

# REUNION

Holy Innocents Orthodox Church  
Parish, and Retreat House for  
The Society of Clerks Secular of Saint Basil  
*[Within the Ecumenical Patriarchate]*



Volume 23 No. 1 OF THE CHURCH OF MAN WITH GOD March, 2013 A.D.

**~ GOD HAS GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR YOU. What more do you want from Him? (Forth in a series of four related articles in this issue of REUNION) ~**



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

Very often people think God does not want them to have what they want, or that God does not want what they want. If they are correct - well, guess who should consider changing what they want!

It also often occurs that a person desires something or something happen which they think is good, even holy, or which they positively know is good or holy, and even just.

If God does not provide what ever it is, or make what ever is desired happen, some people get angry with God, they get mad at God.

What in the world do they want from God? He already died for them. Do they want God to step aside and make them be God? If they answer: No, they just want God to do this which they desire, then they are in actuality expressing the desire to control God, which in reality would be to be God.

**They are creatures and therefore can never be God . . . or can they?**

The created can never be the Creator. Jesus did, however, make very clear His desire that each of us truly and faithfully follow Him so that we each could and would be one with Him as He is one with the Father.

Jesus even provided a preview of this union in the Transfiguration, when Moses and Elias appeared with Jesus. Though they were not yet united with God in Heaven, for the Sacrifice of  
*(Continued 4 OF 4 on page 6)*

**PROBABLE REACTION TO CHRIST'S PERSONALLY PERFORMING A MIRACLE TODAY (First in a series of four related articles in this issue of REUNION)**

What would be the reactions if Our Lord had fed the the multitude in modern times? Consider: there were five thousand men, which means there probably was a like number of women, and at least two or three children or young adults for every couple. Therefore ten to twenty thousand people or more were fed.

If this had happened today, a few news papers probably would publish articles about it, but the broadcast, so called "journalists", likely would ignore the event unless it was bandied about on Twitter and blogs, and perhaps FOX News, to the extent it could not be ignored.

Then, NBC news would give an in depth report, complete with pictures and videos - even if they had to manufacture fake videos - all with a negative and derisive perspective. CBS news would give a quick summary which cast suspicions on Christ's motives in  
*(Continued 1 OF 4 on page 3)*

**SUFFERING - PERSPECTIVES REGARDING GOD AND MAN (Second in a series of four related articles in this issue of REUNION)**

It is basic to the Faith we have been given by God: that Jesus Christ fully man and fully God - the Second Person of The Blessed Trinity; that He totally and fully experienced His Passion and Death, so-as-to make eternal salvation available to each human being.

We are barely able to glimpse or appreciate this reality, and therefore have a greatly diminished comprehension and appreciation of this reality.

Let us "poke" at this just a little by using the tool of analogy.

Our first "poke" is the specialness of God. Our analogy is one which, hopefully, is sufficiently unusual as to be re-  
*(Continued 2 OF 4 on page 4)*

**WISELY USE THE INEVITABLENESS OF SUFFERING AS PART OF THE PROCESS - PROGRAM IF YOU WILL - OF PERMANENTLY EXPERIENCING JOY BEYOND IMAGINING (Third in a series of four related articles in this issue of REUNION)**

We have learned that suffering is an aspect of being a follower of Christ, of truly being a Christian.

Suffering is not limited to physical  
*(Continued 3 OF 4 on page 5)*

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**LETTERS**



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(Continued 1 OF 4 from page 1)

and reasons for feeding the multitude. ABC news would give a sarcastic and mocking report.

All of the reports would state incredulously that it was an "alleged" event even if it had been video taped or filmed from beginning to end by their own people. If the event had been filmed or video taped by regular people, or sent out on the Internet, the videos would be t e r m e d "unconfirmed".

Some very stupid reporter, perhaps many such reporters, would rhetorically state, as though asking a question, "If this really happened, what does this all mean?" Oh ye slow of whit, it means God is visiting. Do not ask how stupid these people who hate God can get for you will be astounded and disgusted.

Jay Leno would ridicule the event and Christ as well.

Obama would claim Jesus was a wealthy guy who was inspired by Obama to spread His wealth, and claim credit for everything.

Romney would declare Jesus was acting as every good Mormon should.

Many prominent religious leaders would attempt to capitalize on the event.

The FDA would issue Jesus a citation for distributing food that was not inspected and not labeled with sodium, cholesterol, and other contents.

Bloomberg, the Mayor of New York, would have Jesus arrested on suspicion of distributing consumables with unacceptable levels of fat, sugar, and other ingredients on the politically incorrect list.

And the government would put Jesus in

jail for feeding the multitude. Why? Because the government leaders and their assistants want to be god: terrible, nasty, enslaving, demonic deities, who batter, maim, and crush those created by the true God. In the minds of these people the real God interferes with their desires and therefore must be imprisoned and killed.

If this were to happen today the results would be good examples of lots of good seed falling on poor soil, and on good soil but sprayed with de-

foliant - spiritual Roundup. But also an example that there is always some seed that survives and bears good fruit.

Followers of the true God know the importance of a calm, fruitful, happy life in the "here and now"; for such is harmonious with God's expressed intention that mankind manage His creation and bring it to fruition union with Him as an aspect of His plan of creation. This is only possible if the world is in harmony with God. The greater the harmony, the greater the potential for happiness - but only the greater the *potential*. The attainment is, as it always is, dependent upon the individual, and outside forces; but the greater the prevalence of harmony with God, the more diminished is the prevalence of intentional traversing of the individual's pursuit of that happiness. This leaves to be dealt with the potentially adverse effects of natural phenomena. But these attain increasingly greater manageability as people attain greater harmony with God.

God does not desire to crush those who oppose or who deny Him. He will so do as it proves necessary. But God much more desires those who oppose or deny Him, convert to being His.

How is this attained: By each of us who

have the Divine Virtue of Faith living in accordance with that Faith - by our operating Divinely. In so doing we teach others why they should do likewise, and to do likewise.

Join with Our Saviour by bringing ourselves and His creation - including that portion of mankind which rejects Him - into greater completion in Him by harmonizing with Christ, God.

God's Charity - Divine Love - is so great that Jesus chose to rule from the most terrible and horrible of thrones - the Holy Cross upon which He was crucified and died.

We know in our hearts that our burdens and sufferings are much less than that which our sins would make us deserve. Do not allow your burdens and sufferings to be wasted. Put them to good use. Accept them in prayer while also offering them to God with Christ suffering on the Cross.

Also engage secular or worldly activities - but in a holy manner. Vote wisely, and encourage intelligent holy people to run for public office. Support your holy clergy, and

do not support clergy who *primarily* preach goals of worldly and material gain. Seek Godly justice in worldly matters, and Godly mercy for truly repentant criminals. Seek a new Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, and support his radio and television program better than do the supporters of Rush Limbaugh, and the PBS and NPR talk and news programs.

Instead of bemoaning that we are hungry, we should be rejoicing that, for some food is on the way, that others are already eating, that there is more than enough for everyone, that God really does Love us, and that God's Love really is meaningful.

Ref: 2 Cor 11: 19-33; 12:1-9; Gal. 4:22-31; Luke 8:4-15; John 6:1-15

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(Continued 2 OF 4 from page 1)

membered. Mankind considers certain individuals to be especially deserving of extra protection and consideration: babies, little children, handicapped, infirm, elderly, and even certain government employees such as members of the military, police officers, and firemen, as well as those who have performed extraordinary deeds. In many instances special laws establish additional penalties for crimes committed against those whom society has decided are special. God is much more special than any of these - *and*, God is unique.

Now we will “poke” at God’s value. Again, we will use an analogy of sufficient unusualness as

to be readily remembered. What is a normal and also acceptable reaction when a baby annoys someone? The only acceptable reaction is a gentle interaction with the baby coupled with resolving any difficulties the baby may be experiencing. When an older child is annoying the interaction may include some attempt to reason, but properly remains calm while including greater levels of interaction. As the maturity of the person who is being annoying increases the response and interaction become more complicated, simple, and situational as well as relationship specific. But when a mosquito becomes annoying, it gets swatted. Our perception of the value of the entity or person effects our approach and interaction. God obviously is of greater value than a mosquito; His value actually is greater than that of anything other than Himself.

Let us now “poke” in another direction. What is the color of the vestments during Great Lent? It is the color reserved to royalty, called purple or violet. Whom do we commemorate with this color during this liturgical season, and why is this color so strongly associated with penance, with suffering?

**The Ultimate in Royalty, in Specialness, in Value, did penance, endured the most horrible passion, suffering, and death, for creatures that are less than mosquitoes in comparison. And He did nothing to deserve the suffering He endured.**

Of course, we commemorate Christ, the ultimate in fitness to wear the Royal color, and the ultimate in doing penance for sins - though the sins are ours and not His - and in suffering for sins. The Ultimate in Royalty, in Specialness, in Value, did penance, endured the most horrible passion, suffering, and death, for creatures that are less than mosquitoes in comparison. And He did nothing to deserve the suffering He endured.

If someone were to commit a horrible crime against a baby we anticipate the authorities would impose something horrible upon the perpetrator. *How*

*much more so horrible against the perpetrator is the deserved result of even the most minor sin against this ultimate in everything good, holy, and nice, which is God.*

It is to effect - to make happen - this deserved result of sin, that Jesus Christ, God, endured the most horrible suffering possible in His passion and death. Stated in a different manner, Jesus Christ, God, made happen the horrible result which is deserved from the commission of even the most minor of sins. But He made it happen to Himself.

The why's are far beyond our topic but may be summed up by simply stating man was incapable of making restitution for sin. Only God could make that restitution because it is God who is offended by sin. So God, loving us beyond our ability to comprehend, did it. And what He suffered is also beyond our ability to comprehend, and even beyond our ability to experience no matter how horribly we suffer.

**Jesus Christ, God, made happen the horrible result which is deserved from the commission of even the most minor of sins. But He made it happen to Himself.**

Where do we human creatures come into play, or enter into this scenario?

Christ opened the door to salvation. It is up to each of us to enter that door. We approach that door by following the path known as The Way - The Way taught by Christ.

Jesus instructed us that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. In this He informed us that following the path to and of holiness is very possible. He also instructed us, that if we are to be His followers, then, in being His followers we must pick up our cross and follow Him.

As His followers we also are participants in our own salvation and the salvation of all others. One aspect of that participation is becoming and being holy. Another aspect of that participation is suffering - *but not suffering just for the sake of suffering. Rather, suffering as the deserved result of sin - our own sins and those of others; suffering in reparation for sin, in atonement for sin.*

Some positive aspects of these matters are in a related article. What is of importance for now is that we comprehend as best we are able: the actually incomprehensible unique magnificence of God; the equally incomprehensible reality that

just as by His Divine Nature God is omnipotent, all encompassing, beyond and without limits, so too was and is His suffering for us for our sins; that He did it for love of us, each of us; and that as His followers and as members of His Body we participate in the magnificence, suffering, love, as well as the rewards to come.

Ref: 1 Cor 13:1-13; Heb 9:11-15; Luke 18:31-43; John 8:46-59

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(Continued 3 OF 4 from page 1)

pain. Mental pain and anguish (as the lawyers prefer to couple them) are suffering. The uncertainty the elderly who live alone - what if they get sick, can they get to the grocery or the doctor, and the other anxieties they experience - being alone also is so boring, and loneliness, it actually is painful. These are forms of suffering. Suffering a loss, be it through theft, intentional tort, accident, natural calamity, ineptitude, and be it of a thing or a person, is termed suffering a loss because it entails suffering. Stub your toe, hit your funny bone, give birth, do your income tax, and you suffer. The power goes out and you are excruciatingly cold or oppressively hot - that is suffering.

A person who experiences fear, is suffering. A person being teased, snubbed, ridiculed, hit or beat up, is suffering.

**just as by His Divine Nature God is omnipotent, all encompassing, beyond and without limits, so too was and is His suffering for us for our sins**

We all suffer in some measure. Even when we are good we suffer: remember the old adage, that no good deed goes unpunished. It seems to be true.

When Christ rode on the ass, seemingly in triumph, into Jerusalem, He knew Gethsemani awaited Him. Gethsemani, in some form, awaits each of us as well.

Since suffering is an aspect of life - whether one is holy or evil, why not make that suffering be meaningful? Why suffer anxiety, pain, loss, or anything, with the suffering ultimately being without meaning or purpose?

It may seem trite, but consciously offer the suffering you experience to be in union with Christ's suffering, passion and death. Do this when you experience suffering. Make this offering upon arising regarding any suffering you may experience during the day even if none is anticipated. Do it at night just before retiring, especially for any suffering you experienced during the day and which you did not offer at the time it occurred.

When one considers the deserved result of

one's least or smallest sin, the suffering one experiences in life becomes insignificant by comparison. Even that suffering caused by the evil deeds of others. We each are able to truthfully state, that all the suffering we have experienced during our entire life does not even begin to make atonement for the smallest single sin we have committed. Offering that suffering in reparation for one's own sins, and in union with Christ's suffering, puts to good use the suffering one experiences. It also, in some mysterious manner, soothes the suffering, especially the suffering caused by the evil deeds of others.

We know that each of us actually participates in the process of his or her own salvation. As members of the Communion of Saints and of the Body of Christ, we each also actively participate in the process of the eternal salvation of each other person and of mankind as a whole.

As His followers we are to follow Christ in all things . . . but not just in living holy lives or in suffering.

No. As His followers we also will permanently participate in the most ecstatic, joyful, happy life and existence possible once we are united with God for all eternity after this life. This knowledge of our potential future with God, and the realistic Hope of its attainment, sometimes is the lynch pin of our sustenance.

And what awaits those who attain eternal salvation is beyond our ability to imagine.

If you make it to Heaven, it will be as though you have had a ticker tape parade just for you in downtown New York with the whole world participating. Only it will be God greeting you, in Heaven, not New York City. Most of us only have this world experiences to which we are able to inadequately compare eternal union with God in Heaven. But let us give it a try. Like chocolate eclairs? How about all you

can eat, and never get tired of them. Fascinated by sub-atomic physics, or astronomy - how about gaining knowledge of their inner complexities and fascinations, with a never diminishing wonder. Like to fish - you got it, without boredom. Like being snug and secure, it is there. Want to be loved - no better love than that from God, and He welcomes your loving Him as well. The joy and happiness portrayed in all of the movies ever made will pale in comparison with the happiness of Heaven. What ever it is that interests you will be in Heaven.

In Heaven, united with God, experiencing the Beatific Vision, in total harmony with God, you will be free. Total and complete freedom only occurs for those who are in total harmony with God. Complete, total, permanent, freedom, will be yours, in that harmony with God.. Not just freedom from sin, pain, anxiety, fear, or from anything else, but actual freedom itself will be yours.

But these are only this world comparisons. They pale at the mere approach of the reality of what awaits us. So go for that reality.

Ref: 2 Cor 6:1-10; Phili 2:5-11; Mat. 4:1-11; The Passion according to Saint Matthew

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*(Continued 4 OF 4 from page 1)*

Redemption had not yet been made, and they had only encountered the Beatific Vision as it were from afar, their magnificence was only exceeded by that of Jesus Himself.

God did not change so-as-to harmonize with Moses or Elias, or both of them. Each of them changed so-as-to harmonize with God. They maintained their individuality, yet harmonized perfectly.

That is how one acquires Divine power.

Yet, if obtaining Divine power is a person's goal, that person will never attain that goal. For the union with the Divine only occurs when that which conflicts with the Divine, and that which is not in harmony with the Divine, no longer conflicts, no longer is disharmonious. The creature therefore is the one who improves, the creature therefore is the one who changes, for perfection can neither be improved nor change.

When a person who was angry with God because God did not do what the person wanted, attains that perfect and harmonious union with Our Lord, the once angry person readily acknowledges they would now not do it either.

Look forward to union with God for all eternity. And do not be angry or upset with God. After all, He has given His life for you. What more do you want from Him?

Ref: 1 Thes. 4:1-7, Col. 3:1-4; Mat. 17:1-9, Mat 28:1-7



++ *Lee, S.S.B. (Ret.)*

*God, please help me love You*

## THE WASTEFUL STEWARD'S TEMPTATION PREPARATION

When the master ordered the wasteful steward to give an accounting of his stewardship and informed the steward he would be steward no longer, the steward was faced with the need to provide for his own future. He considered the honest means available to him, and was tempted by the dishonest means available to him.

He was not prepared to meet and defeat the temptations for he had not spent much of his recent life preparing to overcome temptations. Rather, he had spent much of his recent life succumbing to temptations.

The temptation to further ingratiate himself to those who owed the master was quickly acted upon by the wasteful steward, for he had become accustomed to wasting, using and/or abusing, the master's assets, and he simply continued the practice.

Overcoming temptation is difficult. Temptations which come from within ourselves are difficult to overcome, but those which come from the devil are extremely difficult to overcome for two main reasons. First, very few people prepare themselves to meet and overcome temptations whether the source of the temptation is from themselves, an outside source or another ordinary type of creature person, and especially not when the source of the temptation is the devil. Second, when the devil tempts he tempts through our weaknesses: if we are hungry it may be through appetite, if we are lonely it may be through the desire for companionship, if we are depressed it may be through anything

which has even a slight tendency to make us feel better even if it is for only a very little while.

Which of us is constantly prepared to meet and overcome such challenges?!

When Satan or his followers, be they fallen angels or living humans, or the works - books, organizations, movies, et ceterae - available to us of Grace dead humans, attack us, tempt us, evil is taking the initiative, attacks where we are weakest, and usually when we are not prepared - for we usually are not prepared.

If we would overcome Satanic tempta-

**Think of this in a very simple situation. When a person undergoes surgery under a general anaesthetic as they begin to regain consciousness they often verbalize, speak, say, or make comments related to that which preoccupies them. Under those circumstances, what is it likely you would be talking about? What would you prefer or like to be talking about? Would it be: someone you screwed in a business deal, how you flimflammed the public through government enactments, a recent sexual experience, or perhaps the Our Father - the Lord's Prayer, or "Hail Mary full of Grace . . ."**

tion or temptation from within, we must be constantly and continually prepared. Very few of us have discovered a practical means of emulating Christ's forty days in the desert wherein He prepared for the triple temptations from Satan. If we would discover the means, then, perhaps we would be able to go out to meet Satan and, as they say in the country, "whoop up on him". When Christ did that Christ put an end to any attempt by Satan to tempt Christ. But should we attempt to do that, if the Devil did not rip off one of

our arms and shove it up our nose, and we actually won, the Devil would just come around again and attempt to tempt us when he perceived the opportunity. And he would find an opportunity.

What we should do is to live a life which is generally in conformity with

*(Continued PREPARATION on page 7)*

(Continued PREPARATION from page 6)  
 God's direction.

If the wasteful steward had not been wasteful, he might not have been discharged, and therefore not been faced with the need to obtain a new source of sustenance. If he was given notice he was being discharged but there was no failure in his service nor was there even an accusation - perhaps the master had a son who was coming of age and was being given the position, or perhaps the master had some financial reverses (he may have invested in American economic futures) - then not only would the steward have stewardship for another as possibility, but he also would be inclined to do even those things which he found unpleasant, such as begging.

It is difficult for us to obtain astonishing spiritual strength through the various spiritual exercises. But we are able to acquire strong spiritual strength which will serve us well in "emergency" situations if we are intentionally accustomed to praying and to living a life which is generally in conformity with God's direction.

Obviously this will well serve us in a time of need.

Think of this in a very simple situation. When a person undergoes surgery under a general anaesthetic as they begin to regain consciousness they often verbalize, speak, say, or make comments related to that which preoccupies them. Under those circumstances, what is it likely you would be talking about? What would you prefer or like to be talking about? Would it be: someone you screwed in a business deal, how you flimflammed the public through government enactments, a recent sexual experience, or perhaps the Our Father - the Lord's Prayer, or "Hail Mary full of Grace . . ."

Ref: Rom. 8:12-17; Luke 16:1-9

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### THE ATTRACTION OF MEN TO THE HEART OF THE MASTER OF THE WASTE- FUL STEWARD

There are a multitude of, shall we say, "things", which never change. Dogma is truth fixed forever for it comes from God who never changes and it is absolute.

But that does not mean that humans as a whole, or in groups, or individuals, can not change, do not change, or that we do not change our perspective and appreciation of reality, or dogma.

For the first perhaps seven hundred years of the Church on Earth the only universal, real feast was that of Pascha, of Easter. Its celebration encompassed all aspects of salvation: the Pascal mystery, the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Saviour, the actual mystery of Baptism. There was more of a focus on combining the risen Christ with the crucifix rather than the Christ crucified.

But as the Church began to mature in dogma it began to explore the multiple facets of the act or process of salvation - not just what man does to facilitate what Christ has made possible, but also aspects of the how and the why of Christ's making salvation possible for us to attain.

With the examination of His actual Passion, the instinctive horror it invoked for those who contemplated it, and the realization God the Father could easily have established an alternative but that all Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity God willed what transpired - with these came a more universal appreciation of the love God has for mankind.

We think we can not help but respond in a positive manner to such love, can not help but be attracted to the Sacred Heart into which we place the image of that Love.

Then we are faced with the reality presented in the parable of the wasteful

steward. The Master had to terminate the service of the wasteful steward. The Master did not desire any harm to the wasteful steward. The Master also could not allow the wasteful steward to continue in stewardship. The steward's betrayal of the Master's trust damaged that which was the Master's, and damaged others as well, so his continuation in his former position just was not possible.

Had the steward not engaged in waste this would be a discussion of the rewards of being a good and faithful steward. It could and usually is a discussion of the fruits of dishonesty, and the reality that if we pursued holiness as diligently as the wasteful steward pursued material self interest we would all walk on water. But it rarely is an exploration of the Divine Love, and that is a shame for it is an excellent opportunity for that exploration.

Notice the Master is aware of the deceit of the steward in falsifying the accounts of what is owed the Master, and the reasons for it - the steward's expectation he will be received into the homes of those who received economic benefit from the falsification of the their accounting statements.

Had the steward not taken the path of dishonesty upon his receipt of notice of his discharge his past work history would have prevented him from ever again attaining a position of stewardship. But being wasteful is much less a transgression than outright theft, and outright theft is what the steward committed when he attempted to purchase future support by falsifying the balances owed to the Master.

Had the steward provided an honest accounting, then left and when it became necessary began to seek alms, to beg wherever it was that beggars begged, it is probable the Master would have seen to the former steward's necessities. He seems to have been such a person, or perhaps we should state He is such a Person. It also is possible the former

(Continued MASTER'S LOVE on page 8)

*(Continued MASTER'S LOVE from page 7)*

steward could have found another position - just not one with such a high level of responsibility. The Master may have been prepared to provide such a position had the former steward's pride not prevented the former steward seeking such a position.

The Master could have easily had the steward thrown into prison for falsifying the statements of the Master's debtors. The Master also could have easily had those who were indebted to Him imprisoned for falsifying the accounts and attempting to steal or being accomplices to the attempted theft of His goods.

But the Master did none of these things.

But the Master also would not interfere with the steward's or with the debtors' exercise of their free will.

His love for them induced the desire they would follow the path of honesty and integrity. And His love for them never ceased.

But as they followed the path to eternal damnation His sorrow reached out to them with ever more evident love.

It is this to which many of us respond.

Let us pray we respond to it in sufficient strength to remedy our situation, and with sufficient time to participate in the Master's retraining program.

Ref: Rom. 8:12-17; Luke 16:1-9

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## DO YOU PRAY FOR THE DEAD . . . FAITHFULLY . . . DAILY . . . ?

Our religious tradition is rich with prayers for the dead, as well as dogma and tradition encouraging the living to pray for the dead.

Exactly how prayers for the dead benefit the dead is similar in explanation to the traditions before Christ wherein sacrifices were offered for the dead, the belief being that those who had died in holiness had great grace laid up for them.

We know from both Saint Peter and Saint Paul that a Sacramentally Baptized person who has attained the ability to know when they have committed a sin must be purified after death - as they indicated, as though gold being purified in the fire. We know from Our Lord Jesus Christ that even a just man sins several times every day. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that everyone except babies and the very young can expect that they will need to be purified after death before they are received into Heaven.

Of course, those dead who have rejected God are incapable of being purified like gold in the fire, for they have no gold to purify; they have no soul living in God's grace, God's essence, from which the impurities may be removed.

Babies and the young who have not yet attained the use of reason but who are Sacramentally Baptized have no impurities intermixed in God's grace, God's essence, in their souls, and therefore have no need to be purified. They are acceptable into Heaven immediate upon the death of their physical bodies.

Those who were not Sacramentally Baptized, and who had no real opportunity to learn about Jesus, are not able to enter into Heaven upon death since Sacramental Baptism is required for entry into the Body of Christ. Yet they are not deserving of Hell simply because they were not Baptized. Some may have been evil, some good, and possibly some

holy, so their situation is very different.

From this it is obvious there is a very great number of dead people who can benefit from our prayers. Some need purification, others need support in what ever it is that God does in the process which applies to the just who died without being Baptized.

A true follower of Christ will make praying for the dead part of their daily life. They may even offer alms. Prayers for the dead offered in conjunction with the Holy Sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy and alms offered for the dead in conjunction with the Holy Sacrifice of the Divine Liturgy - even though the one offering is not attending every Divine Liturgy being prayed throughout the world - these work great benefit for those for whom they are offered. Since the dead are unable to do anything to help themselves, they are dependent upon what we, the living, and those in Heaven, do to assist them.

When we pray for the dead we should so do out of the goodness of our heart. If we so do expecting any benefit the efficacy of our prayers may well be diminished.

Which dead for whom we pray also is important. There are numerous general categories: those who receive the benefit of few or no prayers, the newly dead, those who have been dead a very long time, those who need much prayer before they can be united with God in heaven, people we know, celebrities, those who need but a few prayers to be united with God in Heaven . . .

We should pray for them all.

One of the most common forms of giving alms in conjunction with praying for the dead is purchasing and lighting a candle for the dead.

A great sorrow is those who die and receive a memorial service - but no prayers.

*(Continued ALMS FOR THE DEAD on page 9)*

*(Continued ALMS FOR THE DEAD from page 8)*

Think of the dead for whom you pray. Do you ever wonder if anyone else prays for them? Especially specific individuals - family and friends - whom you know, or knew.

Do you ever wonder who will pray for them when you are dead? Do you ever wonder who will pray for you when you are dead?

Perhaps, just perhaps, if you, by your prayers and alms, are instrumental in assisting someone through the purification process that follows death, and they are united with God in Heaven - perhaps that person will assist you when you die.

You should not pray for the dead with this in mind, but it should give you some comfort to know you will not be abandoned when you die. But you do have to make sure there is something of you which can be purified, some spiritual gold or silver remaining, otherwise you are all impurities.

Ref: Rom. 8:12-17; Luke 16:1-9

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### SOMETHING EFFECTIVE YET DIFFERENT FOR GREAT LENT

Those who believe they need do nothing to attain eternal salvation other than believe that Jesus is God and Saviour are

greatly in error for one easily loses the eternal salvation Jesus has made available if one neglects to do their part. Always remember Jesus instructed us to take up His Cross and follow Him. And also remember that for those with true Faith, His yoke is easy and

His burden is light. Those who fail to follow this admonition and instruction from Jesus Christ God greatly reduce their prospects of experiencing a delightful eternity.

We are entering into Great Lent, the portion of the liturgical year during which we more closely assess our spiritual life and improve it through a multitude of means all provided and suggested either directly or indirectly by God.

One of the most common practices during Great Lent is to give up something we like, such as candy. We do this so as to deny ourselves something which we like thereby inducing some measure both of suffering and of self discipline.

Another practice during Great Lent is to do something, such a pray certain prayers, "make a Novena", or assist at a public charity such as a food pantry.

And some people combine the two, such as those who "give up" cigarettes and donate to the Church or another charity the money they would have spent on the cigarettes.

These are various forms of or contain

various forms of penance, suffering, prayer, alms giving, examination of conscience, spiritual self evaluation, and attempted spiritual improvement - all with the intent to attain or maintain holiness.

And very often those who attempt these practices are no more successful than those who attempt to keep their new year's resolutions.

It may be helpful if those who have difficulty "doing something" for Great Lent returned to more simple practices. More simple practices may benefit others as well.

One of the simplest is a derivation from the prayer to one's Guardian Angel. Many disdain this prayer as being childish or as being a child's prayer, because they erroneously contemplate Saint Paul's words that when he was a child he did as a child, but now as an adult he has put away childish things. Such individuals neglect to mesh Saint Paul's words with Our Lord's words, that we be as little children, and also His telling us that every child's Guardian Angel is constantly before the face of God.

The Guardian Angel Prayer in the morning is: Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love entrusts me here, ever this day, be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

The Guardian Angel Prayer before bedtime is: Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love entrusts me here, ever this night, be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

That is nice, you may think, but rather simplistic. This is true. Therefore, make this prayer into something of benefit to someone else as well. Most people at any one time will have at least one person in their family or whom they know, who has a problem or trouble of some sort. We will name that person Carol.

*(Continued CHILDLIKE on page 12)*

## CHILDREN'S PAGE

### THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA AND THE TWO ELDERS

*Daniel Chapter 13 The history of Susanna and the two elders. This history of Susanna, in all the ancient Greek and Latin Bibles, was placed in the beginning of the book of Daniel: till St. Jerome, in his translation, detached it from thence; because he did not find it in the Hebrew: which is also the case of the history of Bel and the Dragon. But both the one and the other are received by the Catholic Church: and were from the very beginning a part of the Christian Bible.*

13:1. Now there was a man that dwelt in Babylon, and his name was Joakim: 13:2. And he took a wife, whose name was Susanna, the daughter of Helcias, a very beautiful woman, and one that feared God. 13:3. For her parents being just, had instructed their daughter according to the law of Moses.

13:4. Now Joakim was very rich, and had an orchard near his house: and the Jews resorted to him, because he was the most honourable of them all. 13:5. And there were two of the ancients of the people appointed judges that year, of whom the Lord said: That iniquity came out from Babylon, from the ancient judges, that seemed to govern the people. 13:6. These men frequented the house of Joakim, and all that had any matters of judgment came to them. 13:7.

And when the people departed away at noon, Susanna went in, and walked in her husband's orchard. 13:8. And the old men saw her going in every day, and walking: and they were inflamed with lust towards her: 13:9. And they perverted their own mind, and turned away their eyes, that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments. 13:10. So they were both wounded with the love of her, yet they did not make known their grief one to the other. 13:11. For they were ashamed to declare

to one another their lust, being desirous to have to do with her: 13:12.

And they watched carefully every day to see her. And one said to the other: 13:13. Let us now go home, for it is dinner time. So going out, they departed one from another. 13:14. And turning back again, they came both to the same place: and asking one another the cause, they acknowledged their lust: and then they agreed together upon a time, when they might find her alone.

13:15. And it fell out, as they watched a fit day, she went in on a time, as yesterday and the day before, with two maids only, and was desirous to wash herself in the orchard: for it was hot weather. 13:16. And there was nobody there, but the two old men that had hid themselves, and were beholding her. 13:17. So she said to the maids: Bring me oil, and washing balls, and shut the doors of the orchard, that I may wash me. 13:18. And they did as she bade them: and they shut the doors of the orchard, and went out by a back door to fetch what she had commanded them, and they knew not that the elders were hid within.

13:19. Now when the maids were gone forth, the two elders arose, and ran to her, and said: 13:20. Behold the doors of the orchard are shut, and nobody seeth us, and we are in love with thee: wherefore consent to us, and lie with us. 13:21. But if thou wilt not, we will bear witness against thee, that a young man was with thee, and therefore thou didst send away thy maids from thee.

13:22. Susanna sighed, and said: I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing, it is death to me: and if I do it not, I shall not escape your hands. 13:23. But it is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.

13:24. With that Susanna cried out with a loud voice: and the elders also cried out against her. 13:25. And one of them

ran to the door of the orchard, and opened it. 13:26. So when the servants of the house heard the cry in the orchard, they rushed in by the back door, to see what was the matter.

13:27. But after the old men had spoken, the servants were greatly ashamed: for never had there been any such word said of Susanna. And on the next day, 13:28. When the people were come to Joakim, her husband, the two elders also came full of wicked device against Susanna, to put her to death.

13:29. And they said before the people: Send to Susanna, daughter of Helcias, the wife of Joakim. And presently they sent. 13:30. And she came with her parents, and children and all her kindred.

13:31. Now Susanna was exceeding delicate, and beautiful to behold. 13:32. But those wicked men commanded that her face should be uncovered, (for she was covered) that so at least they might be satisfied with her beauty. 13:33. Therefore her friends, and all her acquaintance wept. 13:34. But the two elders rising up in the midst of the people, laid their hands upon her head. 13:35. And she weeping, looked up to heaven, for her heart had confidence in the Lord.

13:36. And the elders said: As we walked in the orchard alone, this woman came in with two maids, and shut the doors of the orchard, and sent away the maids from her. 13:37. Then a young man that was there hid came to her, and lay with her. 13:38. But we that were in a corner of the orchard, seeing this wickedness, ran up to them, and we saw them lie together. 13:39. And him indeed we could not take, because he was stronger than us, and opening the doors, he leaped out: 13:40. But having taken this woman, we asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us: of this thing we are witnesses.

*(Continued CHILDREN PAGE on page 11)*

## CHILDREN'S PAGE

*(Continued CHILDREN PAGE from page 10)*

13:41. The multitude believed them, as being the elders, and the judges of the people, and they condemned her to death.

13:42. Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said: O eternal God, who knowest hidden things, who knowest all things before they come to pass, 13:43. Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me: and behold I must die, whereas I have done none of these things, which these men have maliciously forged against me.

13:44. And the Lord heard her voice. 13:45. And when she was led to be put to death, the Lord raised up the holy spirit of a young boy, whose name was Daniel: 13:46. And he cried out with a loud voice: I am clear from the blood of this woman. 13:47. Then all the people turning themselves towards him, said: What meaneth this word that thou hast spoken? 13:48. But he standing in the midst of them, said: Are ye so foolish, ye children of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, you have condemned a daughter of Israel? 13:49. Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her.

13:50. So all the people turned again in haste, and the old men said to him: Come, and sit thou down among us, and shew it us: seeing God hath given thee the honour of old age.

13:51. And Daniel said to the people: Separate these two far from one another, and I will examine them.

13:52. So when they were put asunder one from the other, he called one of them, and said to him: O thou that art grown old in evil days, now are thy sins come out, which thou hast committed before: 13:53. In judging unjust judgments, oppressing the innocent, and letting the guilty to go free, whereas the Lord saith: The innocent and the just

thou shalt not kill. 13:54. Now then if thou sawest her, tell me under what tree thou sawest them conversing together: He said: Under a mastic tree. 13:55. And Daniel said: Well hast thou lide against thy own head: for behold the angel of God having recieved the sentence of him, shall cut thee in two.

13:56. And having put him aside, he commanded that the other should come, and he said to him: O thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda, beauty hath deceived tee, and lust hath perverted thy heart: 13:57. Thus did you do to the daughters of Israel, and they for fear conversed with you: but a daughter of Juda would not abide your wickedness. 13:58. Now, therefore, tell me, under what tree didst thou take them conversing together. And he answered: Under a holm tree. 13:59. And Daniel said to him: Well hast thou also lied against thy own head: for the angel of the Lord waiteth with a sword to cut thee in two, and to destroy you.

13:60. With that all the assembly cried out with a loud voice, and they blessed God, who saveth them that trust in him.

13:61. And they rose up against the two elders, (for Daniel had convicted them of false witness by their own mouth) and they did to them as they had maliciously dealt against their neighbour, 13:62. To fulfil the law of Moses: and they put them to death, and innocent blood was saved in that day.

13:63. But Helcias, and his wife, praised God, for their daughter, Susanna, with Joakim, her husband, and all her kindred, because there was no dishonesty found in her. 13:64. And Daniel became great in the sight of the people from that day, and thence forward. 13:65. And king Astyages was gathered to his fathers; and Cyrus, the Persian, received his kingdom.

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### HUMOR

(Thank you Patricia)

A teenage boy had just passed his driving test and inquired of his father as to when they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said he'd make a deal with his son, "You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car."

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it. After about six weeks his father said, "Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't had your hair cut."

The boy said, "You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair, and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair."

(You're going to love the Dad's reply!)

The father replied, "Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went?"

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(Continued **CHILDLIKE** from page 9)

Immediately after praying the Guardian Angel Prayer for your self in the morning, pray it for Carol. Pray: Angel of God, Carol's guardian dear, to whom God's love entrusts him/her here, ever this day, be at his/her side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen. (Carol may be a boy's or a girl's name)

And immediately after praying it for yourself just before bedtime, pray it for Carol again: Angel of God, Carol's guardian dear, to whom God's love entrusts him/her here, ever this night, be at his/her side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

You may wish to pray this for a different person each day of Great Lent.

Just this simple prayer, this simple act, is for your own benefit and also for the benefit of another, requires attention but easy to engage attention, time but a minimal amount of time, is a giving of alms through prayer which everyone is able to afford, and is very effective for it is directed to individuals who constantly stand before and see the face of God.

Hopefully you will see where these suggestions are intended to lead you.

Oh, and give up the candy for Lent.

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

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## THE GOD POSITION HAS AN INCUMBENT and He isn't leaving

### So get used to it

~COMPARATIVE ETERNITIES ~

God - each Person of the Blessed Trinity - has spent a lot of love, time, energy, and effort making eternal salvation available to each of us. The Apostles, Disciples, Early Fathers of the Church, and innumerable validly Ordained Priests and Bishops in Apostolic Succession, as well as innumerable laity, martyrs, confessors, doctors, and other saints, have all also spent immeasurable love, effort, time, and energy to assist each and every human being in attaining eternal union with God.

The result? A few who accept Christ's statement, "*Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God.*" And a great multitude who invent words which they attempt to place in God's mouth.

For the time being forget the non-Christians. Let them have the eternity which their various religions state are reality.

Let the Moslems have a heaven which only men are able to attain and wherein each man is given several swelling breasted slow eyed virgins who once they are deflowered return to the state of virginity, and where each man is given several little boys - probably so the boys can be buggered. That will become very dull and boring after just a little while - just ask any Hollywood celebrity.

Let the Buddhists and Hindus have an eternity where they continually recycle into the world attempting to gain or regain union with perfection - and ask yourself this question: Why did any of them ever drop out of the perfection of which they were once a part and enter into this world where their only purpose

is to regain union with that perfection which they left? Their perfection must be rather stupid.

Let the Animists and Pagans have their hereafter, which is fairly much the same as the here and now only as some form of spirit instead of flesh and blood and spirit and soul. It is easy to understand why many of them just do not care about life since no matter whether they are here or in the hereafter the only real difference is the hereafter is shadowy and one is without a body which can be poked.

The Jews can go to Abraham's bosom having never tasted the delights of a Bacon, Lettuce, and Tomato sandwich.

Christianity - now that should be simple. An eternity of eternal ultimate happiness and joy in

union with God or an eternity of eternal ultimate unhappiness, pain, and suffering in the fires of Hell separated from God.

Since there are two potential eternities which a person may experience, how does one reach either destination?

One group of Christians teach that all one must do to attain eternal happiness is to have faith and that faith consists of, "Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ." That means Adolph Hitler, Joe Stalin, Atilla the Hun, Charlie Sheen and his pornography friends, and other of similar ilk, if they, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," will attain eternal salvation. Just imagine Charlie Sheen and his pornography friends having lunch with Saint Agnes. Adolph Hitler living across the street from Saint Peter. Atilla the Hun playing golf with Saint Brendan(m). Saint Paul in a lively discussion with Joe Stalin and Lenin.

Oh, Hitler and the others are backsliders so they do not get to go to Heaven? At least the ones who died as backslid-

(Continued **INCUMBENT** on page 13)

**The Jews can go to Abraham's bosom having never tasted the delights of a Bacon, Lettuce, and Tomato sandwich.**

**WHEN IS FASTING NOT A FORM OF SUFFERING?**

**Just a Quick Thought.**

Many consider fasting as a form of suffering. From what should we fast? Food and drink? Treats, wine, candy, sweet meats, desserts and delicacies? There is a great potential for one who fasts from food to suffer physical harm, even permanent harm. Various forms of fasting have the realistic potential of being harmful, and should always be thought out prior to and during the exercise of the fast. However, there is one form of fasting, one thing from which we should always fast, the fasting from which always does us immense good, never causes us any form or type of harm, is always pleasing to God, and always reaps immense blessings from God - Fasting from sin. Of course, we experience no suffering when we fast from sin. But, that is OK.

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*(Continued INCUMBENT from page 12)*

ers, and the ones still alive have a chance if they stop their backsliding!

Oh, oh . . . some standards just got introduced into this mis-shaped and erroneous, pretend Christianity. And were some requirements just introduced as well?

True Christianity requires Faith which includes thinking, acting, actual living, in accordance with Faith. Excluded is some liar's statement as to what God said or what are God's requirements. Today the only ones who maintain absolute continuity with God's teachings are found in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church whose clergy have true Apostolic Succession being ordained Priests and Bishops in unbroken lines and chains directly from the Priests and Bishops of today back to the Apostles and thence to Jesus Christ God.

Notice, they are found in the line of true Apostolic Succession. But this does not mean every Priest and Bishop who is or-

**A lot of people wish God's standards for us were optional but they are not - unless you do not care about going to Heaven.**

daind in the line of Apostolic Succession maintains continuity with Christ's teachings. Where do you think all the erroneous branches of Christianity came from? They came from teachers of false dogma. One must therefore listen closely to what even the Priests of true Apostolic Succession teach and assess whether or not what they teach is within the Apostolic Tradition. And that means each member of the laity must at the very least have a general understanding as to what is the Dogma of the Church which the Church received from Christ and His Apostles.

If anyone teaches one need not confess their sins to a Priest and receive Sacramental Absolution to be assured their sins are forgiven, that teacher is stating the Sacrament of Confession and Absolution established by Christ is not necessary. Did Jesus ever establish anything which He does not desire us to use? No!

If anyone teaches the consecrated Bread and Wine only represent the true and actual Body and Blood of Christ, that they only represent Jesus Christ God, and are not actually Jesus Christ God, then that teacher is stating Jesus Christ God is a liar.

If anyone teaches that use of the so called birth control pill is morally acceptable, even though we know the "pill" does not prevent conception but rather prevents the newly conceived baby from attaching to the womb thereby killing the baby, then that person is teaching that God's commandment against unwarranted harm to others and unwarranted

killing of others and His commandment to love one another, are optional. A lot of people wish God's standards for us were optional but they are not - unless you do not care about going to Heaven.

Great masses of people either damn themselves to hell for all eternity or make their journey to union with God and permanent residence in heaven extremely difficult simply because they **ignore or modify** the words which proceed from the mouth of God, or substitute their own words or

the words of some charlatan for those of God. It may not be that man dies by every word which does not proceed from the mouth of God, or which proceeds from other than the mouth of God, but man surely does not live by such words.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to eternal salvation is the inclination some people have to object to anything which they have difficulty comprehending, anything which they find distasteful, anything which they find obsessional, anything which imposes an obligation upon them, anything which causes them discomfort, anything which interferes with that which they wish; in short, anything which comes from the mouth of God which is not in accordance with their own sense of self omnipotence.

Tough luck. The God position has an incumbent and He is not leaving. So pay attention to the words which issue from the mouth of God or go to Hell.

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

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**But this does not mean every Priest and Bishop who is ordained in the line of Apostolic Succession maintains continuity with Christ's teachings. Where do you think all the erroneous branches of Christianity came from?**

**. . . each member of the laity must at the very least have a general understanding as to what is the Dogma of the Church which the Church received from Christ and His Apostles.**

## MAKING PRAYER EFFECTIVE AND INCREASING THE EFFECT

Those who desire to discredit the divinity of Jesus and thereby His teachings, usually with the ultimate goal of teaching there are no moral standards which we are obligated to follow, often attempt to discredit the miracles of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Usually they teach that the people had food with them and that Christ's distribution of the food which was known to be there induced the people who had food with them to share their food. Of course, that would mean that the thousands of people who followed Christ into the wilderness anticipated they would be a great distance from where food was readily available and has the foresight to bring food with them. That simply is not logical.

The miracles of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes is a clear demonstration of the divinity of Christ.

It also is a lesson showing us the means by which we may increase the effectiveness and reach of our prayers.

When a person properly prays to the real God, whether it be in praise, in thanksgiving, simple conversation, seeking assistance, or anything, the greater the honor, honesty, integrity, focus, concentration, and general harmony with God, of the person praying and of the praying, the greater the effect, effectiveness, and reach of the prayers. But the effect, effectiveness, and reach of the prayer remains limited to that which is within the power and ability of a human to attain.

Think of the result as being similar to a person who has a field and bordering the field is a river. But the river is many feet below the level of the field, so the person must bring the water to the field. Cutting or digging an irrigation ditch would be of no use because the level of the river is far below the level of the field, and water does not flow uphill, it flows downhill. The water must be

brought up to the level of the field.

If the person is limited to the person's own physical strength, abilities, and what they are able to construct with material readily at hand, the person may use a bucket to bring water up from the river and dump it on the field. The person may even rig a series of buckets on ropes with a pulley system, or on a frame, or even build a hand or foot operated pump system with which the field may be irrigated. But the area which may be irrigated and thereby be cultivated and yield a harvest will be limited to that which the person is able to irrigate through their own personal efforts.

So too is it with regular prayers, just as as it would have been with feeding of the masses if Christ had not intervened.

The effect, effectiveness, and reach of our prayers will be greatly increased to the extent there will be an overabundance of effect, effectiveness, and reach, if we take but one simple measure in addition to harmony with God. That simple measure is available only to those who are members of the True Church, the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which we are sure the Orthodox Church (and Jurisdictions), Roman Catholic, Coptic, and very few others - but no Protestants - are a part, and further, only to those members who are in a state of Grace, or to put it in the reverse aspect, to those who do not have the debility of mortal sin.

That simple measure is to pray in union with the Divine Liturgy and reception of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Of course one must not supplant the prayers of the Divine Liturgy with their own prayers. But there are places in the Divine Liturgy which are designed for the participants to include their own intentions. And a prudent person will prepare for and even conclude Divine Liturgy by praying the praise, thanksgiving, requests, conversation with God, and other matters which are the subject or focus of their prayers, intending their inclusion, activation, and ef-

fectuation within the Divine Liturgy in which they are about to participate or in which they have just participated.

Christ, the Holy Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offering truly and completely present, sacrificed, and offered in every Divine Liturgy, multiplies the effect, effectiveness, and reach of the prayers just as He multiplied the loaves and fishes. Just as He made an over abundance of food, so too does He make an overabundance of the effect, effectiveness, and reach of the prayers. It is greater than the difference between attempting to irrigate a field using a bucket, and using a high capacity powered pump.

This effect is not limited to just those occasions when one participates in the Divine Liturgy. It is available to those in a state of Grace, in every Divine Liturgy being prayed and yet to be prayed, and perhaps, even in all of those which have been already prayed. But that last involves a theological exploration fruitless to here explore.

Simply remember you have the ability to make your prayers effective and to increase the effectiveness and reach of your prayers simply by "participating" them within the Divine Liturgy. And, of course, do it.

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

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**SATISFACTION WHICH EXCLUDES COMFORT AND HAPPINESS NEITHER REJOICES NOR SEES GOD**

Very few people alive today have actually seen God or any of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity Person to person. A few more have seen God manifested in His energies in a manner making it virtually impossible for one to be mistaken in knowing and believing they have experienced a Divine manifestation. The vast majority of people have as the main experience of God which they readily recognize as experiencing God or the manifestation of God in His energies, their main experience of God is in their own existence.

A person's ability to realize they experience God in their own existence does not depend on the person's mental prowess, vocabulary, literacy, station in life, leisure time, culture, or any other external or internal factor. The realization of God actually is innate in human nature, is not subject to any internal or external factor, and is universal in all humans - and actually universal in every creature. Humans have free will which allows humans to respond to the realization of God in what ever manner each individual desires.

One of the most natural responses to the realization of God is comfort. Not just a feeling of comfort but actual comfort. Sin disturbs that comfort and the happiness which accompanies that comfort. The greater the sin, the greater the diminution of comfort, and the greater the diminution of happiness, until in severe instances, comfort is replaced by discomfort and there is no happiness. Depending on the individual and their attraction to either holiness or to evil, the happiness lost due to sin may be replaced with sorrow, or with satisfaction or one of its cousins.

It may seem strange but there are very many people who desire and actively seek satisfaction - or one of its cousins - in a form which intentionally excludes

God, excludes the realization of God, and excludes the accompanying comfort and happiness of resting in God. These very numerous people attain further and greater satisfaction when they are able to engage in their unholy pursuits in a manner which presents temptations to others, especially to those who desire to pursue holiness. When such people are successful in ensnaring others in their temptations they derive even greater satisfaction. If they are actually able to direct another person's free will away from God and holiness, their satisfaction is near its potential zenith. Such people further not only have no respect for those they ensnare, but also have no respect for each other - for others of their ilk - nor for themselves.

Those who are in the pornography industry are such people. A vast percentage of those in politics are such people. Perhaps that is the reason many people perceive little or no difference between prostitutes or pornography "stars" and politicians. Both promise that which they neither intend nor are able to deliver. Both enjoy "yanking the chain" of those they successfully tempt. Both derive satisfaction in their ability to manipulate and control others, and in clouding other's perception of what is desirable so that desire for God is replaced by that which they promise. Very rarely are they able to deliver what they promise or seem to promise. Nor would they deliver what they promise if they could. Nor would any person who deliberated and carefully contemplated what was promised desire to accept it - especially permanently - because they would realize that which was or seemed to be promised just is not worth having. Not even those who make the promise want what they promise. What they wish to do is to control you, but even if they accomplish that, they do not want you around except for those occasions where they wish to "yank your chain" for the fun of it. But even that eventually loses its attraction, so they seek some other devilment to perform and others upon who to perform it.

These evil people also are very prac-

ticed at presenting their temptations in a most favorable and desirable light. They prey upon the normal human desires and needs in a manner which attracts the individual skillfully into temptation. A tinge of jealousy or envy in an otherwise decent person is easily coaxed into supporting government policies harmful to those who are more affluent. Creating fear that one set of religious beliefs will be imposed upon everyone is used to deny anyone the public practice of their religion, and as the foundation by which government assistance is denied to religious institutions unless those institutions abandon their religious foundations. It also is the foundation upon which rests the concept that the government must therefore take over the charitable, teaching, medical, and other institutionalized functions traditionally performed by religions. And, remarkably, so-as-to prove their toleration of religions, any religion which promotes immorality is allowed privileges while those which promote morality are attacked as lacking tolerance.

Our own individual areas of moral weakness, those which we readily acknowledge - at least privately, and those which we do not readily acknowledge, and especially those of which we are but dimly aware, are open to easy exploitation by those skilled in the arts of manipulation and control. Those who engage in manipulation and those who engage in control are always on the side of evil, for they intentionally interfere with our exercise of our God given free will. And not even God does that.

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

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**THE LITTLE THINGS THAT ARE GOOD CAN MAKE A REALLY NICE KETTLE OF FISH**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?*

Perhaps the answer to that question is, we should be most afraid of ourselves, for all too often we decide to seek something other than the salvation which God has provided to us. All too often we seek something that is attractive to us but which is not merely not holy but is actually evil, or the circumstances under which we seek it are evil, and therefore it is beyond the protection which God provides to us. Thus we abandon the protection which God has provided to us.

What is really terrible is that we seek the delights of this world while knowing and realizing that the glory and happiness we will receive in the life to come with God makes both the joys of this life and the agonies of this life, even combined, to be nothing in comparison. But if we seek the glory and happiness of God's world, and only accept or seek those delights of this world when they are in concert with what God has approved, then we are able to have the best of both worlds.

Of course this means we will often have to do without the joys of this world. But that is of no significance in comparison to the joys of God's world, and especially the loss of the joys of God's world.

We must guard against becoming weary of a joyless life, of a life wherein our only hope is the joys of the life to come,

the joys of eternity with God. The best method by which we are able to guard against this absence of happiness, of joy, is by being God's laborers. We need not be foremen or supervisors. A position equal to one who sows seeds, mends fences, digs irrigation ditches, prunes, harvesters, and performs other forms of manual labor, is quite good in the eyes of God. One need not be like the Bishops and Confessors Cyril and Methodius, apostles to the Slovaks. One need not be like Saint Paul evangelizing to the Gentiles, or Saint Peter evangelizing in the Temple, raising the dead,

**The best method by which we are able to guard against this absence of happiness, of joy, is by being God's laborers. We need not be foremen or supervisors. A position equal to one who sows seeds, mends fences, digs irrigation ditches, prunes, harvesters, and performs other forms of manual labor, is quite good in the eyes of God.**

and leading the beginning Christian community in Jerusalem and Israel. One need but be like the same Saint Peter the fisherman, lending Jesus his boat to serve as a platform from which Jesus could teach to people. The accomplishment of even one very simple thing which in

any manner assists God in the pursuit of eternal salvation for even one person will provide happiness and satisfaction which will fulfill the otherwise emptiness of a joyless life in this world.

We will repeat this important concept: The accomplishment of even one very simple thing which in any manner assists God in the pursuit of eternal salvation for even one person will provide happiness and satisfaction which will fulfill the otherwise emptiness of a joyless life in this world.

Think of Saint Peter, and Saints James

and John. They had just spent a wearying night fishing and caught nothing. They were washing their nets and taking care of their equipment, obviously disappointed at having nothing to show for their labors, when Saint Peter was asked by Jesus to row out a little from the shore so Jesus could teach the large crowd of people. Jesus did not need Saint Peter's help - Jesus could have walked out on top of the water a few yards and preached from there. It would have been a spectacular teaching event. But Jesus allowed Saint Peter to assist, and Saint Peter did assist.

And in that assisting Saint Peter received happiness which overcame his dejection over having had an unsuccessful night of fishing. Of course, when Jesus confirmed His teaching by providing Saints Peter, James, and John, with a catch of fish that filled both boats, Saint Peter began to realize the enormity of the Divine presence he was in, and his own sinfulness and unworthiness. But Jesus Christ, God, made it clear that not just Saint Peter, but Saints James and John also, were fit to be His assistants in pursuit of eternal salvation for all mankind.

This ability, to assist God in pursuit of eternal salvation for every human being, exists for each of us without regard to our situation, station in life, physical or mental deficiencies or abilities, or anything else. Its only dependency is upon our desire, upon our will.

**One need but be like the same Saint Peter the fisherman, lending Jesus his boat to serve as a platform from which Jesus could teach to people. The accomplishment of even one very simple thing which in any manner assists God in the pursuit of eternal salvation for even one person will provide happiness and satisfaction which will fulfill the otherwise emptiness of a joyless life in this world.**

Exercising this ability need not be known by anyone other than ourselves and God.

More people than you can imagine pray for other persons without the recipient of the prayer in-

*(Continued LITTLE on page 17)*

**HUMOR**

**PRAYER FOR SOMEONE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

(Thanks Mike)

During church Sunday morning a preacher said, "Anyone with 'special needs' who wants to be prayed over, please come forward to the front by the altar."

With that, Leroy got in line, and when it was his turn, the Preacher asked, "Leroy, what do you want me to pray about for you?"

Leroy replied, "Preacher, I need you to pray for help with my hearing."

The preacher put one of his fingers in Leroy's ear, and then he took his other hand and placed it on top of Leroy's head; and then he prayed and prayed and eventually the whole congregation joined in with great enthusiasm.

After a few minutes, the preacher removed his hands, stood back and asked, "Leroy, how is your hearing now?"

Leroy answered, "I don't know. It ain't 'til Thursday."

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(Continued **LITTLE** from page 16)

tentions or anyone other than God and His angels and saints being aware of the prayers. And what is requested in those prayers very often is received with the recipient being totally unaware as to the cause of the blessing received.

More often than you can begin to imagine, someone does something to make their church facility a little more attractive or inviting, and that induces someone to attend, and that person who attends begins to trod the path to eternal salvation.

A dying person who is polite and nice to those in attendance may cause one or more of the medical personnel in attendance to wonder at the source of their niceness; which may lead that medical

person to the realization of God.

The magnificent things are impressive. But the little things are also worth while. Not everyone has the ability to do the magnificent things. Not everyone is in a situation where they are able to do the magnificent things even if they have the ability to do them. But everyone has both the ability to do the little things and the situations wherein the little things are appropriate.

In doing the little things for God we focus on God and the things of God, diminishing then influence of the delights of this world and increasing the realization and the effects of the delights of the things of God.

And that can be a really nice kettle of fish.

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

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**BE JUST THAT YOU MAY ENTER HEAVEN**

*"For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."* The scribes and Pharisees were known for keeping, staying, or observing the letter of the law whenever they were in a situation which forced them to so do, for ignoring the spirit of the law whenever ignoring the spirit was convenient, and basically for doing what ever they pleased and assisting others only in-so-far-as it was to their benefit or necessary for them to maintain power. There were some good and honorable scribes and Pharisees who not only observed the letter of the law when forced so-to-do, but actually embraced both the letter and the spirit of the law. But such individuals were few in comparison to those who sought only their own benefit.

Unfortunately Herod Antipas, Caiphas the high priest, Pontius Pilate, and the worst of the Caesars would feel right at home with most of today's government officials and bureaucrats, as well as many of the

clergy, even clergy of the true Church.

Those laws based in on God's direction which these people do not wish to follow, they change wherever possible by any means possible.

In the 1960's the public was warned that the U.S. Supreme Court would legislate instead of adjudicate, and that it would legislate approval of abortifacient contraceptives, and of abortion, in a manner which would demolish the Constitutional rights of the individual states to outlaw abortion and contraceptives. Those who issued the warning were termed alarmists, but they were accurate. While it was still practically possible to have a Constitutional amendment passed to overturn the Supreme Court's pro abortion legislation those who sought to enhance their personal status with the immoral elite slowed down the process saying the same effect could be accomplished through legislation - and then they slowed down the legislation. Today there are almost three thousand babies killed through abortion every day in the U.S.A., and many thousands more killed through abortifacient contraceptives.

In very plain language, those who support abortion "rights", and those who do not oppose abortion, oppose God and God's instructions, and run the real risk of all the horrors of eternal damnation.

But it is not simply such overt acts of defiance against God that are immoral.

Today there is a program in the United States which establishes government provided health care - supposedly - for all who live in America. To pay for such a program will eventually require an additional thirty percent of each citizen's income be taken by the government. But the plan does not simply immorally take the fruits of the sweat of the laborer's brow, but also establishes parameters excluding benefits to those who do not meet certain standards and including those who do meet certain criteria. If someone suffers from an ailment pri-

(Continued **BE JUST** on page 18)

(Continued **BE JUST** from page 17)

marily obtained through immoral sexual activity, such as AIDS, the individual will automatically be covered. But if someone suffers from an ailment primarily obtained through a condition or status which is not approved by the powers in control, such as diabetes or hypertension brought on through being overweight, treatment will be restricted. The program will not necessarily be instituted with such blatant discrimination, but it will quickly evolve to establish such discrimination once it is fully in place and has diminished the ability of the average individual to obtain health insurance from sources other than the government. But those denied health care services will remain obligated to pay the taxes which will be levied to pay for the system.

Obviously such a system is not a just system, and it is not likely those who are instituting this system will enter into the kingdom of heaven.

But in the meantime the rest of us will suffer under the program - especially as it develops.

Injustice takes many forms and is encountered numerous times every day by those who are not in positions of authority. Expressed in a different manner, it is very common for those in positions of authority to abuse and to treat with injustice those who are in positions subservient to them. Even police officers, who are sworn before God to uphold the law and to protect the common citizen, regularly abuse their police powers and police authority. There are thousands of government and even corporation clerks who ignore their obligations and their duties, often with malice towards those to whom they are supposed to provide services.

There is not much we are able to do about this truth and this reality other than pray, admonish the miscreants - hopefully in a manner which will not alienate them and which will induce them to holiness, attempt to live holy lives ourselves, and attempt to properly

influence those within our sphere of influence.

However, we should never allow this reality to induce us to join the ranks of those who practice injustice, for should we join those ranks then we also will join the ranks of those who are not likely to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And eternal union with God in heaven is the goal we seek.

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

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### **THE SACRED EUCHARIST IS THE FOOD OF CHAMPIONS, provided the champion want to be, exercises.**

When Our Lord fed the multitude, the thousands of people who had been with him for days with nothing to eat, and fed them to full satisfaction with only seven loaves of bread and a few little fish, He was foreshadowing His feeding all who possess true Faith and receive the Sacred Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the source of all grace we receive whether from Sacraments, prayer, or otherwise. And the effects of that grace are beyond our ability to comprehend or measure.

In the early second century there was a widow named Symphorosa. Her husband, the Tribune, Getulius, had been martyred by Emperor Hadrian.

Hadrian eventually built a costly palace at Tibur and began its dedication by offering sacrifices to his pagan gods, which actually were demons or devils. These demons informed Hadrian that they were being tormented daily by the widow Symphorosa and her sons by invoking the true God in their prayers. The demons-gods told Hadrian that if Symphorosa and her sons offered sacrifice to them, the demons-gods, that they would give Hadrian all for which he asked.

All of the Emperor's efforts to induce Symphorosa and her sons to sacrifice to the demons-gods were unsuccessful. He

therefore had her tortured and then had a heavy boulder tied around her neck and had her thrown into the river. The next day the emperor summoned her seven sons, and being equally unsuccessful in his attempts to make them sacrifice to the gods, he ordered them to be tied to seven stakes. Each of them suffered a different kind of martyrdom: one was pierced through the throat, another through the breast, another through the heart, another at the navel, one was pierced through the back, another at the side, and one was cleft in two parts from top to bottom.

The power of just the prayers of Saints Symphorosa and her seven sons was so great it prevented the demons-gods from exercising any of their power, and that power over the demons continued even after their martyrdom. Hadrian never did receive his wishes. All of that power of their prayers was derived from their worthy reception of the Sacred Eucharist, of Holy Communion.

A person who receives the Sacred Eucharist as a social custom, or as representing Christ, or who receives in any manner which is other than receiving the actual Body and Blood, Soul, and Divinity, of Jesus Christ, God, not only does not receive any benefit and remains in spiritual starvation, but also should consider themselves fortunate if they do not suffer extreme detriment and even opening themselves to eternal suffering, damnation, and perdition.

As we increasingly appreciate the reality of the Sacred Eucharist the effects of the Sacred Eucharist increase our spiritual strength and the positive effects of our prayers, discussions, conversations, and even the most mundane and common daily activities in which we engage. The Eucharist is so powerful that one who increasing appreciates Its reality will find that even cleaning their teeth or even sleeping, produce positive spiritual effects which induce others to holiness and create blockades to evil.

Material food which we consume for

(Continued **EXERCISE** on page 19)

(Continued EXERCISE from page 18)

physical nourishment requires physical exercise if it is to be utilized for physical strength and health. That physical strength must also be trained through exercises for its most effective use. Eating protein rich food will not make one into a field and track athlete, a champion boxer or swimmer, or world class weight lifter. A good diet will improve one's health without exercise but one's health will benefit by the addition of exercise to the healthful diet - unless one engages in physical activity as a natural part of their life. Exercise and training are necessary to utilize the health and potential strength gained by a good diet.

Spiritual health and strength also require the proper diet of the Eucharist, but unlike physical exercise which builds on physical nourishment, spiritual exercise not only strengthens but also provides nourishment. Nor should we compare physical and spiritual exercises too closely. Performing fifty push ups should not be thought of as having a comparison companion in fifty Hail Mary's (or fifty praying of the Rule of the Mother of God, or of the Jesus Prayer). Though fifty Hail Mary's are an excellent spiritual exercise and should not be overlooked, the fullness of spiritual strength is achieved when holiness becomes the predominant influence in our daily lives whether we are working to earn a living or watching a sporting event.

It is this level of holiness, founded in the Spiritual nourishment of the Sacred Eucharist, and formed into spiritual utility by conscious effort, which made the normal lives of Symphorosa and her sons such powerful opponents to the power of the demons.

After having lived in spiritual starvation for millennia it is no wonder that mankind relishes the Sacred Eucharist. What is a wonder is that so many refuse the Sacred Repast and Sacrificial Victim.

Ref: Rom 6:3-11; Mark 8:1-9

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### THE BELIEF "ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED" IS FOOLISHLY AND SINFULLY PRESUMPTIVE

There are many who proclaim themselves to be Christians *who do not believe in or partake of the Sacraments*. Many of these profess that once a person believes Christ is the Son of God, with the Divinity of Christ sometimes being acknowledged and sometimes being denied but being immaterial, that person is guaranteed to go to heaven without regard as to how they live their lives. Many profess that once a person is born again of the spirit, meaning being re-born in the Holy Spirit, that person is guaranteed to go to heaven without regard as to how they live their lives.

These persons share a two pronged belief: first, that only Christ can save us, meaning sometimes along the lines of that it is only through the passion and death of Christ that eternal salvation is made available to each person; second, that there is nothing which a person can do to win eternal salvation for themselves since only Christ is able to attain eternal salvation for us.

From this two pronged belief comes the principle these profess, that once a person, "believes on the Lord Jesus Christ," and, "is born again in the Holy Spirit," nothing that person does or fails to do will keep them from heaven.

These people commit the sin of presumption, which is: "to venture without positive permission," or "unreasonable confidence in divine favor."

They believe they deserve heaven because they believe Christ is the Son of God, and in that belief and because of that belief they proclaim they have been "born again in the Holy Spirit". What they actually have is a form of immoderate or unjustified hope - not the Divine Virtue of Hope but a very not-divine form of hope.

Their belief and their position, sometimes called or termed "once saved, always saved" or "eternal assurance" is an unjustified reliance on God when God Himself has proclaimed otherwise.

God has dictated very clearly that we each will bear the fruits of our deeds, we will harvest what we sow. In more modern times, both Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin, who murdered millions of people, were, at one time, devout Christians, properly Baptized, and in the terms of those who propound this form of presumptuousness, "born again in the Holy Spirit." While no one should presume to Judge either man, nor to know their final, eternal destination, using the measures God has given us to use for ourselves, it is proper to believe it is highly unlikely either of these men attained eternal union with God in Heaven. Though one or both might have so done, it is permissible to think such as being very unlikely, but still possible.

But the presumption doctrine requires each of these men to have attained eternal union with God in Heaven since they were both, when young, "born again in the Holy Spirit," and "believed on the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Once saved, always saved" or "eternal assurance," is not even slightly in accordance with the parable of the unfaithful steward. The unfaithful steward betrayed the trust of his employer and when confronted with that betrayal and notification he would be discharged, deepened the betrayal. Christ complimented the consistency of the steward's evil and his planning for his future purchased by further betrayal of the employer. But Christ most consistently stated the evil steward was evil, and reaped the reward of being cast out for his evil.

At one time the steward was trustworthy, otherwise he would never have been placed in a position of trust by the rich man. Then the steward transgressed against his employer, and when

(Continued SAVED on page 20)

(Continued **SAVED** from page 19)

the transgressions were discovered, the employer removed the steward from his position of trust. Instead of repenting, the steward continued his evil practices, and those who benefited from his evil practiced evil against the rich man by reducing that which they owed the rich man. Thus the evil steward insured he would be received by those evil debtors who benefited from his continued evil.

Likewise, when someone who believes in Christ, even if their belief is proper, Sacramental, with true Faith, true Hope, true Charity, and true dogma, when such a person sins, they distance themselves from Christ and from eternal salvation. If they sin grievously the separate themselves from Christ, being in effect, discharged from His service. If they refuse to repent they have no possibility of re-establishing a relationship with God. If they continue in grievous sin, then they are assured of evil companionship in Hell for all eternity. They will not go to Heaven, nor will they be united with Christ, ever.

Our acts do have an effect on our eternity. While we are by our nature unable to do anything to warrant eternal salvation, Christ, by His passion and death, as the Supreme Sacrificial Victim and the Supreme Sacrifice, has enabled our deeds to have an effect on our own salvation. And that effect can be to attain eternal salvation, or to deny us eternal salvation.

That is why it is so important that we never cease, never stop, never abandon: pursuit of attaining perfect harmony with God, doing His will, becoming not just good but holy, as well as repentance for our sins, utilization of the Sacraments, and avoidance of evil.

Ref: Rom. 8:12-17; Luke 16:1-9

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## REUNIFICATION HORIZON

Most Rev. Lee S. Mc Colloster, S.S.B. (Ret.)

Prior to approximately the year 1054 A.D. , the Bishop of Rome, who also is the Pope of Rome (not designated as such out of any derision, but to distinguish that office from other offices of equal antiquity which also bear the title of Pope, such as the Coptic Pope) was considered as being the First Amongst Equals - even by the Roman incumbents of that office.

The Bishop of Rome discarded this well established reality of a thousand years, and began to claim the totality of Divine authority rested in the office of Pope of Rome, in approximately the year 1054 A.D. The schism was founded in the *filioque clause* which had been declared invalid, contrary to dogma, and bad theology, by two councils of the Church, with the concurrence of the Bishop of Rome - the Roman Pope - with the Roman Pope just an hundred years prior declaring as anathema, anyone who added the filioque clause to the Creed of Nicea. In approximately 1054 A.D., the Roman Pope added the filioque clause to the Nicene Creed - which effective anathematized him according to the edict of his predecessor.

Over the hundreds of years which followed, the Roman Catholic Church increasingly expanded its claim to Divine authority, eventually effectively claiming the sole authority and ability to proclaim dogma rests with the Pope of Rome.

During all of these events, the primacy of the Bishop of Rome has never been at issue, never been questioned, by the not Roman Catholic jurisdictions (or parts) of The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. What has been opposed, challenged, and denied is the concept, and even the practice, which began after 1054 A.D., that there is no collegiality in "The Power of the Keys". The collegiality is clearly stated by Christ in Matthew 18:15-22, particularly at Mat. 18:18. This clarifies Mat. 16:18, clearly establishing the collegial nature of "The

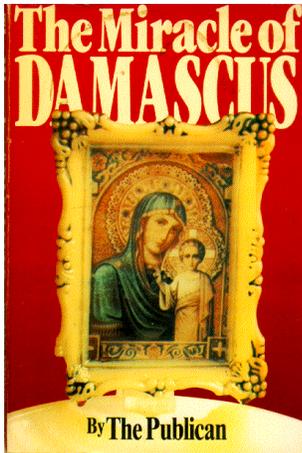
Power of the Keys".

When Pope Benedict XVI resigned, in the Orthodox mind it was a dramatic demonstration that the Divine authority (which is impossible to relinquish for it *is* Divine) claimed by Rome (especially as claimed in Vatican I) might no longer bear its former autocratic nature and all encompassing expanse. It was a demonstration that the office can be set aside - something which most people may have not considered possible. This, combined with the "retirement" of the triregnum or papal tiara by Pope Paul VI, and the actual invitation by Pope Francis I, to Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I, to attend his inauguration of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome and the celebration for taking possession of the See of Rome . . . Never before had a Patriarch of Constantinople attended. The magnitude of this is indicated by the reality that in attendance were many Orthodox primates, amongst them being: Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople, Catholicos of All Armenians Karekin II, Archbishop Tikhon Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America, and Metropolitan Hilarion of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Moscow.

Pope Francis I's use of terms such as referring to himself as the Bishop of Rome, and to his ministry and duties as Bishop to his people, with no reference to being in charge of the Universal Church, his constant call to Charity, insistence that the power of the papacy is the "power of service" seen in the charge by Jesus to St. Peter, "Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep," combined with all of the aforementioned, have resulted in an invitation by Patriarch Bartholomew to Pope Francis to go to Jerusalem in 2014 A.D. for the 50th anniversary of the meeting of Pope Paul VI and Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras.

**Patriarch Bartholomew also stated, he sees a possibility for reunion between the Orthodox and Roman churches, even if it "will probably not happen during my life."**

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*(Editor's Note: We wish this book did not contain negative comments regarding other purported apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We neither condemn nor endorse those comments; but do wish it were possible for there to be more continuity within and amongst the Marian communities.)*

**THE  
MIRACLE  
OF  
DAMASCUS  
by  
the publican  
CHAPTER 1**

*(Continued)*

*A Divided Kingdom*

March 24, 1983, Mirna had another apparition. 9 It was 9:30 P.M. on the feast of the Annunciation, the entrance of Christ into Her womb and into the world for the first time. The Virgin appeared again in blue and white with the Rosary in Her right hand. She came and left the same way as in the second apparition, in a ball of light on the tree. Twelve people followed Mirna to the roof. They could see nothing. The Virgin came close to Mirna and spoke:

**MY CHILDREN,**

**MY MISSION HAS COME TO AN END.**

**IN THIS NIGHT THE ANGEL TOLD ME: "BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN." I COULD SAY NOTHING EXCEPT: "I AM THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD." 10**

*9. An apparition is a face-to-face vision of the natural eyes, and the visionary does not lose consciousness of those around her. An ecstasy is a vision of the mind or the eyes of the soul.*

*10 The words "Blessed are you among women" appear in the fourth century versions of the Bible in Luke 1:28 However, in the second century they only appear in Luke 1:42 The Arabic Bibles all have it in 1:28 We can draw one of two conclusions from this. Either Mary is conforming to the time and place of the seer, as most Marian Theologians would conclude; or Mary is stating that the translation of the fourth century was inspired by the Holy Spirit to be correct. I am inclined to believe the second.*

**I AM HAPPY.**

**I AM NOT WORTHY TO SAY: "YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN," BUT MY LORD HAS SAID IT.**

**ESTABLISH CHURCH. I DID NOT SAY "BUILD A CHURCH." THE CHURCH WHICH JESUS ADOPTED IS ONE CHURCH, BECAUSE JESUS IS ONE.**

**THE CHURCH IS GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH. HE WHO DIVIDED IT HAS SINNED. HE WHO IS HAPPY IN THESE DIVISIONS HAS ALSO SINNED.**

**JESUS ESTABLISHED IT. IT WAS VERY SMALL. WHEN IT GREW IT BECAME DIVIDED. WHOEVER DIVIDED IT HAS NO LOVE. BE UNITED.**

**I SAY TO YOU: "PRAY, PRAY, PRAY."**

**HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE MY CHILDREN WHEN THEY KNEEL AND**

**IMPLORE. DO NOT BE AFRAID. I AM WITH YOU.**

**DO NOT BE FRAGMENTED LIKE THE ELDERS.**

**YOU SHALL TEACH GENERATIONS UNITY, LOVE AND FAITH.**

**PRAY FOR THE INHABITANTS OF (SAMMA) AND EARTH. 11**

*11. At first I translated "Samma" as "Heaven"; however, I was wrong in the translation. "Samma" means "upper sky" and "Janni" means "Heaven." There is another word for the blue or lower sky. So this has to mean an in between place or Purgatory. The Melkites call it "Mat'har" or "cleansing." The Virgin Mary is stating a doctrine without offending anyone.*

The Mother of God clasped Her Rosary at the center of the beads (where it connects, making a circle). The cross hung down. She reached out as if to hand it to Mima. Mirna reached out with two cupped hands to catch it and lifted her hands to a point of touching the Crucifix. Oil poured quickly out of the Crucifix and filled both hands. It overflowed onto the ground. Everyone around her saw the oil overflowing and ran over to catch it. Each of them filled their own hands from the overflow of Mirna's hands. One man filled his hands and poured it all over his face. Then filled his hands again.

The Virgin backed away lifting the Rosary up as if to remind us not to forget it. The road of light disappeared under Her as She passed through the railing, across the street, into the ball of light in the tree. The ball closed around Her. Three bolts of lightning came out of the ball. Everything disappeared. A large spot of oil on the floor was all that remained. Later they built a ring of bricks around the spot to keep people from walking on it. And later still they built a shrine with a statue of the Virgin over the spot.

Mirna understood almost none of this  
*(Continued DAMASCUS on page 22)*

(Continued DAMASCUS from page 21)

apparition. Her limited religious knowledge allowed her only to pass it on. A great deal of deep theology is in these simple lines, but we will get into that in another chapter. For now it is important to note that she didn't understand. Mary's mission from God was to teach the world that God wants His Church united again as it was in the beginning.<sup>12</sup>

**12. "Establish Church" has the same meaning as "Establish Truth." For the word "adopted" see Romans 8:14-15.**

On October 24, Mirna had two ecstasies. The first at 2:00 P.M. and the second at 6:00 P.M. There were no messages; however, on October 26th she began for the first time to feel the presence of nails in her hands.

On October 28, 1983, Mary comforts her:

**DO NOT BE AFRAID. ALL THIS HAPPENED SO THE NAME OF GOD WILL BE GLORIFIED.**

**DO NOT BE AFRAID. THROUGH YOUR EXAMPLE I WILL EDUCATE MY GENERATION.**

The ecstasy lasted from 6:20 P.M. until 6:50, even though the message was short. Oil extruded from her face, neck, chest and hands. Her body became rigid and cold. She had pain in her head and in the palms of her hands. On November 4, 1983 a kind of callosity (red spots) appeared in the middle of each palm.

#### *Not All My Children*

On the 7th of November she started receiving pain at the "bend of her foot." Oil continued from the Icon and the pain continued. She had the feeling of the presence of nails in the palms of her hands and feet. She prayed all that time.

She stayed in bed. Her mother was beside herself with worry and sympathy for her pain. She began to wish this had

never happened to her daughter. Mirna went into another ecstasy, and as she narrates: "I found myself in the clouds, and I saw my Mother Virgin Mary. She was smiling at me. I smiled too. It was if She was my sister and my friend. She was standing and I was almost standing. . . I mean sort of squatting.

"The Virgin's smile changed and became gloomy. She said:

**GO DOWN AND TELL THEM THAT YOU ARE MY DAUGHTER BEFORE BEING THEIR DAUGHTER.**

"I repeated what She said. I saw them all crying around me. Also I saw my body lying down on the bed. How I saw that, I do not know. I told them: 'Nouha [this is her mother's name], I am her daughter before being yours.' Again I went back to the Virgin Mary. She said to me:

**MY HEART IS CONSUMED FOR MY UNIQUE SON.**

**IT WILL NOT BE CONSUMED FOR ALL MY CHILDREN.**

"Then I came back and opened my eyes."

During the ecstasy, Mirna approved with a movement of her head what Father Malouli was telling the believers.

She kept saying, "Pray, pray, pray!"<sup>13</sup> (See film.)

**13. Mary is affirming in these apparitions that She is the Mother of all mankind. Co-redemption is also implied. Mirna came out of her body and then could look back at herself lying in bed.**

By now oil was coming out of copies of the Icon from all over the world. Hundreds of Icon copies had been given out to visitors at the house of Soufanieh or simply made by people who believed. These (copies) were pouring out oil, and cures were taking place everywhere.

This is very much like what happened and continues to happen with the Miraculous Medal. So far we can count 37 comparisons to the apparitions of Saint Catherine Laboure.

#### *Wife or Nun?*

The Miracle of Damascus was a year old. No one who lived the miracle had any doubts. Hundreds of priests and nuns had become involved. Five bishops were watching closely. No condemnations were given. Documents were being sent to the Vatican. Mirna was beginning to suffer not only from her body (which was taking on the five wounds of Christ) but also from the people around her and her own husband.

Her friends became angry at her because she continued to be a housewife. She mopped the floors, made beds, fixed the meals, washed the clothes. When her friends saw her, they would get angry.

"Your hands should not do these things. They are blessed by God."

She would answer, "I don't believe the Virgin Mary had a servant."

Nicolas was a problem too. He loved her dearly, but he now thought of her as something that no longer belonged to him, something (not somebody) that was holy, a relic, a sacramental, something too holy to touch. Mirna spent many hours crying. No one knew why. The priests worried about it, but (for a long time) didn't ask. Eventually, they found out. Mirna wanted to have a baby, but Nicolas had not even touched her in over a year. Finally, the good priest decided to get involved.

"Nicolas, marriage is for children. Why are you not having children? Why are you breaking your marriage contract?"

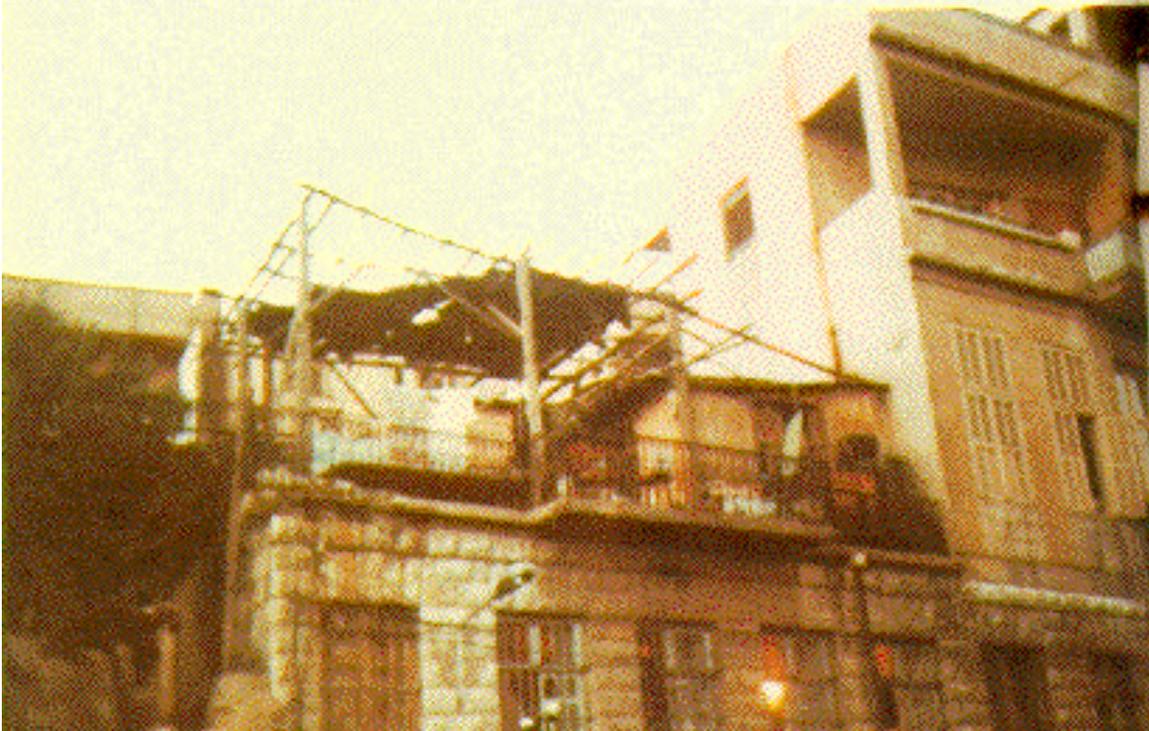
"Father, I married a normal, happy girl, but she no longer belongs to me. God took her away. She should become a nun or something. She has become the

(Continued DAMASCUS on page 24)

(Continued DAMASCUS)



Upper: The home of Mirna and Nicholas Nazour in the Soufanieth (Christian) district of the "Old City" of Damascus. They occupy the lower apartment. Nicholas' brother and his family occupy the upper apartment.  
Lower: The roof of the Nazour home at the time of the first apparition of Our Lady - who approached the roof from across the street and passed through the iron railing.



(Continued DAMASCUS)

(Continued DAMASCUS from page 22)

property of the world. She is called by God to something. I don't know what. But how can our life ever be the same again? These things do not happen to normal people, only to nuns and priests."

"Have you learned nothing from all of this, Nicolas? What is God trying to say to us? It is not 'UNITY'? Isn't He telling us we should be one, one Kingdom on earth, one faith, one belief, one Church? The greatest example of this unity was the holy family. Family life is the first building block of the Kingdom, the Church. The unity of the family is the first example of the unity of the Church. If God didn't want your marriage, He would have started this miracle six months earlier before you were married. He wanted to show the world the sanctity of marriage, the sanctity of the unity of one body in Christ. You and Mirna are one, not two. She is no longer alone. She is one body with you. Is that not what you became at the Sacrament of Marriage? It is not what you promised to God in your vows?"

Nicolas was not convinced. "Yes! Yes! I have thought out all those things. But you know my past life. I was not the most saintly of men. In this part of the world, we do not have such openness about sex. It is not even thought of as holy within the marriage itself. We think of it as only tolerated by God."

"No! No! No! My poor friend! Your thinking is all wrong. What do you think you can give to God? Do you think God needs anything? Does God need sacrifices? Does God need our prayers? No! He doesn't. We need them. He gives everything. All He wants in return is SOULS, SOULS, SOULS. We cannot give Him souls without babies.

"Sex is [a] most perfect example of unity, since the unity brings life, and life [properly lived] brings eternal life with Christ, and eternal life with Christ is all God wants from us so He can show us His love forever and ever and ever. Without this perfect unity, nothing hap-

pens."

"What about you priests and nuns? What about Christ, Mary, and Joseph? None of you have sex. You have all given it up for God."

"Christ, Mary, Joseph, and we, who have followed their example, have done so to become the servants of the family. We are the aids of the family. We are always and forever outside in order to be the guides, the directors, the debt-payers for all those families who don't live as they should, who don't pray as they should, who don't love as they should. We are ordained by God to be the servants of the family.

But the family is the main building block of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. It is the miniature Kingdom, or the atoms of the Church. Without babies there are no souls for us priests to serve." 14

*14. There are many saints throughout history who were married. There are many who had apparitions: St. Bridget, Blessed Anna Maria Taigi, St. Monica, St. Helen, etc.*

### Stigmata and Unity

It was a great argument, but the good priest needed help. He got the help from the greatest of all sources. On November 25, 1983, Mirna was starting to show signs of the stigmata. Her small home was packed with priests from every different kind of church: Syrian Catholics, Roman Catholics, Romanian Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Assyrians, etc. Oil continued pouring from her hands and the Icon. Blood came from her side leaving a blood stain on her shirt. By 5:00 P.M. blood was flowing from her hands and her feet. After six hours the blood stopped and the wounds closed all by themselves.

At 8:00 P.M. Mirna had another vision. (See film.) She saw the Virgin Mary. The Virgin was standing at a level slightly higher than Mirna, but in the vision, both were standing. The Holy

Mother didn't mention the wounds and pains Mirna had suffered. In referring to past messages and to Nicolas, She simply said:

**THAT IS ALL I WANT.**

**I DID NOT COME TO SEPARATE. YOUR MARRIED LIFE SHALL STAY AS IT IS.**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME TO ME?...COME**

**IT SUFFICES THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO COME.**

Their marriage life became normal again, but God didn't bless them with children. After four-and-one-half years they would finally have a child. It would be with the help of God. (See the message of May 1, 1985.)

The miracle of oil continued, not only from the original Icon, but from other Icons, in other houses and in other countries. The blind were being cured, the lame were walking, the deaf hearing, the sinners repenting. But most important of all, people and even priests from all the different Orthodox, Catholic, and Moslem Churches were praying together as one body.

### Greek Orthodox or No One

This didn't make some of the Greek Orthodox priests happy, especially to see fellow Orthodox priests praying with Catholics. Some Catholics had the same problem. But since Nicolas was Greek Orthodox and head of the household, they felt only Greek Orthodox should lead in the prayers. Father Joseph Malouli, a Catholic priest had been doing it. In spite of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch's approval of the miracle, these priests tried to close down the house by bringing in the local security.

On November 29, 1983, a Greek Orthodox deacon lawyer and a Greek Orthodox theologian came with Syrian security police. The police took the picture

(Continued DAMASCUS on page 25)

(Continued DAMASCUS from page 24)

apart to find out how the oil came out of it. In doing so, they tore the top right-hand corner of the picture, which remains severed to this day. (The picture took on the look of the Kingdom of God as it is today. The frame was broken on the outside. The Icon was ripped on the inside.) They could find no reason to close down the house.

Several days afterward, the security officer came back to the house. He asked Mirna to pray for him. Ever since he tore the Icon his arms were itching badly. Mirna put oil on his arms and prayed for him. The itching stopped. Never again did they have problems with the police. In fact, on days when the crowds are very large, (thousands of people and hundreds of cars) the police are there directing traffic and keeping order.

During the year, oil flowed from everywhere, in front of people from every walk of life and almost every type of religion except Protestant. It even came from the Sacred Heart Picture on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. On November 6, 1984 in front of the Vatican Ambassador, Pro Nuncio Nicolas Rotunno, oil flowed from the hands of Mirna and from the Icon. He met with her secretly in the Little Sisters of Jesus house in Damascus.

Copies of the Icon were made and passed out. People wrote their names on the copies and wanted to leave them in the house overnight. The copies poured out oil.

Soon their bedroom was so full of Icons, Mirna and Nicolas had to sleep on the couches in the living room. Over 900 Icons gave oil in that house. (See pictures.)

As the oil came from a picture, the name on the Icon was called and they came to pick it up. One nun came to leave a picture with Mirna.

Mirna said, "You don't need to leave it. Oil is already coming."

The nun looked down at the Icon still in her hands. Oil was coming out already.

On Holy Thursday, April 18, 1984, the stigmata started again. The wound in her side opened up about five inches long. It opened from the inside to the outside as if the flesh exploded.

The wounds were larger than the ones in 1983. Six hours later the wounds closed without any care. The pain lasted a few days and then disappeared.

*Beautiful Shining Mountain*

On Holy Friday the pain in her side and head was severe. At 3:30 in the afternoon she went into ecstasy. Father Malouli asked her to ask the Virgin what he should do.

"Mirna, Mirna, ask the Virgin Mary what does She want from us so we will execute it."

Mirna didn't hear anything. During the ecstasy she didn't see the Virgin Mary. She saw a high and beautiful mountain. The entire mountain was bathed in light. It lit the whole mountain. She had a strong wish to climb. Many times during the ecstasy she tried to raise her head and her body. For a long time after the ecstasy she couldn't move her left arm and left leg.

When she recovered, Nicolas, Mirna, Father Malouli and all the household went to the Holy Friday burial-service of Christ at Our Lady of Damascus Church. Probably nowhere in the world is there a greater example of the beautiful result a UNITY the Churches could bring about than the Good Friday candle-light procession at Our Lady of Damascus Church. Father Zahlaoui initiated it many years before the Miracle of Unity began.

The ceremony was so beautiful and he was so well liked by the faithful that in time everyone from every type of church attended his service. More than ten thousand people filled the church and

the streets: Roman Catholics, Syrian Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholics, Armenian Catholics, Maronites, Assurian and Moslems, all crowded the streets around his church to pray together for the one Christ.

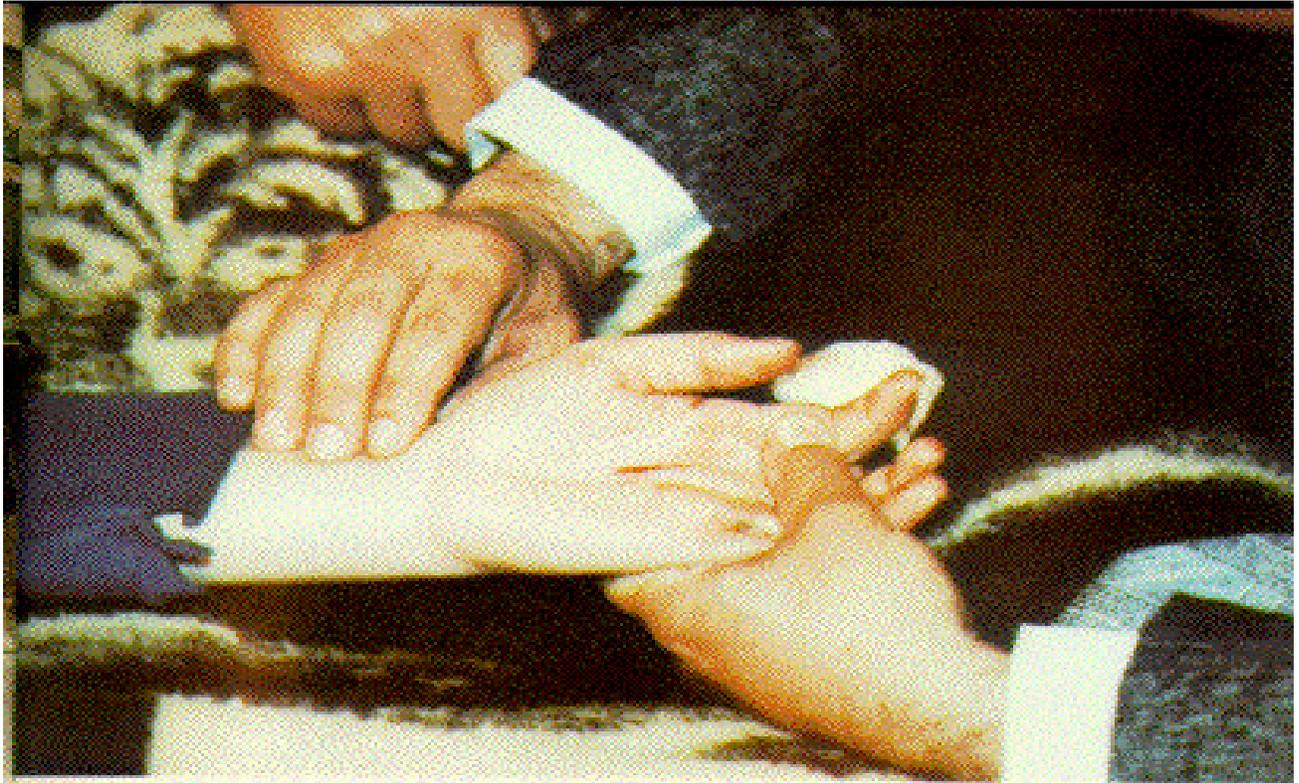
Unity, one Church, one Christ! Maybe it really all started with the work and the prayers of Father E. Zahlaoui many years earlier. Only a few blocks away from his church is the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Fatima, where in 1977 the statue began to cry. Five years afterward came Mirna. The crowds around Our Lady of Damascus church were so big they encircled both churches.

The mountain? I don't know. Maybe it was the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Maybe it was Heaven itself. Maybe it was the unity that we should all try to reach. (See film.)

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(Continued DAMASCUS)

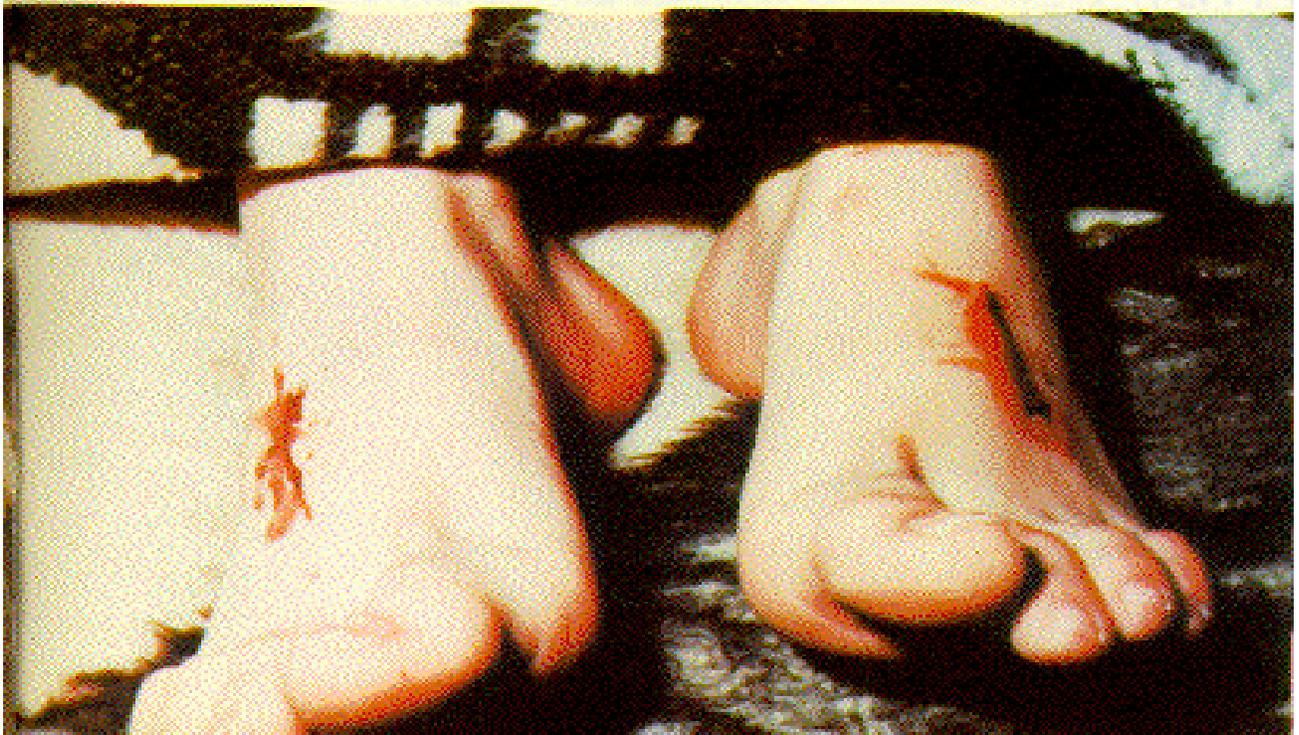
(Continued DAMASCUS)



Upper: Picture of the stigmata in Mirna's left hand

Lower: The stigmata (nail wounds of Christ) in her feet. In November, 1983, Fr. Malouf, her Latin Rite Confessor, and Fr. Zahloot, her Melkite parish priest, were present to observe the wounds open, from the inside to the outside, and then close themselves again.

104-2



**THE CHURCH HISTORY OF  
EUSEBIUS**

**BOOK II.**

(Continued)

**CHAPTER XXVI.**

The Jews, afflicted with Innumerable Evils, commenced the Last War against the Romans.

Josephus again, after relating many things in connection with the calamity which came upon the whole Jewish nation, records, in addition to many other circumstances, that a great many of the most honorable among the Jews were scourged in Jerusalem itself and then crucified by Florus. It happened that he was procurator of Judea when the war began to be kindled, in the twelfth year of Nero.

2 Josephus says that at that time a terrible commotion was stirred up throughout all Syria in consequence of the revolt of the Jews, and that everywhere the latter were destroyed without mercy, like enemies, by the inhabitants of the cities, "so that one could see cities filled with unburied corpses, and the dead bodies of the aged scattered about with the bodies of infants, and women without even a covering for their nakedness, and the whole province full of indescribable calamities, while the dread of those things that were threatened was greater than the sufferings themselves which they anywhere endured."

Such is the account of Josephus; and such was the condition of the Jews at that time.

**BOOK III.**

**CHAPTER I.**

The Parts of the World in which the Apostles preached Christ.

Such was the condition of the Jews. Meanwhile the holy apostles and disciples of our Saviour were dispersed

throughout the world.

Parthia, according to tradition, was allotted to Thomas as his field of labor, Scythia to Andrew, and Asia to John, who, after he had lived some time there, died at Ephesus. Peter appears to have preached in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia to the Jews of the dispersion. And at last, having come to Rome, he was crucified head-downwards; for he had requested that he might suffer in this way.

What do we need to say concerning Paul, who preached the Gospel of Christ from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and afterwards suffered martyrdom in Rome under Nero? These facts are related by Origen in the third volume of his Commentary on Genesis.

**CHAPTER II.**

The First Ruler of the Church of Rome.

After the martyrdom of Paul and of Peter, Linus was the first to obtain the episcopate of the church at Rome. Paul mentions him, when writing to Timothy from Rome, in the salutation at the end of the epistle.

**CHAPTER III.**

The Epistles of the Apostles.

One epistle of Peter, that called the first, is acknowledged as genuine. And this the ancient elders used freely in their own writings as an undisputed work.

But we have learned that his extant second Epistle does not belong to the canon; yet, as it has appeared profitable to many, it has been used with the other Scriptures.

The so-called Acts of Peter, however, and the Gospel which bears his name, and the Preaching and the Apocalypse, as they are called, we know have not been universally accepted, because no ecclesiastical writer, ancient or modern, has made use of testimonies drawn from them.

But in the course of my history I shall be careful to show, in addition to the official succession, what ecclesiastical writers have from time to time made use of any of the disputed works, and what they have said in regard to the canonical and accepted writings, as well as in regard to those which are not of this class.

Such are the writings that bear the name of Peter, only one of which I know to be genuine and acknowledged by the ancient elders.

Paul's fourteen epistles are well known and undisputed. It is not indeed right to overlook the fact that some have rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it is disputed by the church of Rome, on the ground that it was not written by Paul. But what has been said concerning this epistle by those who lived before our time I shall quote in the proper place.

In regard to the so-called Acts of Paul, I have not found them among the undisputed writings.

But as the same apostle, in the salutations at the end of the Epistle to the Romans, has made mention among others of Hermas, to whom the book called The Shepherd is ascribed, it should be observed that this too has been disputed by some, and on their account cannot be placed among the acknowledged books; while by others it is considered quite indispensable, especially to those who need instruction in the elements of the faith. Hence, as we know, it has been publicly read in churches, and I have found that some of the most ancient writers used it. This will serve to show the divine writings that are undisputed as well as those that are not universally acknowledged.

**CHAPTER IV.**

The First Successors of the Apostles.

THAT Paul preached to the Gentiles and laid the foundations of the churches

*(Continued EUSEBIUS on page 28)*

(Continued EUSEBIUS from page 27)

"from Jerusalem round about even unto Illyricum," is evident both from his own words, and from the account which Luke has given in the Acts.

And in how many provinces Peter preached Christ and taught the doctrine of the new covenant to those of the circumcision is clear from his own words in his epistle already mentioned as undisputed, in which he writes to the Hebrews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. But the number and the names of those among them that became true and zealous followers of the apostles, and were judged worthy to tend the churches rounded by them, it is not easy to tell, except those mentioned in the writings of Paul. For he had innumerable fellow-laborers, or "fellow-soldiers," as he called them, and most of them were honored by him with an imperishable memorial, for he gave enduring testimony concerning them in his own epistles. Luke also in the Acts speaks of his friends, and mentions them by name.

Timothy, so it is recorded, was the first to receive the episcopate of the parish in Ephesus, Titus of the churches in Crete.

But Luke, who was of Antiochian parentage and a physician by profession, and who was especially intimate with Paul and well acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us, in two inspired books, proofs of that spiritual healing art which he learned from them. One of these books is the Gospel, which he testifies that he wrote as those who were from the beginning eye witnesses and ministers of the word delivered unto him, all of whom, as he says, he followed accurately from the first. The other book is the Acts of the Apostles which he composed not from the accounts of others, but from what he had seen himself.

And they say that Paul meant to refer to Luke's Gospel wherever, as if speaking of some gospel of his own, he used the words, "according to my Gospel."

As to the rest of his followers, Paul testifies that Crescens was sent to Gaul; but Linus, whom he mentions in the Second Epistle to Timothy as his companion at Rome, was Peter's successor in the episcopate of the church there, as has already been shown. Clement also, who was appointed third bishop of the church at Rome, was, as Paul testifies, his co-laborer and fellow-soldier.

Besides these, that Areopagite, named Dionysius, who was the first to believe after Paul's address to the Athenians in the Areopagus (as recorded by Luke in the Acts) is mentioned by another Dionysius, an ancient writer and pastor of the parish in Corinth, as the first bishop of the church at Athens. But the events connected with the apostolic succession we shall relate at the proper time. Meanwhile let us continue the course of our history.

#### CHAPTER V.

The Last Siege of the Jews after Christ.

AFTER Nero had held the power thirteen years, and Galba and Otho had ruled a year and six months, Vespasian, who had become distinguished in the campaigns against the Jews, was proclaimed sovereign in Judea and received the title of Emperor from the armies there. Setting out immediately, therefore, for Rome, he entrusted the conduct of the war against the Jews to his son Titus. For the Jews after the ascension of our Saviour, in addition to their crime against him, had been devising as many plots as they could against his apostles. First Stephen was stoned to death by them, and after him James, the son of Zebedee and the brother of John, was beheaded, and finally James, the first that had obtained the episcopal seat in Jerusalem after the ascension of our Saviour, died in the manner already described. But the rest of the apostles, who had been incessantly plotted against with a view to their destruction, and had been driven out of the land of Judea, went unto all nations to preach the Gospel, relying upon the power of

Christ, who had said to them, "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations in my name."

But the people of the church in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation, vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea called Pella. And when those that believed in Christ had come thither from Jerusalem, then, as if the royal city of the Jews and the whole land of Judea were entirely destitute of holy men, the judgment of God at length overtook those who had committed such outrages against Christ and his apostles, and totally destroyed that generation of impious men. But the number of calamities which every where fell upon the nation at that time; the extreme misfortunes to which the inhabitants of Judea were especially subjected, the thousands of men, as well as women and children, that perished by the sword, by famine, and by other forms of death innumerable,--all these things, as well as the many great sieges which were carried on against the cities of Judea, and the excessive sufferings endured by those that fled to Jerusalem itself, as to a city of perfect safety, and finally the general course of the whole war, as well as its particular occurrences in detail, and how at last the abomination of desolation, proclaimed by the prophets, stood in the very temple of God, so celebrated of old, the temple which was now awaiting its total and final destruction by fire,-- all these things any one that wishes may find accurately described in the history written by Josephus.

But it is necessary to state that this writer records that the multitude of those who were assembled from all Judea at the time of the Passover, to the number of three million souls, were shut up in Jerusalem "as in a prison," to use his own words. For it was right that in the very days in which they had inflicted suffering upon the Saviour and the Benefactor of all, the Christ of God, that in those days, shut up "as in a prison," they should meet with destruc-

(Continued EUSEBIUS on page 29)

(Continued EUSEBIUS from page 28)

tion at the hands of divine justice.

But passing by the particular calamities which they suffered from the attempts made upon them by the sword and by other means, I think it necessary to relate only the misfortunes which the famine caused, that those who read this work may have some means of knowing that God was not long in executing vengeance upon them for their wickedness against the Christ of God.

#### CHAPTER VI.

The Famine which oppressed them.

TAKING the fifth book of the History of Josephus again in our hands, let us go through the tragedy of events which then occurred. "For the wealthy," he says, "it was equally dangerous to remain. For under pretense that they were going to desert men were put to death for their wealth. The madness of the seditions increased with the famine and both the miseries were inflamed more and more day by day. Nowhere was food to be seen; but, bursting into the houses men searched them thoroughly, and whenever they found anything to eat they tormented the owners on the ground that they had denied that they had anything; but if they found nothing, they tortured them on the ground that they had more carefully concealed it. The proof of their having or not having food was found in the bodies of the poor wretches. Those of them who were still in good condition they assumed were well supplied with food, while those who were already wasted away they passed by, for it seemed absurd to slay those who were on the point of perishing for want. Many, indeed, secretly sold their possessions for one measure of wheat, if they belonged to the wealthier class, of barley if they were poorer. Then shutting themselves up in the innermost parts of their houses, some ate the grain uncooked on account of their terrible want, while others baked it according as necessity and fear dictated. Nowhere were tables set, but, snatching the yet uncooked food from the fire,

they tore it in pieces. Wretched was the fare, and a lamentable spectacle it was to see the more powerful secure an abundance while the weaker mourned. Of all evils, indeed, famine is the worst, and it destroys nothing so effectively as shame. For that which under other circumstances is worthy of respect, in the midst of famine is despised. Thus women snatched the food from the very mouths of their husbands and children, from their fathers, and what was most pitiable of all, mothers from their babes. And while their dearest ones were wasting away in their arms, they were not ashamed to take away from them the last drops that supported life.

And even while they were eating thus they did not remain undiscovered. But everywhere the rioters appeared, to rob them even of these portions of food. For whenever they saw a house shut up, they regarded it as a sign that those inside were taking food. And immediately bursting open the doors they rushed in and seized what they were eating, almost forcing it out of their very throats. Old men who clung to their food were beaten, and if the women concealed it in their hands, their hair was torn for so doing. There was pity neither for gray hairs nor for infants, but, taking up the babes that clung to their morsels of food, they dashed them to the ground. But to those that anticipated their entrance and swallowed what they were about to seize, they were still more cruel, just as if they had been wronged by them. And they, devised the most terrible modes of torture to discover food, stopping up the privy passages of the poor wretches with bitter herbs, and piercing their seats with sharp rods. And men suffered things horrible even to hear of, for the sake of compelling them to confess to the possession of one loaf of bread, or in order that they might be made to disclose a single drachm of barley which they had concealed. But the tormentors themselves did not suffer hunger. Their conduct might indeed have seemed less barbarous if they had been driven to it by necessity; but they did it for the sake of exercising their madness and of providing sustenance

for themselves for days to come.

And when any one crept out of the city by night as far as the outposts of the Romans to collect wild herbs and grass, they went to meet him; and when he thought he had already escaped the enemy, they seized what he had brought with him, and even though oftentimes the man would entreat them, and, calling upon the most awful name of God, adjure them to give him a portion of what he had obtained at the risk of his life, they would give him nothing back. Indeed, it was fortunate if the one that was plundered was not also slain."

To this account Josephus, after relating other things, adds the following: "The possibility of going out of the city being brought to an end, all hope of safety for the Jews was cut off. And the famine increased and devoured the people by houses and families. And the rooms were filled with dead women and children, the lanes of the city with the corpses of old men. Children and youths, swollen with the famine, wandered about the market-places like shadows, and fell down wherever the death agony overtook them. The sick were not strong enough to bury even their own relatives, and those who had the strength hesitated because of the multitude of the dead and the uncertainty as to their own fate. Many, indeed, died while they were burying others, and many betook themselves to their graves before death came upon them. There was neither weeping nor lamentation under these misfortunes; but the famine stifled the natural affections. Those that were dying a lingering death looked with dry eyes upon those that had gone to their rest before them. Deep silence and death-laden night encircled the city.

But the robbers were more terrible than these miseries; for they broke open the houses, which were now mere sepulchres, robbed the dead and stripped the covering from their bodies, and went away with a laugh. They tried the points of their swords in the dead bodies, and

(Continued EUSEBIUS on page 30)

(Continued EUSEBIUS from page 29)

some that were lying on the ground still alive they thrust through in order to test their weapons. But those that prayed that they would use their right hand and their sword upon them, they contemptuously left to be destroyed by the famine. Every one of these died with eyes fixed upon the temple; and they left the seditious alive. These at first gave orders that the dead should be buried out of the public treasury, for they could not endure the stench. But afterward, when they were not able to do this, they threw the bodies from the walls into the trenches. And as Titus went around and saw the trenches filled with the dead, and the thick blood oozing out of the putrid bodies, he groaned aloud, and, raising his hands, called God to witness that this was not his doing." After speaking of some other things, Josephus proceeds as follows: "I cannot hesitate to declare what my feelings compel me to. I suppose, if the Romans had longer delayed in coming against these guilty wretches, the city would have been swallowed up by a chasm, or overwhelmed with a flood, or struck with such thunderbolts as destroyed Sodom. For it had brought forth a generation of men much more godless than were those that suffered such punishment. By their madness indeed was the whole people brought to destruction."

And in the sixth book he writes as follows: "Of those that perished by famine in the city the number was countless, and the miseries they underwent unspeakable. For if so much as the shadow of food appeared in any house, there was war, and the dearest friends engaged in hand-to-hand conflict with one another, and snatched from each other the most wretched supports of life. Nor would they believe that even the dying were without food; but the robbers would search them while they were expiring, lest any one should feign death while concealing food in his bosom. With mouths gaping for want of food, they stumbled and staggered along like mad dogs, and beat the doors as if they were drunk, and in their impotence they would rush into the same houses twice

or thrice in one hour. Necessity compelled them to eat anything they could find, and they gathered and devoured things that were not fit even for the filthiest of irrational beasts. Finally they did not abstain even from their girdles and shoes, and they stripped the hides off their shields and devoured them. Some used even wisps of old hay for food, and others gathered stubble and sold the smallest weight of it for four Attic drachm'.

"But why should I speak of the shamelessness which was displayed during the famine toward inanimate things? For I am going to relate a fact such as is recorded neither by Greeks nor Barbarians; horrible to relate, incredible to hear. And indeed I should gladly have omitted this calamity, that I might not seem to posterity to be a teller of fabulous tales, if I had not innumerable witnesses to it in my own age. And besides, I should render my country poor service if I suppressed the account of the sufferings which she endured.

"There was a certain woman named Mary that dwelt beyond Jordan, whose father was Eleazer, of the village of Bathezor (which signifies the house of hyssop). She was distinguished for her family and her wealth, and had fled with the rest of the multitude to Jerusalem and was shut up there with them during the siege. The tyrants had robbed her of the rest of the property which she had brought with her into the city from Perea. And the remnants of her possessions and whatever food was to be seen the guards rushed in daily and snatched away from her. This made the woman terribly angry, and by her frequent reproaches and imprecations she aroused the anger of the rapacious villains against herself. But no one either through anger or pity would slay her; and she grew weary of finding food for others to eat. The search, too, was already become everywhere difficult, and the famine was piercing her bowels and marrow, and resentment was raging more violently than famine. Taking, therefore, anger and necessity as her counsellors, she proceeded to do a most

unnatural thing. Seizing her child, a boy which was sucking at her breast, she said, Oh, wretched child, in war, in famine, in sedition, for what do I preserve thee? Slaves among the Romans we shall be even if we are allowed to live by them. But even slavery is anticipated by the famine, and the rioters are more cruel than both. Come, be food for me, a fury for these rioters, and a byword to the world, for this is all that is wanting to complete the calamities of the Jews. And when she had said this she slew her son; and having roasted him, she ate one half herself, and covering up the remainder, she kept it. Very soon the rioters appeared on the scene, and, smelling the nefarious odor, they threatened to slay her 'immediately unless she should show them what she had prepared. She replied that she had saved an excellent portion for them, and with that she uncovered the remains of the child. They were immediately seized with horror and amazement and stood transfixed at the sight. But she said This is my own son, and the deed is mine. Eat for I too have eaten. Be not more merciful than a woman, nor more compassionate than a mother. But if you are too pious and shrink from my sacrifice, I have already eaten of it; let the rest also remain for me. At these words the men went out trembling, in this one case being affrighted; yet with difficulty did they yield that food to the mother. Forthwith the whole city was filled with the awful crime, and as all pictured the terrible deed before their own eyes, they trembled as if they had done it themselves. Those that were suffering from the famine now longed for death; and blessed were they that had died before hearing and seeing miseries like these."

Such was the reward which the Jews received for their wickedness and impiety, against the Christ of God.

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(To be continued.)

Altem Varnich der Fied granteig Sachl halwegh der andal der fied esthorat

# How Innocents

III-218



(Continued CONTENTS from page 32)

had died in holiness had great grace laid up for them. We know from both Saint Peter and Saint Paul that a Sacramentally Baptized person who has attained the ability to know when they have committed a sin must be purified after death - as they indicated, as though gold being purified in the fire. We know from Our Lord Jesus Christ that even a just man sins several times every day. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that everyone except babies and the very young can expect that they will need to be purified after death before they are received into Heaven. **Think of the dead for whom you pray. Do you ever wonder if anyone else prays for them? Especially specific individuals - family and friends - whom you know, or knew. Do you ever wonder who will pray for them when you are dead? Do you ever wonder who will pray for you when you are dead?** page 8

**SOMETHING EFFECTIVE YET DIFFERENT FOR GREAT LENT**

Those who believe they need do nothing to attain eternal salvation other than believe that Jesus is God and Saviour are greatly in error for one easily loses the eternal salvation Jesus has made available if one neglects to do their part. Always remember Jesus instructed us to take up His Cross and follow Him. And also remember that for those with true Faith, His yoke is easy and His burden in light. Those who fail to follow this admonition and instruction from Jesus Christ God greatly reduce their prospects of experiencing a delightful eternity. It may be helpful if those who have difficulty "doing something" for Great Lent returned to more simple practices. More simple practices may benefit others as well. One of the simplest is a derivation from the prayer to one's Guardian Angel. Oh, and give up the candy for Lent. page 9

**CHILDREN'S PAGE** page 10 - 11  
**THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA AND THE TWO ELDERS** Daniel Chapter 13

**HUMOR** A teenage boy had just

passed his driving test

**THE GOD POSITION HAS AN INCUMBENT and He isn't leaving So get used to it ~COMPARATIVE ETERNITIES** ~ For the time being forget the non-Christians. Let them have the eternity which their various religions state are reality. **The Jews can go to Abraham's bosom having never tasted the delights of a Bacon, Lettuce, and Tomato sandwich.** page 12

**WHEN IS FASTING NOT A FORM OF SUFFERING? Just a Quick Thought.** page 13

**MAKING PRAYER EFFECTIVE AND INCREASING THE EFFECT**

Those who desire to discredit the divinity of Jesus and thereby His teachings, usually with the ultimate goal of teaching there are no moral standards which we are obligated to follow, often attempt to discredit the miracles of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. a lesson showing us the means by which we may increase the effectiveness and reach of our prayers. The effect, effectiveness, and reach of our prayers will be greatly increased to the extent there will be an overabundance of effect . . . if we take but one simple measure page 14

**SATISFACTION WHICH EXCLUDES COMFORT AND HAPPINESS NEITHER REJOICES NOR SEES GOD**

A person's ability to realize they experience God in their own existence does not depend on the person's mental prowess, . . . One of the most natural responses to the realization of God is comfort page 15

**THE LITTLE THINGS THAT ARE GOOD CAN MAKE A REALLY NICE KETTLE OF FISH**

*The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?* Perhaps the answer to that question is, we should be most afraid of ourselves . . . **The best method by which we are able to guard against this absence of happiness, of joy, is by being God's laborers. We need not be foremen or**

**supervisors. A position equal to one who sows seeds, mends fences, digs irrigation ditches, prunes, harvesters, and performs other forms of manual labor, is quite good in the eyes of God.** page 16

**HUMOR PRAYER FOR SOMEONE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS** page 17

**BE JUST THAT YOU MAY ENTER HEAVEN**

Unfortunately Herod Antipas, Caiphas the high priest, Pontius Pilate, and the worst of the Caesars would feel right at home with most of today's government officials and bureaucrats, as well as many of the clergy, even clergy of the true Church. page 17

**THE SACRED EUCHARIST IS THE FOOD OF CHAMPIONS,**

**provided the champion want to be, exercises.** page 18

**THE BELIEF "ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED" IS FOOLISHLY AND SINFULLY PRESUMPTIVE** page 19

**REUNIFICATION HORIZON** Most Rev. Lee S. Mc Colloster, S.S.B. (Ret.)

Patriarch Bartholomew also stated, he sees a possibility for reunion between the Orthodox and Roman churches, even if it "will probably not happen during my life." page 20

**THE MIRACLE OF DAMASCUS** by the publican (Continued) (with pictures) page 21

**THE CHURCH HISTORY OF EUSEBIUS** (Continued) page 27

CONTENTS page 32

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**CONTENTS**

**TOPIC/TITLE**

**Page**

**ICON OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS**  
page is an insert to this edition

**PROBABLE REACTION TO CHRIST'S PERSONALLY PERFORMING A MIRACLE TODAY**  
(First in a series of four related articles in this issue of *REUNION*) page 1

**SUFFERING - PERSPECTIVES REGARDING GOD AND MAN** (Second in a series of four related articles in this issue of *REUNION*) page 1

**WISELY USE THE INEVITABLENESS OF SUFFERING AS PART OF THE PROCESS - PROGRAM IF YOU WILL - OF PERMANENTLY EXPERIENCING JOY BEYOND IMAGINING** (Third in a series of four related articles in this issue of *REUNION*) page 1

**~ GOD HAS GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR YOU.** What more do you want from Him? (Forth in a series of four related

articles in this issue of *REUNION*) ~  
*From Metropolitan Archbishop Lee S. Mc Colloster, S.S.B. (Ret.) To the flock entrusted into my care:* page 1

**PUBLICATION NOTICE** page 2

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:** page 2

**LETTERS** (none) page 2

**WORLD WIDE WEB: and INTERNET MAILING LISTS** page 2

**THE WASTEFUL STEWARD'S TEMPTATION PREPARATION**  
Think of this in a very simple situation. . . When a person undergoes surgery under a general anaesthetic as they begin to regain consciousness they often verbalize, speak, say, or make comments related to that which preoccupies them. Under those circumstances, what is it likely you would be talking about? What would you prefer or like to be talking about? Would it be: someone you screwed in a business deal, how you flimflammed the public through government enactments, a recent sexual experience, or

perhaps the Our Father - the Lord's Prayer, or "Hail Mary full of Grace . . ." page 6

**THE ATTRACTION OF MEN TO THE HEART OF THE MASTER OF THE WASTEFUL STEWARD** Had the steward not taken the path of dishonesty upon his receipt of notice of his discharge his past work history would have prevented him from ever again attaining a position of stewardship. But being wasteful is much less a transgression than outright theft, and outright theft is what the steward committed when he attempted to purchase future support by falsifying the balances owed to the Master. page 7

**DO YOU PRAY FOR THE DEAD . . . FAITHFULLY . . . DAILY . . . ?** Our religious tradition is rich with prayers for the dead, as well as dogma and tradition encouraging the living to pray for the dead. Exactly how prayers for the dead benefit the dead is similar in explanation to the traditions before Christ wherein sacrifices were offered for the dead, the belief being that those who

*(Continued CONTENTS on page 31)*

**A Priest from New Orleans relates what happened when he asked the students at his parish grammar school what the Feast of The Epiphany is about. One of the boys explained it pretty much this way. Three wise guys from the East came to see Jesus, to bring Him the gold from Frankey and Murry. When they finished the job they celebrated that night with the first Mardi Gras parade.**

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