conjunction with that miracle.

That is one of the reasons oil continues to flow from the Icon of Soufanieh (which is the Icon of Our Lady of Kazan), in Damascus, Syria - near the house of Ananias where Saint Paul was converted. To confirm the message that unity of the Church is both desired and required by Christ, the message being continually delivered to Myrna Nazzour by the Ever Virgin Mary.

The preachers who appear on television, claiming to work miracles of healing, of obtaining money or wealth - usu-

ally they attempt to obtain your money -, of being able to impart and implant the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, are doing what their master the devil does. They are lying, deceiving, and attempting to lead you astray from the path to eternal salvation established by Christ. They are trying to have or make you believe they are working miracles as a means of validating their teachings, which are, on the part of the preachers, often designed to place your money in their pockets, and on the part of the devil designed to place your soul in Hell.

If what appears to be a miracle is in conjunction with anything, especially any teaching, which is contrary to the established dogma of the true Church, to the teachings of Christ, it is not a miracle but rather is a sham.

A true miracle will often be in conjunction with an application of dogmatic truth which has been or become neglected or ignored in some manner, or in some specific circumstance, and is being brought to our attention by God so that we will reform ourselves into conformity with the Divine Will and instructions.

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

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MODERN HERODIAN VICTIMS

When those who govern forget or ignore morality, forget or ignore God is preeminent, whether those who govern be in the secular world, business world, or any other realm including the religious world, they wreck havoc and destruction.

What difference is there between the elder Herod who murdered the Holy Innocents in his seeking to murder Christ, and the judges, legislators, executive government officials, and bureaucrats of every government of today that condones, allows, promotes, or fails to oppose abortion? There is none, and generically, the eternal damnation one would expect for the murder of the Holy Innocents would also be expected for those who unrepentantly murder through or fail to oppose murder through abortion, including abortive so called "contraceptives".

The elder Herod murdered seeking to maintain his worldly position.

The younger Herod murdered Saint John because Saint John truthfully admonished Herod for marrying Herodias, who was the wife of Herod's brother Philip, and likewise admonished Herodias. Herod apparently got drunk at his own birthday party, and the daughter of Herodias danced for Herod - apparently igniting Herod's lust. Herod promised the daughter whatever she desired. The daughter very dutifully consulted with her mother, and at her mother's suggestion, requested the head of Saint John on a dish. Herod, not wishing to renege on his word and promise, knowing it was a murderous transgression of justice, complied with the request.

There is no difference between Herod's granting a request he knew was totally immoral and unjust, and today's government officials granting the

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immoral requests made of them by their own immoral desires or those of others.

But it is not just government officials who grant immoral requests.

Every religion founded on ignoring the sanctity of marriage, such as the Anglican Church - the Church of England, the Episcopal Church, and the Episcopal Communion - and their leaders are Herod's granting immoral requests. The Church of England was founded on granting and granted the immoral marriage requests of King Henry VIII, and later granted the demands that contraceptives and abortion be declared morally permissible. That so called church again attacked the sanctity of marriage, and the actual natural order, by approving homosexual and lesbian ceremonies which they call marriages. It further attacked the foundations of religion by attacking the priesthood which is entrusted with dogmatic purity, by ordaining as priests and as bishops: women, lesbians, and homosexuals, some of them being in these sham marriages.

Other so called religions recruited members from both the Roman Catholic Church and the various Orthodox Catholic Churches, teaching Sacramental Confession and Absolution are not necessary, preying on the natural inclination to be embarrassed regarding one's own sins. Assemblies of God especially recruited Roman Catholics beginning in the 1960's, and continuing, to today, teaching one need confess his sins to no man, and that no man should be called father but only God should be called father - intentionally mis-citing and mis-quoting Sacred Scripture.

Today even in the true church there are priests and bishops who practice gross immorality, teach that various of the aforementioned immoralities are permissible, that any wrong committed will be forgiven automatically by God. Some go so far as to teach that these

favorite sins are not immoral, that Christ is not really present in the Eucharist but merely represented, and that the Royal Priesthood of the Laity is able to do anything which the ordained Priest is able to do.

Perhaps some of these do their evil because they seek to maintain what ever power they think they possess; others to curry favor; others to gain something; but all primarily do evil, whether it be in religion, government, business, organizations, society, or even in solitude, because they are evil.

There is a great difference between those who sin, and fight against their own sins, and those who permit or promote sin and thereby embrace sin and therefore embrace evil. The former, with persistence, may well attain eternal salvation with the help of God in God's love. The latter, with persistence, may well attain the eternal damnation which is the result of what they seek.

In the process of their attaining eternal damnation, those betrayers of humankind inevitably leave in their wake the victims of their evil, the Holy Innocents and Saint Johns of today. One need not be murdered to be a victim of these evil people. Their victims include: the unjustly taxed; the underpaid; those damaged as a result of the immoral form of pursuit of profits; those damaged as a result of the immoral form of pursuit of unearned employment benefits; those improperly deprived of employment; the racially, religiously, ethnically, gender based improperly discriminated against - remember there is such a thing as proper discrimination: neither Will Smith nor Martha Stewart should play the lead in the George Washington story or the Simon Bolivar story. Their victims also may include those who benefit from the intentional evil of these officials.

Many people express a desire to understand why evil persists, why it can not be stamped out permanently once and forever.

Defeat of evil must begin for each of us within each of us. Even should we attain the virtually impossible, and eradicate evil from ourselves, we would continue to meet it in others for there will always be those who chose to fulfill their own desires even at the immoral expense of others.

This is a continuing battle, a continuing war, which every true follower of Christ must be prepared to wage and fight, for the duration of their life on Earth, their life in this world.

However, those who are inclined to react to evil with violence must carefully weigh their reaction to evil to insure their reaction meets with the moral requirements God has established. These requirements are set forth in the dogmatic proclamations of the Church God established, through true Ecumenical Councils of the entire Church in its Apostolic Succession.

But success against evil, be it evil from officials of government, religion, business, organizations, or others, requires not just reaction against evil, but active pursuit to eradicate it.

Success against evil requires active, readily known, opposition to evil in its various forms, and our unceasing demand it be eradicated by those with the power, authority, and ability to eradicate evil in its various forms and appearances.

It also requires we strive to imitate Saint John in his adherence to God, to the ways of God, and to love of God above all others and all else.

And when we are dead it will be up to the next generation to do likewise, until the blessed event of the Second Coming of Christ.

Ref: Jer. 1:17-19, Mark 6:17-29

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WHY BEGIN LIFE IN CHRIST ANEW

Every morning when we awaken we have the opportunity to begin life in Christ anew. Every evening as we go to sleep we have the opportunity to begin life in Christ anew. As we perceive an emergency or potentially difficult situation approaching, during that situation, and after that situation is complete, we have opportunities to begin life in Christ anew.

We each also have the opportunity to begin life in Christ anew at every instant of our life, though for some reason it seems the resolutions we make at the beginning of the day are more firmly begun.

Why would or should anyone desire to begin life in Christ anew?

Even those who intentionally and conscientiously live or attempt to live life in Christ consistently fail to live life in Christ even in the midst of their successfully living life in Christ. Since the successful consistently fail, those of us who are only marginally successful, or not very successful, or unsuccessful, as well as the successful, need to begin life in Christ anew, and to do so constantly.

Prudence dictates we should always have in the forefront of our thoughts the fact that we will reap what we sow. If we sow only in the flesh, in the things of this world, that is all we will reap. Since this world is very transitory, very temporary, if we sow only in this world, what we reap will last only a little time. What we will receive in the spiritual world, the true permanent world, will not just be lack of anything good, but will be evil which correlates with the evil we have done and the good we have omitted, or perhaps the good we have neglected. It is impossible to sow evil in the spiritual world for God cast evil out and into a special place He created for the Devil and the Devil's followers. That place is named Hell. When one attempts to sow evil in the spiritual world, it is sown in the world of the flesh, and

the harvest made somewhat in the world of the flesh but fully made in Hell.

Therefore, if one is to sow in the spiritual world, what is sown is seeds of good. The harvest may be partially made in the world of the flesh just as some of the harvest of evil may be made in the world of the flesh. But the harvest of good that was sown is made in the permanent spiritual world of God.

The wise individual therefore attempts to live life in Christ, for such a life is a life of good, of Godly permanence.

If the attempt to live life in Christ is made only so as to avoid eternal suffering, at least the attempt is made. And the avoidance of eternal suffering is amongst the most strong inducements to living life in Christ.

One of the most cherished realities is in the attainment of living life in Christ because of Christ, because of God, because of God's goodness to us, for the sake of God, in response to God, with the element of avoiding eternal suffering greatly diminished or even not even considered - not even a factor. There probably are many individuals who attain such perfection of love of and for God, but most of us do not and do not know any such individuals. But we can imagine such a state, and it is possible to attain such a state even if we really do not have any concept as to what such a state must be like. From the perspective of the ordinary individual, that state of existence is similar to being a person reading *Ivanhoe*. *Ivanhoe's* struggles to attain his goals are matters with which most persons can identify, but what is one's life like when the struggles are successful, the goals attained, and pleasantries of life secured? Only those who live the life *Ivanhoe* attained, and only those who live the life of God's Love, know what that living is like. It is impossible for those who do not live that life to comprehend that life.

Intellect and emotions, guided by empirical observation of the happiness of

those who live the life of God's Love, demand we acknowledge the superiority of that life.

Since that life obviously is a superior life, only the foolish or the stupid reject that life if they have the ability to attain that life. Since we all have the ability to attain that life, if we are not working on attaining that life, or if we have fallen away from attempting to attain that life, we should begin life in Christ anew. Those who do not are, quite simply, foolish and stupid.

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

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WHAT IS HOLY?

When you wish to obtain something it is a good idea to understand and to have a good concept of what it is you wish to obtain. Sometimes obtaining a firm concept of what you desire will re-focus your goal.

If you think you want to be rich think carefully about that desire and then decide whether it is rich you wish to become, or is it the life style of the rich you desire, or perhaps it is the security which wealth provides that you desire, or perhaps all of these. We have some concept of these things and therefore have the ability to sort through our desires and fashion a course of action which will assist us in obtaining the goal we seek.

We all, at least those of us who have attained some level of wisdom, want to go to Heaven. But we really do not have a viable concept of Heaven for who can describe the indescribable, who can know the unknowable. What we do know about Heaven is that it is God's place and therefore is the place and status of eternal and unimaginable happiness reserved for those who are holy.

And so we have the question: Just what is holiness?

There are some really good clinical and theological definitions of holiness, beginning with the classic, "the state of being holy," but of what use is that for one who desires to obtain that status? Humans require examples and models if they are to grasp certain types of concepts. Holiness and any concept which has anything to do with God are chief amongst those concepts for which humans require examples and models so that they may be best grasped.

We can begin by knowing holiness requires one be good, but holiness is so much more than simply being good - is it not?

Is holiness partially attitude, or is it that holiness imparts a certain attitude to the

possessor? The holy person does not seek to place himself before all others or even before anyone - he does not seek acclaim and celebrity for their own sake but he may use them for the good he can work if he possesses them.

Does holiness excite goodness so that one does good or is holiness simply a form of common sense? It is common sense to rescue an animal you own and need even if the requirement occurs on the day God commanded we not work. In modern concept, it is common sense to preserve a machine you need if it will be irreparably damaged if you do not take the preservation action immediately, even if it is the day which God commanded we keep as a day of rest and of worship of God.

What about those who refuse to do anything other than engage in prayer and prayerful discussion and contemplation of God on the Lord's Day? If they observe a little old lady fall down in the street on the way to church and she can not get back up, is it holy to ignore her because assisting her would require they stop their prayer and their contemplation of God? We can state with the greatest of certainty that holiness requires we promptly assist the little old lady and extend that assistance to include comforting her.

When the holy person contemplates himself he acknowledges he is a failure in all that is worth being successful, in all matters spiritual. But he also knows that if one were to plot the course of his life, even though there is constant divergence off course, the main plot of his course of life is towards God. But this main plot of life being towards God does not mean a person is holy nor does it mean that person will attain eternal salvation. It simply indicates that person is aware of what the proper course of his life should be and that he more often than not is "pointed in the right direction".

There are two forms of holiness: the holiness of God; the holiness of the human creature.

In the holiness of God, holiness is God but God is more than holiness. God is holy but He is more than holy.

In the holiness of the human creature, the more like God the greater the holiness. The more a human thinks like God, does or does not do things for the reasons God would do or not do them, the more holy is that human.

Holiness does not include emulation of God because it is the right thing to do. It includes emulation of God for the sake of God.

Simplicity is an aspect of holiness because holiness is an element, it is a conglomeration stripped down to its essential, it is an energy of God and therefore is incapable of definition even though we know what it is - or, better, we think we know what it is, somewhat. The reason we can not adequately define holiness is because it is impossible to define any aspect of God, much less God, just as it is impossible to know God to any extent greater than that to which He has made Himself known. But we do have the ability to exclude concepts from applying to God and to His energies and we do have the ability to give examples which do apply to God and to His energies.

So, be holy, even though no human can really express what that is or means.

Ref: Eph. 3:13-21, Luke 14:1-11

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**SAINT DISMAS - AN
EXAMPLE OF ACTING IN
FAITH**

Before he enters through the Iconostat to pray Divine Liturgy the Priest prays the Prayer Before the Ikon of Christ, which states: *“We reverence thy spotless ikon, O gracious Lord, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God: for of thine own good will thou wast pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh, that thou mightest deliver from bondage to the enemy those whom thou hadst fashioned. Wherefore, we cry aloud unto thee: thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, for thou didst come to save the world.”* Consider the word, bondage.

Both the good thief and the bad thief bound themselves to the Devil. God constantly sought to cut them free. Even as He hung dying on the cross Jesus Christ God reached out to cut their bindings and free them from the Devil. The bad thief, Gestas, unrepentant and defiant, sought to move away from being freed from the Devil, and as each binding was cut he tied it again even tighter and stronger. Saint Dismas, the good thief, finding his bindings to the Devil to have been cut through to a bare thread by Christ, freed himself from servitude to the Devil by coming to the defense of Jesus Christ God, and thus accepted eternal salvation.

At the end of their lives God held out the same offer of salvation to Gestas and to Saint Dismas. Gestas had lead a life which made him predisposed to reject that offer. Saint Dismas had lead a life which made him predisposed to accept that offer. The offer can be rejected simply by failing to accept it. But most often the offer of eternal salvation is rejected by the proposed recipient’s attempt to modify the offer, negotiate the offer, or make a conditional acceptance of the offer.

Modification of the offer often involves the false Protestant doctrine that, Faith is the believing Christ is God and does

not include as a caveat the necessity of acting and thinking in accordance with that belief. This false doctrine equates belief with Faith, and it is false because belief is not Faith. The Devil believes, but does nothing harmonious with Faith, nothing harmonious to God, and therefore has no Faith just as those Protestants who promote this false doctrine do not have Faith. Acting in accordance with belief is a form of predisposition. Acting in accordance with belief, acting in Faith, is the only means by which a predisposition to accept eternal salvation can be created. If one is not accustomed to so acting, one will not be predisposed to act, and acceptance of salvation requires an act.

Saint Dismas did not “luck out”. Saint Dismas was predisposed to accept eternal salvation because he desired forgiveness, sought forgiveness, had lead a life which while immersed in sin, desired with some small measure of success to overcome sin. When forgiveness and its accompanying eternal salvation were offered at the close of his life, Saint Dismas, because of his lifetime struggle to attain goodness and holiness - even though many would deem it a failed struggle - was predisposed to accept and actually did accept.

Gestas added a requirement to the offer for forgiveness and eternal salvation. He required God *do* everything. God does not *do* everything. We must *do*; we must *act*. But then, perhaps if God had done everything for Gestas, he may well have even then rejected Christ.

Ref: Is. 59:1-4, Luke 23:39-43

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**SEEK GOD’S MERCY
WHILST YOU ARE ABLE**

Psalm 136:1 says, *“Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept; when we remembered Thee, O Sion.”* When a person has lost the good things which that person had it is too late to enjoy, utilize, preserve, protect, strengthen, and increase them. It may be possible to enjoy the memory of that which has been lost, but the memory often brings sorrow at the loss. The only thing which remains possible is to give thanks for having had that which is now lost, but giving thanks often also brings sorrow for the loss.

It is extremely important to remember and to fully realize that, **while we are yet alive there is nothing of value which we have lost which we can not regain.** It is only at death that we are no longer able to regain that of value which we have lost. Of course, if what we value is of the material world, we are already spiritually dead and only need physical death to complete the death process.

However, while we are still alive we can always pray, *“All that Thou hast done to us, O Lord, Thou hast done in true judgment; because we have sinned against Thee, and we have not obeyed Thy commandments: but give glory to Thy name, and deal with us according to the multitude of Thy mercy.”* (Daniel)

Many, many people ignore God’s mercy during the time they are able to obtain God’s mercy. It is the wise person who understands the will of God not just in doing what is holy and avoiding what is evil, but in seeking God’s mercy while one is able to obtain that mercy - while one is alive in body, soul, and spirit - while one is mentally competent and living in this world.

There is a “but” which applies to this. It is the “but” of acknowledging one’s own evil, the necessity of correcting one’s own evil, of seeking forgiveness

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for one's own evil, of obtaining strength to overcome one's inclination to one's own evil; combined with the necessity of one's seeking to become holy, one's becoming holy, maintaining holiness in one's own self, and strengthening and increasing one's own holiness.

Just because a person avoids sinful acts and thoughts does not mean that person is holy. Atheists often are amongst those who most studiously avoid acts and thoughts which are classified as sinful, but atheists are not holy. **A person who is holy acts and thinks in accordance with God's will.** The more fully and completely a person acts and thinks in a manner which is in concert with God, the more holy the person. While we are alive in this world we have the ability to seek God's mercy, regain that of value which we have lost, and continually increase our measure of that which is of value.

If instead of a ruler whose son was at the point of death, we substitute a person whose own soul was at the point of death, we can clearly see the strength of God's drive and desire that we seek His mercy. But just as the ruler had to seek God's intervention to save the life of his son, so too must we seek God's merciful intervention in our sinful lives. Just as it is impossible to even think that once his son was cured the ruler gave his son poison to drink, so too should it be impossible to imagine once we have received God's mercy that we would willingly return to sin. We can easily imagine the ruler assisting his son to regain his strength by exercise which began at a gentle level and gradually increased in intensity over time as the son was able to benefit from the exercise. Can we imagine ourselves becoming increasingly strong in spirit, in holiness, without spiritual exertion and exercise?

We are able to do these things while we live in this physical world. When we die, whatever spiritual deficiencies exist in us remain. If those deficiencies are of a great magnitude, our souls are dead and we go to hell. If those deficiencies

are not sufficient to have killed our souls, then those deficiencies, those impurities of spirit, must be removed; we must be purified. Once purified we will be with God for all eternity, but it would be much more pleasant for us if we were advanced in the purification process long before we die.

Ref: Eph. 5:15-21, John 4:46-53, 3:29-35; Ps. 136:1

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CAESAR CAN ONLY IGNORE GOD UNTIL THE TIME HE MEETS GOD

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Ps. 132:1) It is natural and normal for people to seek commonality, to seek some form of unity. Problems arise when individuals or a group seek to impose their will on others. There is a belief that if we can agree on a universal set of guidelines we will be able to attain some level of unity. But as soon as a set of guidelines is agreed upon someone or some group attempts to make certain exceptions for themselves, to gain an advantage for themselves, to maximize the contributions of others while minimizing their own contributions.

There is only one set of guidelines which are totally impartial, do not allow any one individual or group to attain an advantage, do not discriminate against anyone, do not allow the taking advantage of any one or any group, and which are not merely guidelines but in actuality are absolutes. These are the absolutes established by God and they apply to every aspect of life and existence. Nothing is left uncovered, nothing is left out, everything is addressed.

The guidelines of Caesar and the Divine edicts often are exactly the same. But just because they are exactly the same in one instance or situation or even at one particular instant in time does not mean the continuity is

permanent. Caesar changes his guidelines as he desires and each new Caesar issues his own guidelines which he or she changes as he or she desires. But the Divine standards are permanently fixed, never change, they are never wrong, they are always correct. Caesar's edicts are for Caesar's benefit. God's edicts are reality which always benefit those who follow them while those who ignore or transgress them always suffer harm.

It is impossible to compromise, negotiate, or find some middle or common ground between Caesar and God when their requirements do not coincide or match exactly. The followers of God should therefore not even begin to attempt to negotiate standards with the followers of Caesar except to attempt to raise the followers of Caesar to the Divine standards. In those situations the followers of God must not relinquish even the slightest hint of a Divine standard; not even one dot over a single letter "i", or one comma, or even the shadow of a Divine concept, for as soon as even the shadow of a Divine concept is altered God's desires have been abandoned.

The followers of God should also always avoid any smugness or attitude of moral superiority. God's instructions are so very clear that anyone who desires to follow them is easily able to ascertain what they are. But knowing what they are is not the same as the "doing thereof". Despite the knowing, no matter how well one knows God's requirements, no one except God, the Ever Virgin Mary, and those actually now in heaven, ever completely and perfectly follow God's will.

There are numerous situations wherein overt opposition to Caesar is either not practical or is impossible. We *are* able to privately remain steadfast to God. In some countries Caesar has the ability for force people to engage in evil. In such situations each individual must suffer what ever Caesar decides to inflict upon that individual rather than

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participate in evil. Escape if one can, suffer if one must. In countries where freedom of expression and of religion are guaranteed by the founding laws of a country we have the expectation of being able to at least express and personally practice adherence to the Divine standards. But even in countries where freedom of expression and of religion are basic rights, Caesar has the ability to take money from us under the pretense and guise of taxation and to use that money for evil purposes.

We can refuse to be accomplices with Caesar when Caesar decides to engage in immorality. In fact, if we are to be true to God we must refuse to be accomplices with Caesar when Caesar decides to engage in immorality. Unfortunately, when Caesar decides to take our money from us through the disguise of taxation or the use of valid taxation, and then use that money for immoral purposes, we do not have the ability to withhold that money. Caesar is able to simply take it.

Often we are cursed with a new Caesar who informs us he intends to take wealth from those who have worked hard for it and give that wealth to those who have made the decision to live as parasites, and in the process give some small measure of assistance to those who have been unfortunate and are unable to assist themselves. The reason those who are unable to assist themselves will only receive a small measure of that wealth is that there already exist provisions to render assistance to such individuals - in the USA. The newest Caesar has also informed us he intends to have unborn babies killed so their stem cells may be used for experimentation even though science informs us stem cell research may easily be conducted using stem cells readily available from sources which do not require murder. He has also informed us he intends to expand the laws which allow murder of unborn children, and engage in practices which include the murder by starvation and exposure of children who survive

abortion. The new Caesar has informed us he intends to use our money which he acquires through taxation, for these purposes.

Each such new Caesar ignores God. But each new Caesar will only be able to ignore God until such time as he meets God.

Ref: Phil. 1:6-11, Mat. 22:15-21

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**A MEANS OF
“CORRECTING”
THOUGHTS AND DEEDS
MISGUIDED BY THE PER-
CEPTIONS OF THE
FALLEN SENSES**

Because before their original sin Adam and Eve were able to perceive true reality through their senses, they were not deceived by their senses perceiving something to be warm, fuzzy, nice, cuddly, bright and shiny, good, and holy, when it actually was not. Their original sin therefore was based in their intellect and not based in a misinterpretation of reality through faulty senses.

If we remember that our *fallen* nature is not able to perceive the true reality human nature was able to perceive before the fall, we will be able to better comprehend why we are attracted to that which we think is good or beneficial to or for us, but which turns out to actually be not good or beneficial to or for us.

We could respond to this imperfect ability to perceive through the senses by rejecting everything that seems to be warm, fuzzy, nice, cuddly, bright and shiny, good, and holy, thinking it is not. But that would be foolish for some of what we perceive actually is warm, fuzzy, nice, cuddly, bright and shiny, good, and holy. And some of what appears to be cold, harsh, sharp, dangerous, and evil, actually is, while some of it actually is warm, fuzzy, nice, cuddly, bright and shiny, good, and holy.

We could decide to live as hermits, sev-

ering ourselves from the world, in order to avoid error. But that would be to a desecration of the vocation of being a hermit, for a proper hermit practices that vocation so-as-to become closer to God, and to be able to better assist others to become closer to God. Very often a hermit will in later years re-introduce him or her self into society so-as-to be able to assist others with the wisdom he or she has gained while in seclusion with God. But if a person lives the life of a hermit so-as-to run away from the world and its problems, without including the desire to grow closer to God and attain some measure of holiness, then they have buried their God given talents and do not give God an increase. That is not a good thing to do.

Utilizing our senses and ability to perceive must therefore follow a different course. We must combine another naturally innate faculty or ability, that of the intellect, with what we perceive through our senses, when we assess something, someone, or a course of action or belief.

We can use fame and acclaim as an example of blending of what we perceive with out intellect in manners which produce either faulty or good processes, conduct, and results. We can then apply this example to ourselves, and may also be able to persuade others of the viability of this process thus assisting them to avoid evil and attain holiness.

The example is quite simple.

If you seek the approval of a superior or of anyone and gain fame in the process, is that person really someone whose praise is worth receiving? Is what you have to do worth the recognition received, and worth receiving recognition from that person? If you are a member of Congress and the method by which you are able to receive recognition from the President is by voting for federal funding of abortions, if you wish to get to heaven, the process by which you receive recognition from the President is not worth the recognition, and if the President is pro-abortion his recogni-

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tion is worthless.

Any warm and fuzzy feeling you may receive as a result of such Presidential recognition will be disclosed by your intellect as worthless.

The same example process holds true for everything, whether it be that the fish that got away was four feet long when it really was four inches long, or that you are really not a "good old boy" blue collar worker but actually a member of management who likes to go bowling, eat pizza, and drink beer.

It also hold true for the prosecutor who wins a capital case conviction against some derelict who was accused of rape and murder, when the prosecutor either did not attempt to ascertain the true guilt or innocence of the accused, or actually went so-far-as to convict someone he had reason to believe was actually innocent. The reasoning used that after all, the accused is a derelict and therefore of no account, is part and parcel of the warm and fuzzy feeling anticipated and attained through the victory of convicting someone and having them sentenced to death. All of that acclaim is, when measured by the intellect, totally worthless.

It therefore becomes obvious that to properly function, the intellect must be morally educated - and that means true, God dictated, morality, and not some substitute developed by morally warped individuals.

Two of our strongest impulses, after self preservation and procreation, are for recognition, and love - be it to be loved, or to love, or both.

If we are to gain control of these four we must so do through a concert of what we perceive through our senses and our true moral intellect. And a lot of prayer. Perhaps our good example, and prayer, will give the evil prosecutor type of person the impulse to amend their ways as well.

Ref: Eph. 3:13-21, Luke 14:1-11

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COMMON-SENSE, ONE OF THE MOST NEGLECTED SPIRITUAL TOOLS, as are common courtesy and their siblings.

If we measure our lives using as the measure the letter of God's law we will always be wanting, our spiritual account ledger will always be in the red with a negative balance, we will always have an abundance of sin and an insignificance of holiness.

If we measure our lives using as the measure the *spirit* of God's law we have the potential for our deficiencies not to be as horrible because within the spirit of the law is the measure of our desire to live in accordance with God's will, our attempts to live in accordance with God's will, the level of stability of consistency of our intentional attempts to live in accordance with God's will, the intensity and consistency of our sorrow at and for our failures so-to-do, the level of the foundation of that sorrow in fear of hell, the level of the foundation of that sorrow in its hurting God, disappointing God, and our continuing unworthiness, and, most importantly for it is the activating agent of the Spirit of the Law, God's mercy.

We know when we stay within the *letter* of the law because we are able to observe the hard boundaries. If we have cultivated common-sense, common courtesy, and their siblings, we know when we are within the *spirit* of the law because we experience a form of peace different from any other form of peace.

When we transgress the *letter* of the law we know it with certain knowledge. But when we transgress the *spirit* of the law, if we have cultivated common-sense, common courtesy, and their siblings, among the things we experience is discomfort - an unsettling discomfort that is persistent.

It is that discomfort combined with that special form of peace, that guide us within the spirit of the law. As an exam-

ple, if there is a government official, or a supervisor at your place of employment, who does things which harm you, things which are immoral, a very natural reaction to that person would be hope that they lose their position, or even under some very adverse circumstances, that they die. Some might even pray that the person lose their position, or die. But one who is attuned to the spirit of the law would pray that the person change their ways, gain the proper moral perspective, and live and act in accordance with Christ's teachings.

One may speak rough wishes against someone who harms others but if the speaker is attuned to the spirit of God's law those spoken expressions wishing harsh treatment are merely expressions of frustration that the person who is the object of the expression continues in malicious behavior.

This frustration is the same frustration every parent experiences when their child acts as though bereft of any semblance of common-sense.

And that frustration is the same frustration expressed by Jesus Christ God when he asked, "Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger."

Of course, our Lord then did something which we should learn to emulate, for He told the Samaritan, "Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole."

Our Lord did not condemn to hell the nine who did not return and thank Him. He left the door open. Likewise, we should support those who do right, who live within the spirit of the law - including ourselves. And we should pray that those who ignore God's will with turn from their path which leads to destruction - and of course, that includes praying for ourselves.

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

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**WHEN THERE IS
DISSENTION OR
DISAGREEMENT.**

Being of one mind, but Whose? What would Jesus do?

We occasionally (once one could say often, but in today’s culture it is, “occasionally”) hear the quote from Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians, “*I beg of Evodia and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind.*” But in our culture the end of that phrase often is omitted. The quote is made in support of individuals coming to their own agreement and resolution of differences. But when the end of that sentence is included as written by Saint Paul, it quickly becomes obvious that each person in a disagreement is to put aside their own opinion and do what Jesus would do, for that sentence as written by Saint Paul states, “*I beg of Evodia and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord.*”

We should seek not so much to know and to do what Jesus would do, as we should seek to be in such accord and harmony with Jesus, with God, that we act and think in that harmony. We should be each our own individual note in the harmony which is lead by Jesus. This maintains our individual flavor instead of our mechanically acting in accordance with a set of rules. It provides us each with the ability to exercise the creativity God has instilled as an aspect of each human. We each thereby exercise the free will and talents which God has given to us in a harmonious union with each Person of the Blessed Trinity, which means we each are in harmony with God.

However, one must always be conscious of God’s leadership, so that one can avoid dissention, and when there is disagreement, resolve the disagreement in a Divine harmony.

Very often there will be disagreement between and amongst humans and each person involved in the disagreement will be morally and dogmatically correct. It is even possible that all the

different positions will be equal in all aspects; that one is not better than another; that all are “best”.

In such a situation the harmony of God is the only resolution of any difficulty.

Today’s culture ridicules the concept expressed in the question, “What would Jesus do?” It ridicules every aspect of the question: the very concept of anyone being concerned with what Jesus would do, the thought that anyone could know what Jesus would do, and even the suggestion that Jesus is someone with whom anyone should be concerned much less His teachings and His morality. All are ridiculed. Only when something Jesus taught can be twisted into supporting immorality is any credence paid to Him by today’s culture.

That is the reason the world of today has innumerable fit and attractive bodies encompassing dead minds and souls.

The soul that has experienced a constant discharge of grace out of it does not reach out to Christ seeking healing and a replenishment of that life sustaining essence if it - the soul - has supplanted or replaced the focus of its delight with that which delights the flesh or with that which is intellectually or spiritually in opposition to God.

A dead soul does not perceive its own death, nor the illness or death of another soul, as being illness or death. It recognizes its own death, and the illness or death of another soul, as being the proper state. But if it is a soul infected with illness, it may, just may, recognize its own illness and seek to be cured. And if it recognizes its own illness, it may, just may, seek the cure of the other souls which it recognizes as being ill. And it may, just may, seek to bring back to life those souls which have died, yet sustain sufficient force to maintain the life of the body with which it is associated.

What would Jesus do? It is a good question. Would that we knew the answer. Discern the answer.

Ref: Phil. 3:17-24;4:1-3; Mat. 9:18-26

**EXORCISM OF THE
POSSESSED
(Continued)**

Psalm 53

Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me in thy strength.

O God, hear my prayer: give ear to the words of my mouth.

For strangers have risen up against me; and the mighty have sought after my soul: and they have not set God before their eyes.

(For) behold God is my helper: and the Lord is the protector of my soul.

Turn back the evils upon my enemies; and cut them off in thy truth.

I will freely sacrifice to thee, and will give praise, O God, to thy name: because it is good:

For thou hast delivered me out of all trouble: and my eye hath looked down upon my enemies.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.

All. Amen

Psalm 117

Give praise to the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Let Israel now say, that he is good: that his mercy endureth for ever.

Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

Let them that fear the Lord now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

In my trouble I called upon the Lord: and the Lord heard me, and enlarged

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me.

The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man can do unto me.

The Lord is my helper: and I will look over my enemies.

It is good to confide in the Lord, rather than to have confidence in man.

It is good to trust in the Lord, rather than to trust in princes.

All nations compassed me about; and, in the name of the Lord I have crushed them.

Surrounding me they compassed me about: and in the name of the Lord I have crushed them.

They surrounded me like bees, and they burned like fire among thorns: and in the name of the Lord I destroyed them.

Being pushed I was overturned that I might fall: but the Lord supported me.

The Lord is my strength and my praise: and he is become my salvation.

The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the just.

The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength: the right hand of the Lord hath exalted me: the right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength.

I shall not die, but live: and shall declare the works of the Lord.

The Lord chastising hath chastised me: but he hath not delivered me over to death.

Open ye to me the gates of justice: I will go in to them, and give praise to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord, the just shall enter into it.

I will give glory to thee because thou hast heard me: and art become my salvation.

The stone which the builders rejected; the same is become the head of the corner.

This is the Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes.

This is the day which the Lord hath made: let us be glad and rejoice therein.

O Lord, save me: O Lord, give good success.

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.

The Lord is God, and he hath shone upon us. Appoint a solemn day, with shady boughs, even to the horn of the altar.

Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, and I will exalt thee. I will praise thee, because thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

O praise ye the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.

All. Amen

Psalm 34

Judge thou, O Lord, them that wrong me: overthrow them that fight against me.

Take hold of arms and shield: and rise up to help me.

Bring out the sword, and shut up the

way against them that persecute me: say to my soul: I am thy salvation.

Let them be confounded and ashamed that seek after my soul. Let them be turned back and be confounded that devise evil against me.

Let them become as dust before the wind: and let the angel of the Lord straiten them.

Let their way become dark and slippery; and let the angel of the Lord pursue them.

For without cause they have hidden their net for me unto destruction: without cause they have upbraided my soul.

Let the snare which he knoweth not come upon him: and let the net which he hath hidden catch him: and into that very snare let them fall.

But my soul shall rejoice in the Lord; and shall be delighted in his salvation.

All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to thee? Who deliverest the poor from the hand of them that are stronger than he; the needy and the poor from them that strip him.

Unjust witnesses rising up have asked me things I knew not.

They repaid me evil for good: to the depriving me of my soul.

But as for me, when they were troublesome to me, I was clothed with haircloth. I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer shall be turned into my bosom.

As a neighbour and as an own brother, so did I please: as one mourning and sorrowful so was I humbled.

But they rejoiced against me, and came together: scourges were gathered together upon me, and I knew

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not.

They were separated, and repented not: they tempted me, they scoffed at me with scorn: they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

Lord, when wilt thou look upon me? rescue thou my soul from their malice: my only one from the lions.

I will give thanks to thee in a great church; I will praise thee in a strong people.

Let not them that are my enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: who have hated me without cause, and wink with the eyes.

For they spoke indeed peaceably to me; and speaking in the anger of the earth they devised guile.

And they opened their mouth wide against me; they said: Well done, well done, our eyes have seen it.

Thou hast seen, O Lord, be not thou silent: O Lord, depart not from me.

Arise, and be attentive to my judgment: to my cause, my God, and my Lord.

Judge me, O Lord my God according to thy justice, and let them not rejoice over me.

Let them not say in their hearts: It is well, it is well, to our mind: neither let them say: We have swallowed him up.

Let them blush: and be ashamed together, who rejoice at my evils. Let them be clothed with confusion and shame, who speak great things against me.

Let them rejoice and be glad, who are well pleased with my justice, and let them say always: The Lord be magnified, who delights in the peace of his servant.

And my tongue shall meditate thy justice, thy praise all the day long.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.

All. Amen

Psalm 30

In thee, O Lord, have I hoped, let me never be confounded: deliver me in thy justice.

Bow down thy ear to me: make haste to deliver me. Be thou unto me a God, a protector, and a house of refuge, to save me.

For thou art my strength and my refuge; and for thy name's sake thou wilt lead me, and nourish me.

Thou wilt bring me out of this snare, which they have hidden for me: for thou art my protector.

Into thy hands I commend my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.

Thou hast hated them that regard vanities, to no purpose. But I have hoped in the Lord:

I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy. For thou hast regarded my humility, thou hast saved my soul out of distresses.

And thou hast not shut me up in the hands of the enemy: thou hast set my feet in a spacious place.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am afflicted: my eye is troubled with wrath, my soul, and my belly:

For my life is wasted with grief: and my years in sighs. My strength is weakened through poverty and my bones are disturbed.

I am become a reproach among all

my enemies, and very much to my neighbours; and a fear to my acquaintance. They that saw me without fled from me.

I am forgotten as one dead from the heart. I am become as a vessel that is destroyed.

For I have heard the blame of many that dwell round about. While they assembled together against me, they consulted to take away my life.

But I have put my trust in thee, O Lord: I said: Thou art my God.

My lots are in thy hands. Deliver me out of the hands of my enemies; and from them that persecute me.

Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; save me in thy mercy.

Let me not be confounded, O Lord, for I have called upon thee. Let the wicked be ashamed, and be brought down to hell.

Let deceitful lips be made dumb. Which speak iniquity against the just, with pride and abuse.

O how great is the multitude of thy sweetness, O Lord, which thou hast hidden for them that fear thee! Which thou hast wrought for them that hope in thee, in the sight of the sons of men.

Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy face, from the disturbance of men. Thou shalt protect them in thy tabernacle from the contradiction of tongues.

Blessed be the Lord, for he hath shewn his wonderful mercy to me in a fortified city.

But I said in the excess of my mind: I am cast away from before thy eyes. Therefore thou hast heard the voice of my prayer, when I cried to thee.

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O love the Lord, all ye his saints: for the Lord will require truth, and will repay them abundantly that act proudly.

Do ye manfully, and let your heart be strengthened, all ye that hope in the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.

All. Amen

Psalm 21

O God my God, look upon me: why hast thou forsaken me? Far from my salvation are the words of my sins.

O my God, I cry by day, and thou dost not answer: and by night, and thou payest no heed.

Yet thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel.

In thee have our fathers hoped: they have hoped, and thou hast delivered them.

They cried to thee, and they were saved: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.

All they that saw me have laughed me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head, saying: He hoped in the Lord, let him deliver him: let him save him, seeing he delighteth in him.

(For) Thou art he that hast drawn me out of the womb: my hope from the breasts of my mother.

I was cast upon thee from the womb. From my mother's womb thou art my God,

Depart not from me. For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me.

Many calves have surrounded me: fat bulls have besieged me.

They have opened their mouths against me, as a lion ravening and roaring.

I am poured out like water; and all my bones are scattered. My heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws: and thou hast brought me down into the dust of death.

For many dogs have encompassed me: the council of the malignant hath besieged me. They have dug my hands and feet.

They have numbered all my bones.

And they have looked and stared upon me.

They parted my garments amongst them; and upon my vesture they cast lots.

But thou, O Lord, remove not thy help to a distance from me; look towards my defence.

Deliver, O God, my soul from the sword: my only one from the hand of the dog.

Save me from the lion's mouth; and my lowness from the horns of the unicorns.

I will declare thy name to my brethren: in the midst of the church will I praise thee.

Ye that fear the Lord, praise him: all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him.

Let all the seed of Israel fear him: be-

cause he hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man. Neither hath he turned away his face from me: and when I cried to him he heard me.

With thee is my praise in a great church: I will pay my vows in the sight of them that fear him.

The poor shall eat and shall be filled: and they shall praise the Lord that seek him: their hearts shall live for ever and ever.

All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord: And all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in his sight.

For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he shall have dominion over the nations.

All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and have adored: all they that go down to the earth shall fall before him.

And to him my soul shall live: and my seed shall serve him.

There shall be declared to the Lord a generation to come: and the heavens shall shew forth his justice to a people that shall be born, which the Lord hath made.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.

All. Amen

Psalm 3

Many say to my soul: There is no salvation for him in his God.

But thou, O Lord, art my protector, my glory, and the lifter up of my head.

I have cried to the Lord with my voice: and he hath heard me from his

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 holy hill.

I have slept and have taken my rest: and I have risen up, because the Lord hath protected me.

I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me: arise, O Lord; save me, O my God.

For thou hast struck all them who are my adversaries without cause: thou hast broken the teeth of sinners.

Salvation is of the Lord: and thy blessing is upon thy people.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.
All. Amen

Psalm 10

In the Lord I put my trust: how then do you say to my soul: Get thee away from hence to the mountain, like a sparrow.

For, lo, the wicked have bent their bow: they have prepared their arrows in the quiver, to shoot in the dark the upright of heart.

For they have destroyed the things which thou hast made: but what has the just man done?

The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven. His eyes look on the poor man: his eyelids examine the sons of men.

The Lord trieth the just and the wicked: but he that loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul.

He shall rain snares upon sinners: fire and brimstone, and storms of winds, shall be the portion of their cup.

For the Lord is just, and hath loved

justice: the righteous shall behold his face.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.
All. Amen

Psalm 12

How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget me unto the end? how long dost thou turn away thy face from me?

How long shall I take counsels in my soul, sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over Me? Consider, and hear me, O Lord, my God.

Enlighten my eyes, that I never sleep in death: Lest at any time my enemy say: I have prevailed against him.

They that trouble me, will rejoice when I have fallen since I have trusted in thy mercy.

Let my heart rejoice in thy salvation: I will sing to the Lord, who giveth me good things: yea, I will sing to the name of the Lord, the most high.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, throughout all ages of ages.
All. Amen

Prayer Following Deliverance

WE BESEECH thee, O almighty God, that the spirit of iniquity may no longer have any power over thy servant N. (Thy handmaid N.), but rather that he may depart afar and nevermore return. At thy command, O Lord, let there enter into this man (woman) a disposition to goodness and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have been redeemed, and let us fear no evil, because the Lord is with us. Who liveth and reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for endless ages. Amen.

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**ENCHIRIDION
 ON FAITH, HOPE, AND
 LOVE
 by
 Saint Augustine**

CHAPTER X

Jesus Christ the Mediator

33. Thus it was that the human race was bound in a just doom and all men were children of wrath. Of this wrath it is written: "For all our days are wasted; we are ruined in thy wrath; our years seem like a spider's web." [64] Likewise Job spoke of this wrath: "Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble." [65]

And even the Lord Jesus said of it: "He that believes in the Son has life everlasting, but he that believes not does not have life. Instead, the wrath of God abides in him." [66] He does not say, "It will come," but, "It now abides." Indeed every man is born into this state. Wherefore the apostle says, "For we too were by nature children of wrath even as the others." [67] Since men are in this state of wrath through original sin -- a condition made still graver and more pernicious as they compounded more and worse sins with it -- a Mediator was required; that is to say, a Reconciler who by offering a unique sacrifice, of which all the sacrifices of the Law and the Prophets were shadows, should allay that wrath. Thus the apostle says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, even more now being reconciled by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him." [68] However, when God is said to be wrathful, this does not signify any such perturbation in him as there is in the soul of a wrathful man. His verdict, which is always just, takes the name "wrath" as a term borrowed from the language of human feelings. This, then, is the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord -- that we are reconciled to God through the Mediator and receive the Holy Spirit so that

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we may be changed from enemies into sons, "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." [69]

34. It would take too long to say all that would be truly worthy of this Mediator. Indeed, men cannot speak properly of such matters. For who can unfold in cogent enough fashion this statement, that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," [70] so that we should then believe in "the only Son of God the Father Almighty, born of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin." Yet it is indeed true that the Word was made flesh, the flesh being assumed by the Divinity, not the Divinity being changed into flesh. Of course, by the term "flesh" we ought here to understand "man," an expression in which the part signifies the whole, just as it is said, "Since by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified," [71] which is to say, no man shall be justified. Yet certainly we must say that in that assumption nothing was lacking that belongs to human nature.

But it was a nature entirely free from the bonds of all sin. It was not a nature born of both sexes with fleshly desires, with the burden of sin, the guilt of which is washed away in regeneration. Instead, it was the kind of nature that would be fittingly born of a virgin, conceived by His mother's faith and not her fleshly desires. Now if in his being born, her virginity had been destroyed, he would not then have been born of a virgin. It would then be false (which is unthinkable) for the whole Church to confess him "born of the Virgin Mary." This is the Church which, imitating his mother, daily gives birth to his members yet remains virgin. Read, if you please, my letter on the virginity of Saint Mary written to that illustrious man, Volusianus, whom I name with honor and affection. [72]

35. Christ Jesus, Son of God, is thus both God and man. He was God before all ages; he is man in this age of ours. He is God because he is the Word of

God, for "the Word was God." [73] Yet he is man also, since in the unity of his Person a rational soul and body is joined to the Word.

Accordingly, in so far as he is God, he and the Father are one. Yet in so far as he is man, the Father is greater than he. Since he was God's only Son -- not by grace but by nature -- to the end that he might indeed be the fullness of all grace, he was also made Son of Man -- and yet he was in the one nature as well as in the other, one Christ. "For being in the form of God, he judged it not a violation to be what he was by nature, the equal of God. Yet he emptied himself, taking on the form of a servant," [74] yet neither losing nor diminishing the form of God. [75] Thus he was made less and remained equal, and both these in a unity as we said before. But he is one of these because he is the Word; the other, because he was a man. As the Word, he is the equal of the Father; as a man, he is less. He is the one Son of God, and at the same time Son of Man; the one Son of Man, and at the same time God's Son. These are not two sons of God, one God and the other man, but one Son of God -- God without origin, man with a definite origin -- our Lord Jesus Christ.

[64] Cf. Ps. 90:9.

[65] Job 14:1.

[66] John 3:36.

[67] Eph. 2:3.

[68] Rom. 5:9, 10.

[69] Rom. 8:14.

[70] John 1:14.

[71] Rom. 3:20.

[72] Epistle CXXXVII, written in 412 in reply to a list of queries sent to Augustine by the proconsul of Africa.

[73] John 1:1.

[74] Phil. 2:6, 7.

[75] These metaphors for contrasting the "two natures" of Jesus Christ were favorite figures of speech in Augustine's

Christological thought. Cf. On the Gospel of John, Tractate 78; On the Trinity, I, 7; II, 2; IV, 19-20; VII, 3; New Testament Sermons, 76, 14.

CHAPTER XI

The Incarnation as Prime Example of the Action of God's Grace

36. In this the grace of God is supremely manifest, commended in

grand and visible fashion; for what had the human nature in the man Christ merited, that it, and no other, should be assumed into the unity of the Person of the only Son of God? What good will, what zealous strivings, what good works preceded this assumption by which that particular man deserved to become one Person with God? Was he a man before the union, and was this singular grace given him as to one particularly deserving before God? Of course not! For, from the moment he began to be a man, that man began to be nothing other than God's Son, the only Son, and this because the Word of God assuming him became flesh, yet still assuredly remained God. Just as every man is a personal unity -- that is, a unity of rational soul and flesh -- so also is Christ a personal unity: Word and man.

Why should there be such great glory to a human nature -- and this undoubtedly an act of grace, no merit preceding unless it be that those who consider such a question faithfully and soberly might have here a clear manifestation of God's great and sole grace, and this in order that they might understand how they themselves are justified from their sins by the selfsame grace which made it so that the man Christ had no power to sin? Thus indeed the angel hailed his mother when announcing to her the future birth: "Hail," he said, "full of grace." And shortly thereafter, "You have found favor with God." [76] And this was said of her, that she was full of grace, since she was to be mother of her Lord, indeed the Lord of all. Yet, concerning Christ himself, when the Evangelist John said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," he added, "and we beheld his glory, a glory as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." [77] When he said, "The Word was made flesh," this means, "Full of grace." When he also said, "The glory of the only begotten of the Father," this means, "Full of truth." Indeed it was Truth himself, God's only begotten Son -- and, again, this not by grace but by nature -- who, by grace, assumed hu-

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nature into such a personal unity that he himself became the Son of Man as well.

37. This same Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son our Lord, was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Now obviously the Holy Spirit is God's gift, a gift that is itself equal to the Giver; wherefore the Holy Spirit is God also, not inferior to the Father and the Son. Now what does this mean, that Christ's birth in respect to his human nature was of the Holy Spirit, save that this was itself also a work of grace?

For when the Virgin asked of the angel the manner by which what he announced would come to pass (since she had known noman), the angel answered: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you; therefore the Holy One which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God." [78] And when Joseph wished to put her away, suspecting adultery (since he knew she was not pregnant by him), he received a similar answer from the angel: "Do not fear to take Mary as your wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" [79] -- that is, "What you suspect is from another man is of the Holy Spirit."

[76] Luke 1:28-30.

[77] John 1:14.

[78] Luke 1:35.

[79] Matt. 1:20.

CHAPTER XII

The Role of the Holy Spirit

38. Are we, then, to say that the Holy Spirit is the Father of Christ's human nature, so that as God the Father generated the Word, so the Holy Spirit generated the human nature, and that from both natures Christ came to be one, Son of God the Father as the Word, Son of the Holy Spirit as man? Do we suppose that the Holy Spirit is his Father through begetting him of the Virgin Mary? Who would dare to say such a thing? There is no need to show by

argument how many absurd consequences such a notion has, when it is so absurd in itself that no believer's ear can bear to hear it. Actually, then, as we confess our Lord Jesus Christ, who is God from God yet born as man of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, there is in each nature (in both the divine and the human) the only Son of God the Father Almighty, from whom proceeds the Holy Spirit.

How, then, do we say that Christ is born of the Holy Spirit, if the Holy Spirit did not beget him? Is it because he made him? This might be, since through our Lord Jesus Christ -- in the form of God -- all things were made. Yet in so far as he is man, he himself was made, even as the apostle says: "He was made of the seed of David according to the flesh." [80] But since that creature which the Virgin conceived and bore, though it was related to the Person of the Son alone, was made by the whole Trinity -- for the works of the Trinity are not separable -- why is the Holy Spirit named as the One who made it? Is it, perhaps, that when any One of the Three is named in connection with some divine action, the whole Trinity is to be understood as involved in that action? This is true and can be shown by examples, but we should not dwell too long on this kind of solution.

For what still concerns us is how it can be said, "Born of the Holy Spirit," when he is in no wise the Son of the Holy Spirit? Now, just because God made [fecit] this world, one could not say that the world is the son of God, or that it is "born" of God. Rather, one says it was "made" or "created" or "founded" or "established" by him, or however else one might like to speak of it. So, then, when we confess, "Born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary," the sense in which he is not the Son of the Holy Spirit and yet is the son of the Virgin Mary, when he was born both of him and of her, is difficult to explain. But there is no doubt as to the fact that he was not born from him as Father as he was born of her as mother.

39. Consequently we should not grant that whatever is born of something should therefore be called the son of that thing. Let us pass over the fact that a son is "born" of a man in a different sense than a hair is, or a louse, or a maw worm -- none of these is a son. Let us pass over these things, since they are an unfitting analogy in so great a matter. Yet it is certain that those who are born of water and of the Holy Spirit would not properly be called sons of the water by anyone. But it does make sense to call them sons of God the Father and of Mother Church. Thus, therefore, the one born of the Holy Spirit is the son of God the Father, not of the Holy Spirit.

What we said about the hair and the other things has this much relevance, that it reminds us that not everything which is "born" of something is said to be "son" to him from which it is "born." Likewise, it does not follow that those who are called sons of someone are always said to have been born of him, since there are some who are adopted. Even those who are called "sons of Gehenna" are not born *of* it, but have been destined *for* it, just as the sons of the Kingdom are destined for that.

40. Wherefore, since a thing may be "born" of something else, yet not in the fashion of a "son," and conversely, since not everyone who is called son is born of him whose son he is called -- this is the very mode in which Christ was "born" of the Holy Spirit (yet not as a son), and of the Virgin Mary as a son -- this suggests to us the grace of God by which a certain human person, no merit whatever preceding, at the very outset of his existence, was joined to the Word of God in such a unity of person that the selfsame one who is Son of Man should be Son of God, and the one who is Son of God should be Son of Man. Thus, in his assumption of human nature, grace came to be natural to that nature, allowing no power to sin. This is why grace is signified by the Holy Spirit, because he himself is so perfectly God that he is also called God's Gift. Still, to speak

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adequately of this -- even if one could -- would call for a very long discussion.

CHAPTER XIII

Baptism and Original Sin

41. Since he was begotten and conceived in no pleasure of carnal appetite -- and therefore bore no trace of original sin -- he was, by the grace of God (operating in a marvelous and an ineffable manner), joined and united in a personal unity with the only-begotten Word of the Father, a Son not by grace but by nature. And although he himself committed no sin, yet because of "the likeness of sinful flesh"[81] in which he came, he was himself called sin and was made a sacrifice for the washing away of sins.

Indeed, under the old law, sacrifices for sins were often called sins.[82] Yet he of whom those sacrifices were mere shadows was himself actually made sin. Thus, when the apostle said, "For Christ's sake, we beseech you to be reconciled to God," he straightway added, "Him, who knew no sin, he made to be sin for us that we might be made to be the righteousness of God in him." [83] He does not say, as we read in some defective copies, "He who knew no sin did sin for us," as if Christ himself committed sin for our sake. Rather, he says, "He [Christ] who knew no sin, he [God] made to be sin for us." The God to whom we are to be reconciled hath thus made him the sacrifice for sin by which we may be reconciled.

He himself is therefore sin as we ourselves are righteousness -- not our own but God's, not in ourselves but in him. Just as he was sin -- not his own but ours, rooted not in himself but in us -- so he showed forth through the likeness of sinful flesh, in which he was crucified, that since sin was not in him he could then, so to say, die to sin by dying in the flesh, which was "the likeness of sin." And since he had never lived in the old manner of sinning, he might, in his resurrection, signify the

new life which is ours, which is springing to life anew from the old death in which we had been dead to sin.

42. This is the meaning of the great sacrament of baptism, which is celebrated among us. All who attain to this grace die thereby to sin -- as he himself is said to have died to sin because he died in the flesh, that is, "in the likeness of sin" -- and they are thereby alive by being reborn in the baptismal font, just as he rose again from the sepulcher. This is the case no matter what the age of the body.

43. For whether it be a newborn infant or a decrepit old man -- since no one should be barred from baptism -- just so, there is no one who does not die to sin in baptism. Infants die to original sin only; adults, to all those sins which they have added, through their evil living, to the burden they brought with them at birth.

44. But even these are frequently said to die to sin, when without doubt they die not to one but to many sins, and to all the sins which they have themselves already committed by thought, word, and deed. Actually, by the use of the singular number the plural number is often signified, as the poet said,

"And they fill the belly with the armed warrior,"[84]

although they did this with many warriors. And in our own Scriptures we read: "Pray therefore to the Lord that he may take from us the serpent." [85] It does not say "serpents," as it might, for they were suffering from many serpents. There are, moreover, innumerable other such examples.

Yet, when the original sin is signified by the use of the plural number, as we say when infants are baptized "unto the remission of sins," instead of saying "unto the remission of sin," then we have the converse expression in which the singular is expressed by the plural number. Thus in the Gospel, it is said of Herod's death, "For they are dead

who sought the child's life"[86]; it does not say, "He is dead." And in Exodus: "They made," [Moses] says, "to themselves gods of gold," when they had made one calf. And of this calf, they said: "These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought you out of the land of Egypt,"[87] here also putting the plural for the singular.

45. Still, even in that one sin -- which "entered into the world by one man and so spread to all men,"[88] and on account of which infants are baptized -- one can recognize a plurality of sins, if that single sin is divided, so to say, into its separate elements. For there is pride in it, since man preferred to be under his own rule rather than the rule of God; and sacrilege too, for man did not acknowledge God; and murder, since he cast himself down to death; and spiritual fornication, for the integrity of the human mind was corrupted by the seduction of the serpent; and theft, since the forbidden fruit was snatched; and avarice, since he hungered for more than should have sufficed for him -- and whatever other sins that could be discovered in the diligent analysis of that one sin.

46. It is also said -- and not without support -- that infants are involved in the sins of their parents, not only of the first pair, but even of their own, of whom they were born. Indeed, that divine judgment, "I shall visit the sins of the fathers on their children,"[89] definitely applies to them before they come into the New Covenant by regeneration. This Covenant was foretold by Ezekiel when he said that the sons should not bear their fathers' sins, nor the proverb any longer apply in Israel, "Our fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." [90]

This is why each one of them must be born again, so that he may thereby be absolved of whatever sin was in him at the time of birth. For the sins committed by evil-doing after birth can be healed by repentance -- as, indeed, we see it happen even after baptism. For

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the new birth [regeneration] would not have been instituted except for the fact that the first birth [generatio] was tainted -- and to such a degree that one born of even a lawful wedlock said, "I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother nourish me in her womb." [91] Nor did he say "in iniquity" or "in sin," as he might have quite correctly; rather, he preferred to say "iniquities" and "sins," because, as I explained above, there are so many sins in that one sin -- which has passed into all men, and which was so great that human nature was changed and by it brought under the necessity of death -- and also because there are other sins, such as those of parents, which, even if they cannot change our nature in the same way, still involve the children in guilt, unless the gracious grace and mercy of God interpose.

47. But, in the matter of the sins of one's other parents, those who stand as one's forebears from Adam down to one's own parents, a question might well be raised: whether a man at birth is involved in the evil deeds of all his forebears, and their multiplied original sins, so that the later in time he is born, the worse estate he is born in; or whether, on this very account, God threatens to visit the sins of the parents as far as -- but no farther than -- the third and fourth generations, because in his mercy he will not continue his wrath beyond that. It is not his purpose that those not given the grace of regeneration be crushed under too heavy a burden in their eternal damnation, as they would be if they were bound to bear, as original guilt, all the sins of their ancestors from the beginning of the human race, and to pay the due penalty for them. Whether yet another solution to so difficult a problem might or might not be found by a more diligent search and interpretation of Holy Scripture, I dare not rashly affirm.

[80] Rom. 1:3.

CHAPTER XIV

The Mysteries of Christ's Mediatorial Work (48-49) and Justification (50-55)

48. That one sin, however, committed in a setting of such great happiness, was itself so great that by it, in one man, the whole human race was originally and, so to say, radically condemned. It cannot be pardoned and washed away except through "the one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," [92] who alone could be born in such a way as not to need to be reborn.

49. They were not reborn, those who were baptized by John's baptism, by which Christ himself was baptized. [93] Rather, they were prepared by the ministry of this forerunner, who said, "Prepare a way for the Lord," [94] for Him in whom alone they could be reborn.

For his baptism is not with water alone, as John's was, but with the Holy Spirit as well. Thus, whoever believes in Christ is reborn by that same Spirit, of whom Christ also was born, needing not to be reborn. This is the reason for the Voice of the Father spoken over him at his baptism, "Today have I begotten thee," [95] which pointed not to that particular day on which he was baptized, but to that "day" of changeless eternity, in order to show us that this Man belonged to the personal Unity of the Only Begotten. For a day that neither begins with the close of yesterday nor ends with the beginning of tomorrow is indeed an eternal "today."

Therefore, he chose to be baptized in water by John, not thereby to wash away any sin of his own, but to manifest his great humility. Indeed, baptism found nothing in him to wash away, just as death found nothing to punish. Hence, it was in authentic justice, and not by violent power, that the devil was overcome and conquered: for, as he had most unjustly slain Him who was in no way deserving of death, he also did most justly lose those whom he had justly held in bondage as punishment for their sins. Wherefore, He took upon himself both baptism and death, not out

of a piteous necessity but through his own free act of showing mercy -- as part of a definite plan whereby One might take away the sin of the world, just as one man had brought sin into the world, that is, the whole human race.

50. There is a difference, however. The first man brought sin into the world, whereas this One took away not only that one sin but also all the others which he found added to it. Hence, the apostle says, "And the gift [of grace] is not like the effect of the one that sinned: for the judgment on that one trespass was condemnation; but the gift of grace is for many offenses, and brings justification." [96] Now it is clear that the one sin originally inherited, even if it were the only one involved, makes men liable to condemnation. Yet grace justifies a man for many offenses, both the sin which he originally inherited in common with all the others and also the multitude of sins which he has committed on his own.

51. However, when he [the apostle] says, shortly after, "Therefore, as the offense of one man led all men to condemnation, so also the righteousness of one man leads all men to the life of justification," [97] he indicates sufficiently that everyone born of Adam is subject to damnation, and no one, unless reborn of Christ, is free from such a damnation.

52. And after this discussion of punishment through one man and grace through the Other, as he deemed sufficient for that part of the epistle, the apostle passes on to speak of the great mystery of holy baptism in the cross of Christ, and to do this so that we may understand nothing other in the baptism of Christ than the likeness of the death of Christ. The death of Christ crucified is nothing other than the likeness of the forgiveness of sins -- so that in the very same sense in which the death is real, so also is the forgiveness of our sins real, and in the same sense in which his resurrection is real, so also in us is there authentic justification.

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He asks: "What, then, shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?"[98] -- for he had previously said, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."[99] And therefore he himself raised the question whether, because of the abundance of grace that follows sin, one should then continue in sin. But he answers, "God forbid!" and adds, "How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"[100] Then, to show that we are dead to sin, "Do you not know that all we who were baptized in Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"[101]

If, therefore, the fact that we are baptized into the death of Christ shows that we are dead to sin, then certainly infants who are baptized in Christ die to sin, since they are baptized into his own death. For there is no exception in the saying, "All we who are baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into his death." And the effect of this is to show that we are dead to sin.

Yet what sin do infants die to in being reborn except that which they inherit in being born? What follows in the epistle also pertains to this: "Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death; that, as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in the newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be also united with him in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dies no more; death has no more dominion over him. For the death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives unto God. So also, reckon yourselves also to be dead to sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus."[102]

Now, he had set out to prove that we

should not go on sinning, in order that thereby grace might abound, and had said, "If we have died to sin, how, then, shall we go on living in it?" And then to show that we were dead to sin, he had added, "Know you not, that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" Thus he concludes the passage as he began it. Indeed, he introduced the death of Christ in order to say that even he died to sin. To what sin, save that of the flesh in which he existed, not as sinner, but in "the likeness of sin" and which was, therefore, called by the name of sin? Thus, to those baptized into the death of Christ -- into which not only adults but infants as well are baptized -- he says, "So also you should reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

53. Whatever was done, therefore, in the crucifixion of Christ, his burial, his resurrection on the third day, his ascension into heaven, his being seated at the Father's right hand -- all these things were done thus, that they might not only signify their mystical meanings but also serve as a model for the Christian life which we lead here on the earth. Thus, of his crucifixion it was said, "And they that are Jesus Christ's have crucified their own flesh, with the passions and lusts thereof"[103]; and of his burial, "For we are buried with Christ by baptism into death"; of his resurrection, "Since Christ is raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk with him in newness of life"; of his ascension and session at the Father's right hand: "But if you have risen again with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."[104]

54. Now what we believe concerning Christ's future actions, since we confess that he will come again from heaven to judge the living and the dead, does not pertain to this life of ours as we live it here on earth, because it belongs not to his deeds already done, but to what he will do at the close of the age. To this the apostle refers and goes on to add, "When Christ, who is your life,

shall appear, you shall then also appear with him in glory."[105]

55. There are two ways to interpret the affirmation that he "shall judge the living and the dead." On the one hand, we may understand by "the living" those who are not yet dead but who will be found living in the flesh when he comes; and we may understand by "the dead" those who have left the body, or who shall have left it before his coming. Or, on the other hand, "the living" may signify "the righteous," and "the dead" may signify "the unrighteous" -- since the righteous are to be judged as well as the unrighteous. For sometimes the judgment of God is passed upon the evil, as in the word, "But they who have done evil [shall come forth] to the resurrection of judgment." [106] And sometimes it is passed upon the good, as in the word, "Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me in thy strength." [107] Indeed, it is by the judgment of God that the distinction between good and evil is made, to the end that, being freed from evil and not destroyed with the evildoers, the good may be set apart at his right hand.[108] This is why the psalmist cried, "Judge me, O God," and, as if to explain what he had said, "and defend my cause against an unholy nation." [109]

[81] Rom. 8:3.

[82] Cf. Hos. 4:8.

[83] I Cor. 5:20, 21.

[84] Virgil, Aeneid, II, 1, 20.

[85] Num. 21:7 (LXX).

[86] Matt. 2:20.

[87] Ex. 32:4.

[88] Rom. 5:12.

[89] Deut. 5:9.

[90] Ezek. 18:2.

[91] Ps. 51:5.

[92] 1 Tim. 2:5.

[93] Matt. 3:13.

[94] Luke 3:4; Isa. 40:3.

[95] Ps. 2:7; Heb. 5:5; cf. Mark 1:9-11.

[96] Rom. 5:16.

[97] Rom. 5:18.

[98] Rom. 6:1.

[99] Rom. 5:20.

[100] Rom. 6:2.

[101] Rom. 6:3.

[102] Rom. 6:4-11.

[103] Gal. 5:24.

[104] Col. 3:1-3.

[105] Col. 3:4.

[106] John 5:29.

[107] Ps. 54:1.

[108] Cf. Matt. 25:32, 33.

[109] Ps. 43:1.

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COMPARING YOUR MORALITY TO ANOTHER’S IS USUALLY ILL ADVISED It would truly be an extraordinary person who could *truthfully* state, “Lord God I thank Thee that I am not an adulterer, thief, murderer, liar, unjust, page 9

CHILDREN’S PAGE *The Orthodox - Basilian Catechism Q. 1122. Was any special promise made in favor of the united prayers of two or more persons? - Q. 1148. How do we offer God false worship?* page 10

MIRACLES: JESUS, AND OTHERS
A miracle can validly be considered as, basically, an event which violates or is contrary to the laws of nature, physics, chemistry, or something similar, for which there is and can be no explanation other than the event being at the direction and will of God. The devil often seems to work miracles, page 12

MODERN HERODIAN VICTIMS
When those who govern forget or ignore morality, forget or ignore God is preeminent, whether those who govern be in the secular world, business world, or any other realm including the religious world, they wreck havoc and destruction. page 13

WHY BEGIN LIFE IN CHRIST ANEW Every morning when we awaken we have the opportunity to begin life in Christ anew. Every evening as we go to sleep we have the opportunity to begin life in Christ anew. . . Why would or should anyone desire to begin life in Christ anew? page 15

WHAT IS HOLY? When you wish to obtain something it is a good idea to understand and to have a good concept of what it is you wish to obtain. Sometimes obtaining a firm concept of what you desire will re-focus your goal. page 16

SAINT DISMAS - AN EXAMPLE OF ACTING IN FAITH Before he enters through the Iconostat to pray Divine Liturgy the Priest prays the Prayer Before the Ikon of Christ, which states:

“We reverence thy page 17

SEEK GOD’S MERCY WHILST YOU ARE ABLE Psalm 136:1 says, *“Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept; when we remembered Thee, O Sion.”* When a person has lost the good things which that person had it is too late to enjoy, page 17

CAESAR CAN ONLY IGNORE GOD UNTIL THE TIME HE MEETS GOD *“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” (Ps. 132:1)* It is natural and normal for people to seek commonality, page 18

A MEANS OF “CORRECTING” THOUGHTS AND DEEDS MISGUIDED BY THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE FALLEN SENSES Because before their original sin Adam and Eve were able to perceive true reality through their senses, they were not deceived by their senses perceiving something to be warm, fuzzy, nice, cuddly, page 19

COMMON-SENSE, ONE OF THE MOST NEGLECTED SPIRITUAL TOOLS, as are common courtesy and their siblings. If we measure our lives using as the measure the letter of God’s law we will always be wanting, our spiritual account ledger will always be in the red page 20

WHEN THERE IS DISSENTION OR DISAGREEMENT. Being of one mind, but Whose? What would Jesus do? We occasionally (once one could say often, but in today’s culture it is, “occasionally”) hear the quote from Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians, *“I beg of Evodia and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind.”* But in our culture the end of that phrase often is omitted. . . when the end of that sentence is included . . . *“I beg of Evodia and I beseech Syntyche to be of one mind in the Lord.”* page 21

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ENCHIRIDION ON FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE by Saint Augustine
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TOPIC/TITLE

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~ DRAMATIC AND SIGNIFICANT CHANGES ~ *From Metropolitan Archbishop Paul, S.S.B. To the flock entrusted into my care:* I rarely write in the personal in this column but this topic requires the personal. This may be the last time I use the above title, and I only use it on this occasion for the sake of formality. For many years I have been seriously concerned with how to protect the clergy and the laity of our jurisdiction, to provide for their ecclesiastical needs upon the event of my becoming incapacitated or my death. page 1

A CHURCH JURISDICTION MUST HAVE TWO BISHOPS AT THE VERY LEAST, OTHERWISE IT WILL CEASE TO EXIST Small Jurisdictions which have only one bishop must seek a bishop from outside its jurisdiction to consecrate another bishop. While this is not uncommon, it opens the requesting church jurisdiction to the request it reciprocate, without the ability

to determine the worthiness of the person to be made bishop - a "quid pro quo". page 1

THE DESIRABLE NECESSITY OF THE HOLY GHOST IN YOUR LIFE When we anticipate the coming of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost we anticipate something different from manifestations of the Holy Ghost which occurred prior to Pentecost. It is quite proper to think of the events of Great Flood and Noah, The Exodus and Moses, securing the Promised page 1

PARAMETERS OF "LOST" AND THEREFORE OF "FOUND Well . . . a few of them. Rejoicing because that which had been lost has been found is a concept all normal people are able to comprehend. All normal people are also able to comprehend the desire to find or reacquire that which has been lost, and likewise understand and page 1

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WORLD WIDE WEB: The direct

connection to the computer which functions as the message, file, and communications center for Holy Innocents Orthodox Church, is page 2

THE FALLACY OF IDOLIZING THE "NATURAL" MAN Or, if one desires to be politically correct, the "natural" person The philosophy of idolizing the human unchanged by civilization, of the human "in communion with nature" un-effected by anything that does not naturally occur in "nature", and especially un-effected by any form of technology or of societal influence, has steadily gained adherents and followers, especially in the period between the early nineteenth century and today. page 7

LOVE UPHOLDS FREE WILL Love is such an unusual, forceful, and unique "thing" that the wise person will or will at the very least attempt to begin and to end every day by telling God they love Him, and attempting to make that statement reality. Love is much more than an emotion, page 8

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In our materialistic, modernistic, times, with the prevalence of the attitude that God is of no importance, to those for whom God is of importance, the prayer, "That good, holy, normal men will be called to and answer the call to the priesthood, and that the various jurisdictions of the true Church will accommodate them where and how it is morally and dogmatically possible." should be a constant prayer. Without such prayer, one may be unable to find a true priest for confession, absolution, the Eucharist, holy anointing for every day life and in preparation for death, and for a proper burial.

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