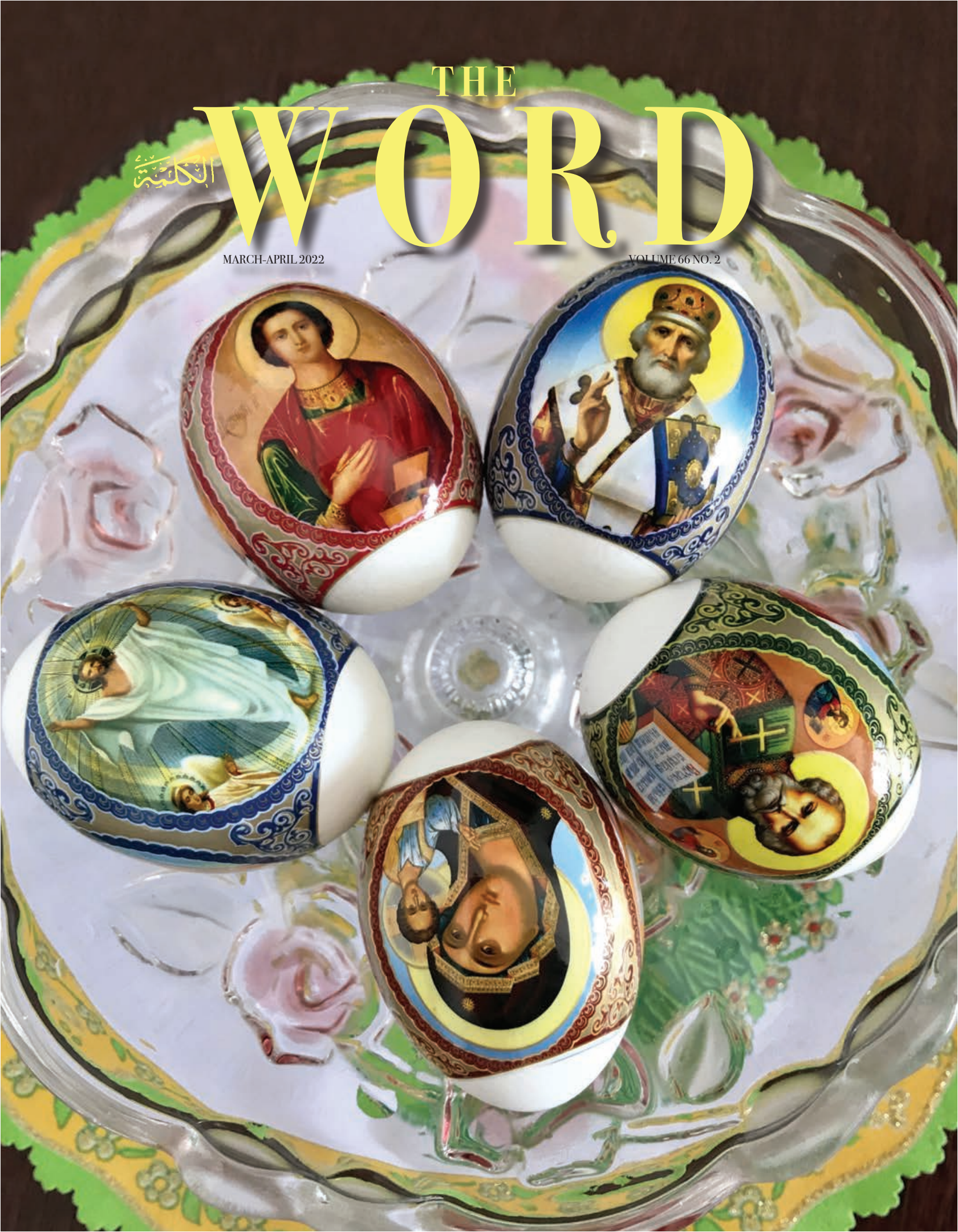


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# THE WORD

MARCH-APRIL 2022

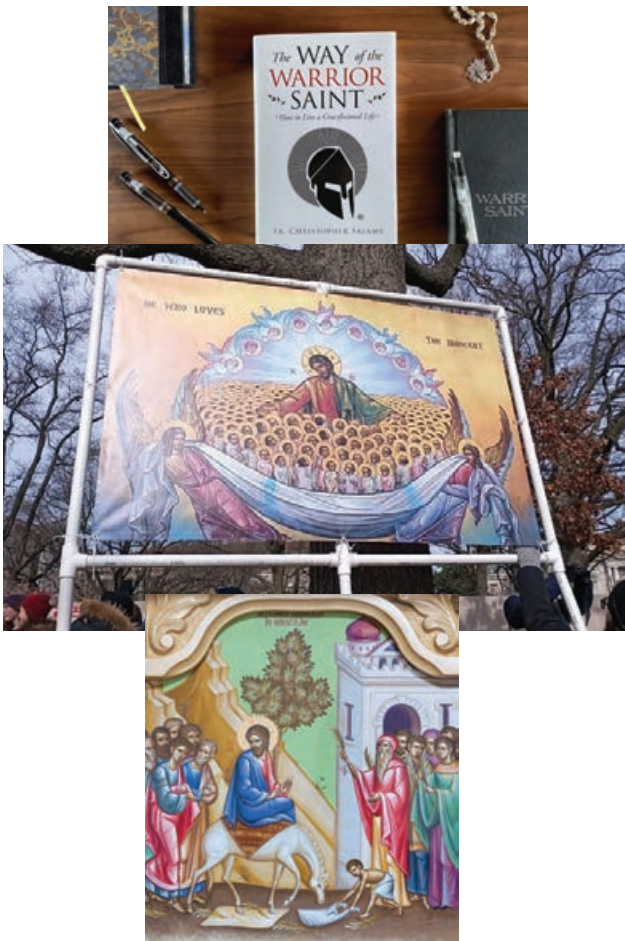
VOLUME 66 NO. 2





# THE WORD

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Letters to the editor are welcome and should include the author's full name and parish. Submissions for "Communities in Action" must be approved by the local pastor. Both may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All submissions e-mailed and provided as a Microsoft Word text or editable PDF. Please do not embed artwork into the word documents. All art work must be high resolution: at least 300dpi.

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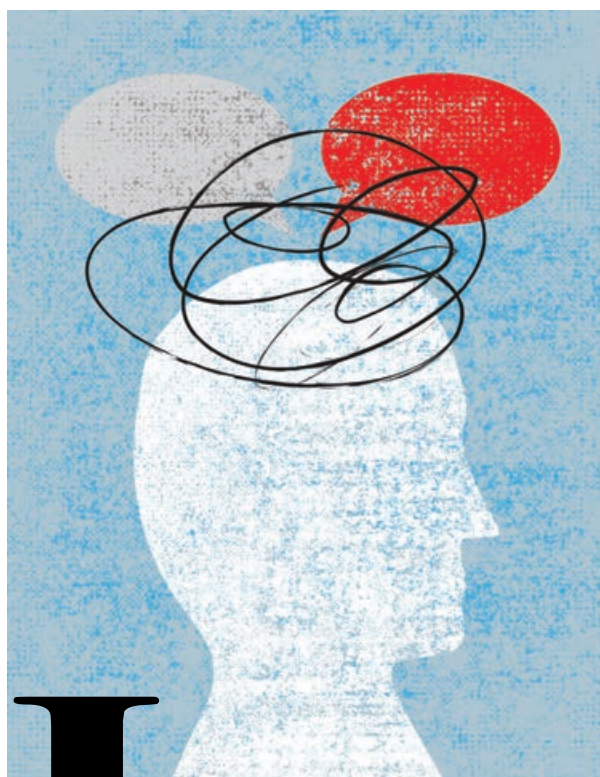
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# FOR MY THOUGHTS ARE NOT YOUR THOUGHTS ...

Bishop JOHN



**I** was snowed-in last Sunday by a Northeastern snowstorm that dumped nearly twenty inches of snow onto the sanctuary. This offered me a rare opportunity to hear a sermon from one of the priests I serve. I got to watch the livestreamed liturgy from Lawrence that morning, and heard the presentation of a new perspective on the story of Zacchaeus from Fr. Ed Hughes. Fr. Ed noted that when He saw Zacchaeus, Christ called him down from the tree and invited Himself to the man's home. He went on to challenge those who say we aren't supposed to evangelize. Christ called out to Zacchaeus and told him that He would dine with Him that day. Zacchaeus, encountering God's love in the presence of Christ, immediately repented, giving away half

of his goods to the poor and restoring fourfold that which was overtaken. He accepted Christ's way of living and being. If we are Christ's, we need to live and serve Christ's way. By his humility, repentance, and willingness to follow Christ, Zacchaeus is an example for us. Following Christ first requires learning His way, which is different from fallen mankind's ways. *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD"* (Isaiah 55:8).

His way is a way of peace, love, joy, generosity, compassion, and forgiveness. Following Christ means being like Him, and this requires study and putting what is learned into practice. Before there is doing, there must be being. Being like God takes deliberate choice, practice, and submission to God. We love because we are God's, and we are called to love with His selfless, generous, and building-up love. We forgive, and we make peace and find peace because God has given us Himself and joined Himself to us. We submit, or join our will to His will.

Too often, some Church leaders, out of their God-given need to give, offer God in the Church well-meaning earthly knowledge and service. They do sacrifice their time, money, energy, and they even offer their connections to craftsmen and laborers for the church's need. I'm sure that God will reward such efforts in His way, but unless we deliberately submit to God to do His will in His way, we will miss the mark. Our mission is to have the mind of Christ, the mindset of God. God has given us His Church, a mystical reality that joins God to man, as God lives and works in and through His Church. Church business is serious, and cannot be reduced to the earthly

The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend  
Bishop BASIL

The Right Reverend  
Bishop THOMAS

The Right Reverend  
Bishop ALEXANDER

The Right Reverend  
Bishop JOHN

The Right Reverend  
Bishop ANTHONY

The Right Reverend  
Bishop NICHOLAS

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*Editor in Chief* Bishop JOHN

*Assistant Editor* Christopher Humphrey

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Editorial Office:  
The WORD  
2 Lydia's Path  
Westborough, MA 01581-1841

e-mail: WORDMAG@AOL.COM

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registrar@antiochian.org

processes of businesses, armies, governments, or clubs. Our mission is, in the words of Metropolitan JOSEPH, to save souls. Our purpose is to teach the way of God. Our objective is to celebrate Sacraments where God feeds, educates, and heals. It is more than balancing budgets, making people comfortable, and giving people forums to share ideas.

God called Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus out of his humility and character responded to God and became a follower. Zacchaeus didn't try to change God or to do things his own way. He opened his heart, mind, and soul. When we follow this example and embrace Christ Himself, salvation comes to our homes.

May our Lenten journeys be fruitful. May we be willing and open to studying, fasting, confessing, repenting, and living His life. May our Pascha be filled with real joy, and may we know abundant life.

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# THE FACE OF CHRIST ON ORTHODOX CROSSES

Reader Daniel Manzuk

A FRIEND COMMENTED THAT THE PEACEFUL (THOUGH SOMETIMES SAD) LOOK ON THE FACE OF CHRIST AND HIS POSTURE SEEN ON MOST ORTHODOX CROSSES – ESPECIALLY THE LARGE ONES USED ON GREAT AND HOLY THURSDAY AND FRIDAY – ARE A BIT ODD WHEN COMPARED WITH THE MEDIEVAL CROSSES FOUND IN MANY PLACES IN WESTERN EUROPE. THE LATTER SHOW WHAT IS PROBABLY A MORE ACCURATE VIEW OF CHRIST AS HE WAS DYING, FACE AND BODY CONTORTED IN UNIMAGINABLE PAIN. MY FRIEND SAID THAT IT WOULD BE MORE MEANINGFUL TO SHOW CHRIST FROZEN IN HIS DEATH THROES, AS THOSE MEDIEVAL CROSSES DO.

Our crosses, however, don't show Him dying; they show Him *dead*. In the Wisdom of Solomon, Chapter 3, we read of how God has accepted the sacrificial lives of His servants: they are akin to "gold in the furnace." Subjected to intense heat, gold melts into a pool of liquid, and is purified from all contaminants. Though the world views them as having been severely punished, they see the reward of immortality. Thus, though their passing is seen as horrible, "they are at peace" (v. 3).

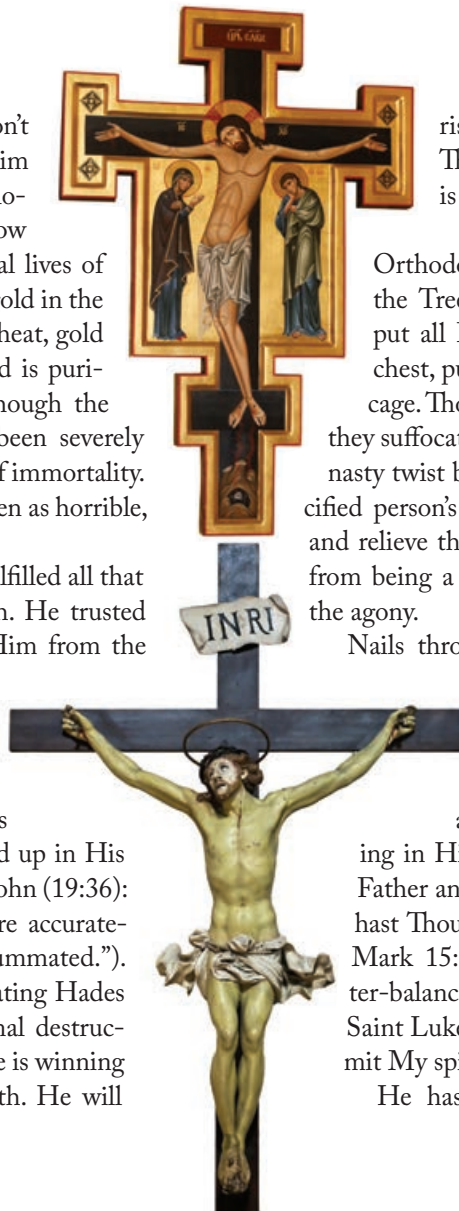
Christ is at peace. He has fulfilled all that was expected of Him on earth. He trusted that His Father would raise Him from the dead by the power of the Spirit. He became the "Man of Sorrows" (Isaiah 53:1–11), and endured everything for us. Now He is at peace. His work on earth is done, summed up in His final words according to Saint John (19:36): "*It is finished*" (or perhaps more accurately, "It is completed," or "consummated."). Meanwhile, His soul is obliterating Hades and crippling Hell until its final destruction at His Second Coming. He is winning the battle against sin and death. He will

rise in the glory of His Kingdom. The agony is over, the blessedness is around the corner.

This dichotomy is seen in the Orthodox cross. Christ is hanging on the Tree like a picture on a wall. This put all His weight on the front of His chest, pushing His lungs against His rib cage. Those crucified rarely bled to death: they suffocated. The Romans devised another nasty twist by placing a cross-bar at the crucified person's feet: he could prop himself up and relieve the pressure, but not for long. Far from being a relief, it would actually prolong the agony.

Nails through His hands and feet, right past major nerves induces more agony. Then there is the hole in His side. The Bible makes clear how agonizing are His final moments, culminating in His extremely human cries to His Father and God, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Psalm 21/22:1; Mark 15:34–37). These words are counter-balanced by His last ones, according to Saint Luke: "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit!" (Luke 23:46).

He has endured all, He has suffered



incomprehensibly insulting treatment from His own creatures and been put to a heinous and agonizing death by them. Yet, as Solomon said, *“He is at peace.”* Death has a hold on Him *because He let it*, just as He let the Devil have the Prophet Job ... for a while. He does not simply have *hope* in immortality, He *is* immortality. He *will* defeat Death, He *will* rise again. Therefore, He is at peace.

So the peaceful depiction of Christ on the cross is not a “sanitizing” of what He went through, making it more palatable for the observer, but an accurate depiction of what He went through viewed – as with everything else in the Church – through the lens of His Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:13–17). The moment Life met Death *“face to face”* removed its sting, and abolished its victory (“Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom,” on 1 Corinthians 15:55). Christ trampled down Death by His death.

This triumphal peace is replicated in the icons of the saints – especially the martyrs. The agony of their deaths does not show, for example, even in most icons showing the Forerunner holding his own head. They are at peace. In this, we see our reality: the agonizing tragedy of death, yet the peace of trust in the resurrection to eternal life.

Christ is the first person to die Who didn’t have to fear the finality of death. Those of us who trust in Him, share in that gift. As shown above, this didn’t make Him blasé about dying. He agonizingly asked that, if possible, the cup be taken from Him – before voluntarily accepting His Father’s will (Luke 22:41–44). Then He suffered greatly on the cross. In the end, however, He was at peace, because He knew He would win. Death cannot beat the Life of all (John 1:4–5), nor can it claim dominion over those in whom He lives (Galatians 2:20).

I once saw a woman, on a Roman Catholic TV show, talk

**“My God,  
My God,  
why hast  
Thou for-  
saken Me?”**

about her youth as a Protestant. Specifically, she mentioned a time she and her mother visited a Catholic church for some ecumenical gathering. Her mother had tears in her eyes. When the woman asked why, her mother – pointing to the crucifix – said, “Those poor Catholics, they don’t know He rose from the dead,” (as though Catholics don’t celebrate Easter).

The Orthodox Church – like our estranged sister Church of Rome – does not (outside the Paschal Season) hide the uncomfortable sight of the God-Man

hanging from the cross; executed, bleeding from forehead, hands, side and feet, as many Protestants do. Indeed, in keeping with the words of St. Paul, we boast in it (Galatians 6:14). On three days outside Holy Week we adorn the cross – with Christ depicted on it – and venerate it (the Sundays of the Veneration, Procession and Elevation). We simply do not show Him in His death throes, enduring the agony of the death penalty accorded thieves and traitors. We show the mystery of His suffering: He is dead, yet at peace. By His death, Death is dead, and the dead are alive.

It pairs well with that other uniquely Orthodox mystery of Holy Week, “joyful sorrow.” The ever-memorable Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, who coined the phrase, stated that the sorrow of Good Friday isn’t replaced by joy, it is transformed into it. He said this describing the beautiful celebration of Christ’s descent into Hades on Holy Saturday, but it is equally applicable to our discussion. In the placid visage of Christ on the cross, we see that transformation frozen, the sorrow of His death changing to the joy of His harrowing of Hades and coming Resurrection. He is still dead, but His death is temporary; for, while His body hangs there (and soon is placed in the tomb), His soul is bringing life to all and a victory which is eternal. The agony is over, the joy is being experienced



**“Father,  
into Thy  
hands  
I commit  
My  
spirit!”**

by those in Hades (seen in the Icon of Christ's Descent into Hades, popularly mistaken as the Paschal icon). Soon it will be known by those on earth. With His work on earth complete (John 17:4), Christ – bodily – is experiencing a peaceful rest, just as He did – bodiless – on the original “Sabbath.” “This is the most-blessed Sabbath. This is the day of rest. On which the Only-begotten Son of God rests from all His works. Through the dispensation of death, He rested in the flesh” (“Lord, I Have Cried,” *Doxastikon* of Pascha sung on Holy Saturday). The rest in the tomb began on the cross, and that is what we see. He is at peace, having endured unimaginable suffer-

His Kingdom with Him. We see this on the cross; the King of Glory on His earthly throne with His Crown (of thorns). That is why, on Feasts of the cross, we sing “Extol the Lord our God, worship at His footstool (the cross), for He is holy” (Psalm 98/99:5). Here is the Man, executed as a traitor and a heretic in the most ghastly, agonizing and accursed manner available (Deuteronomy 21:22–23; Galatians 3:13). Though still hanging on the tree, He appears to be simply taking rest in sleep. It is a victory nap. For by His death the condemned criminal is now the all-conquering righteous King and Judge, Whose name is exalted above every other (Philip-



ing for the salvation of His largely ungrateful creatures (Matthew 17:17 and 23:37). He is at rest, having labored among them, renewing His creation and people as He promised.

Finally, we have the Prince of Peace, now the King of Glory. For it is by His death that Christ enters into His glory and His Kingdom (Luke 24:25–27; John 12:16, 23–33). It is not so much that He comes “into” His Kingdom, but that He brings

prians 2:5–11). As St. Paul said, to non-believers this is scandalous (the method of execution) and ridiculous (victory in death). To us who believe, however, Christ crucified is the power of God and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:18–24). This is why we depict Christ as we do on our crosses.

Reader Daniel Manzuk  
St. Mary's Cathedral (OCA), Minneapolis



# ORTHODOX WORLD HAPPENINGS

## BISHOP JOHN LEADS ANTIOCHIAN DELEGATION IN MARCH FOR LIFE IN WASHINGTON

On Friday, January 21, 2022, His Grace Bishop JOHN of the Diocese of Worcester and New England led a delegation of clergy and laity of the

## ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS' DELEGATION OPENS MARCH FOR LIFE RALLY IN PRAYER

A delegation of twelve members the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America participated in the annual March for Life activities in Washington, D.C. The



Antiochian Archdiocese in the March for Life in Washington, D.C. The March is held every year on or near January 23, the day in 1973 on which the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion on demand in the decision *Roe v. Wade*.

Sayidna JOHN and the delegation joined 11 Orthodox Christian hierarchs and nearly 300 clergy and laity to bear witness to the sanctity of life.

On Thursday, January 20, the dozen hierarchs represented the Orthodox Church at a Mass hosted by the Roman Catholic Church at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. On the morning before the March on the national mall, His Beatitude Metropolitan TIKHON of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) hosted a liturgy at the historic Cathedral of St. Nicholas.

Additionally, Antiochian clergy and laity were among the participants in the March for Life in San Francisco on Saturday, January 22.

delegation was led by the Assembly's Chairman, Archbishop ELPIDOPHOROS, and included Metropolitan METHODIOS, Bishop DEMETRIOS, Bishop ATHENAGORAS, Archbishop DANIEL, Bishop JOHN, Bishop IRINEJ, Bishop SABA, Metropolitan TIKHON, Archbishop MELCHISEDEK, Archbishop MICHAEL, and Bishop ANDREI.

On Thursday, January 20, 2022, the delegation represented the Orthodox Church during a Mass hosted by the Catholic Church at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. After the service, they enjoyed a fraternal meal hosted by Archbishop ELPIDOPHOROS.

The following morning, Friday, January 21, 2022, Metropolitan TIKHON hosted a liturgy at the historic Cathedral of St. Nicholas prior to the Rally on the Mall.

Finally, the Hierarchs were joined on stage by the delegation of Catholic Bishops to offer the opening prayer. The introductory remarks and prayer was delivered by Archbishop ELPIDOPHOROS.



# ARCHDIOCESAN OFFICE

## ORDINATIONS

ROSSETTI, James, to the holy diaconate by Bishop THOMAS on January 15, 2022, at the Antiochian Village. He is assigned to St. George Church in New Kensington, Pennsylvania.

SALVIA, Andrew, to the holy diaconate by His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH on January 16, 2022, at St. John the Baptist Church, Levittown, New York. Dn. Andrew is a second-year seminarian at St. Vladimir's Seminary.

SLAUGHTER DOTY, Alphase (Justin), to the diaconate by Bishop JOHN on December 19, 2021, at St. George Church, Danbury, Connecticut. He was attached to that parish.

SLAUGHTER DOTY, Dn. Alphase (Justin) to the holy priesthood as Fr. Justin Slaughter Doty by Metropolitan JOSEPH on January 5, 2022, at St. Mary Church, Brooklyn, New York. Fr. Justin is assigned as the assistant pastor (second priest) of Three Hierarchs Church, Wenatchee, Washington, effective February 1, 2022.

## ELEVATIONS

BAZ, Rev. Fr. Charles, to the rank and dignity of Archpriest by His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH on January 16, 2022, at St. John the Baptist Church, Levittown, New York, where he is the pastor.

BETHANCOURT, Priest Daniel, proestamemos at St. Nicholas Church, Shreveport, Louisiana, to the rank and dignity of Archpriest by Bishop BASIL on Sunday, December 5, 2021, at the same church.

KHOURI, Priest Elias, to the rank of Archpriest by Bishop Basil on January 30, 2022, at St. Elijah, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where he is the second priest.

SHAHEEN, Rev. Fr. Michael, to the rank and dignity of Archpriest by Bishop ANTHONY on January 16, 2022, at St. George Cathedral, Toledo, Ohio, where he is the pastor.

## ASSIGNED

FARAH, Fr. Ibrahim, attached to St George Richmond Hill, Ontario.

## DEPARTED

Father THOMAS R. LINDSAY, attached priest of Ss. Peter and Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church in Ben Lomond, California reposed in the Lord on November 19, 2021. Father Tom, 76, was a native Californian, and by profession a Certified Public Accountant for more than fifty years in the beautiful mountains of the San Lorenzo Valley. All who knew Fr. Tom experienced and saw his kindness, encouraging spirit, generosity, endurance, and great sense of humor. Father Tom helped start an Evangelical Protestant church in Ben Lomond in the early 1970s called Wee Kirk, which later joined with other Evangelicals in the area to be a part of the Evangelical Orthodox Church (EOC). Father Tom was ordained into the priesthood in February 1987 by Metropolitan PHILIP when the Metropolitan graciously accepted the EOC into the Antiochian Archdiocese. Father Tom leaves behind his beloved wife of 52 years Khouria Maria, their daughter Katie, two grandchildren, and son-in-law Greg Nolen.

Mother OLGA, (Susan Crum) reposed in the Lord on January 5, 2022. She was attached to Our Lady and St. Lawrence Monastery in Canon City, Colorado. Mother transferred to the monastery from the Monastery of Saint Barbara, Santa Paula, California, where she had resided for 16 years and been tonsured to the rank of Stavrophore Nun. She had spent one year living with her daughter in Wichita Falls, TX, before moving to the monastery. For reasons of health, after a year here in the mountains, she returned to Wichita Falls with the blessing of Father Abbot, where she lived in a modest apartment and served as Organist at St. Benedict Orthodox Church, which had been her parish before she entered monastic life. She was a strong support and dear friend to Fr. Peter Kavanaugh, the Rector at St. Benedict's, and was actively engaged in interesting learning programs for senior adults. She faithfully maintained the little rule for Benedictines living in the world, given her by Father Abbot Theodore, with whom she was in frequent contact.

# “MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD”

(JOHN 18:36)

Bishop THOMAS Joseph and Peter Schweitzer

**T**he One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, the Orthodox Church, is the ark of salvation and the beacon of hope and light in a passion-filled world. The Church is the salvific hospital for us who have been wounded by sin and alienated from our Creator. The Orthodox Church invites all – regardless of their ethnicity, state in life, or language, to salvation in Christ Jesus. He desires that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth.

When the Eternal Son of God became man and dwelt among us, He healed and taught those who were willing to accept Him. He was rejected by the powerful and self-satisfied, those who were confident in their own righteousness. He saved the publican, the harlot, and the good thief, precisely because they recognized their need for a savior.

The head of the Orthodox Church is Christ Himself. We have no human au-

thority that rules over us. This is because the sole mission of the Orthodox Church is the healing of all who come to her. As a result, the Church offers





to her children what she herself received from her Lord and Master: the ascetic ointment of repentance to be found in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. This medicine is offered to all and for all, because they are free gifts offered to us from above. Over the course of the centuries, our holy fathers have explained to us the ascetical method in detail, so that we may never be led astray. The only thing we need in order to take advantage of this healing balm may be found in the writings of Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov:

The beginning of conversion to Christ consists in coming to know one's own sinfulness and fallenness. Through this view of himself, a person recognizes his need for a Redeemer, and approach-

trary to the spirit of Christ. We are not building a kingdom for this world or of this world. Saint Isaac the Syrian wrote, "This life was given to you for repentance, do not waste it in vain pursuits." The Orthodox Church is not an ethnic or social club designed to advance the desires of this world or build a "nicer" world here on earth.

The Orthodox Church is by God's design and providence other-worldly. If we are living a life of repentance in the Church, we should encourage all others to join us in the ark of salvation. Never let it be said that an Orthodox Christian desired to exclude a brother or sister because they didn't belong to a certain ethnicity or social status. A true sign of spiritual health is to be found in the joy one feels

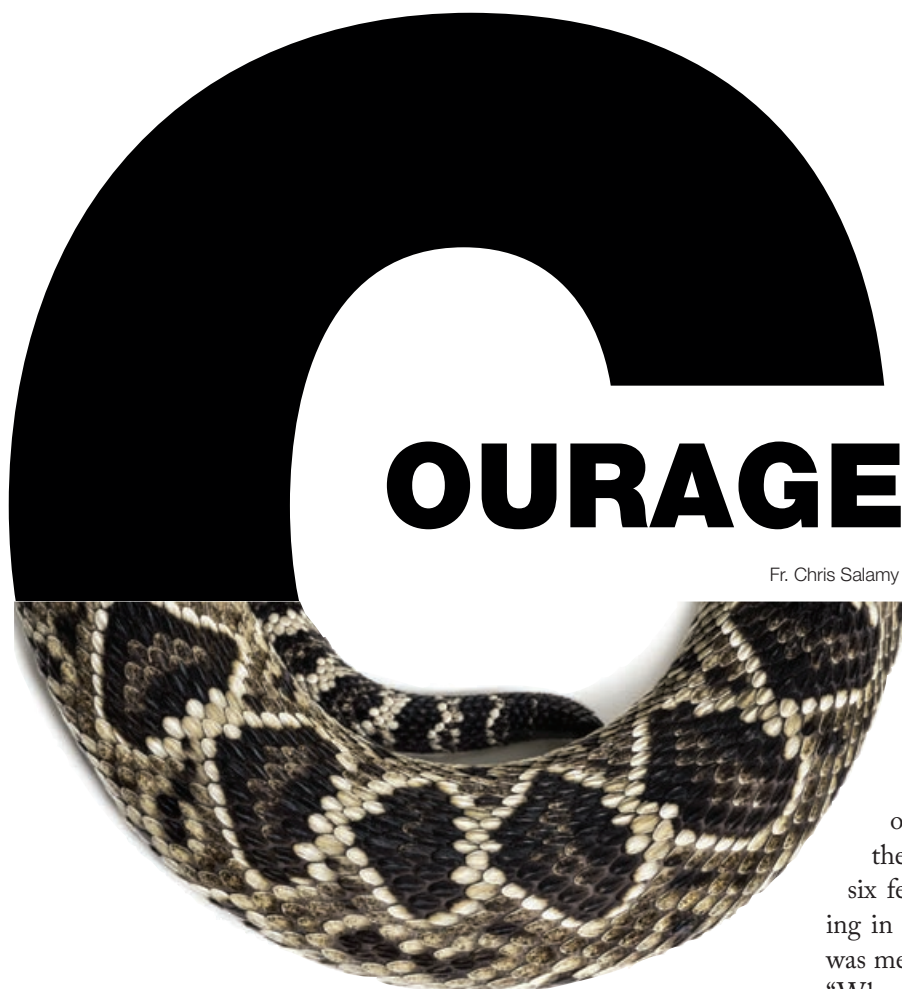


es Christ through humility, faith, and repentance (4:277). He who does not recognize his sinfulness, fallenness, and peril cannot accept Christ or believe in Christ; he cannot be a Christian. Of what need is Christ to the person who himself is wise and virtuous, who is pleased with himself, and considers himself worthy of all earthly and heavenly rewards? (4:378).

The spiritual life offered to us in the Orthodox Church has its origins in Christ's death and resurrection, and is not of this world. Therefore, any thinking or calculation that is of this world is con-

when a brother or sister desires to enter the ark of salvation, regardless of his state in life.

As a bishop, I urge you to dedicate your life to deep repentance. Love your brothers and sisters and do not judge them. Recognize the passionate thoughts that come to you from the unclean spirits and reject them. It is only within the life of asceticism that we can recognize and fight the evil inclinations that come to us. Stand strong in your faith in Christ so that others may be edified and say, "See how much they love one another!"



# OURAGE

Fr. Chris Salamy

who lives in Arizona and has seen a rattlesnake knows what that sound is. The sound of an angry diamondback can send chills down the bravest man's spine.

My first instinct was to run away but I was stuck. I couldn't leave it back there. My kids were playing outside! I had to figure it out. I inched the base of the door back from the wall, bit by bit, and, sure enough, there was six feet of angry rattlesnake. She was just chilling in the shade and was mad that now someone was messing with her. The snake probably thought, "Why are you messing with me? I didn't do anything to anyone." At least not yet.

I thought, "Well, what am I going to do with it? I can't leave it there and I ain't touching it. No way, I'm not touching that thing." Something had to be done and I was frozen with fear.

We've all felt fear in our lives. Anyone who tells you they never experience fear is spinning yarn. Everyone gets afraid at one point or another. And you know what? That's perfectly okay. You're supposed to be afraid sometimes, because some things are truly scary! Fear is your body telling you, "Look out, there's danger ahead!" People who can't be honest enough to admit to their fears are only trying to protect their egos. And by now, we know that is not crucifixional living. Having fear can be normal and healthy, and we need not be embarrassed about it.

So then what's the problem with fear? Why is it worthy of its own chapter? Fear gets its own chapter because, if left unchecked, fear can lead us into one of the greatest opponents of crucifixional living: inaction. Fear can debilitate us and lead us just to standing around, watching, doing nothing . . . inaction!

Courage, in contrast, is what we're after. Courage is not the absence of fear; courage is doing the

I HAD A JUNK PILE AT THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE. ONE OF THE THINGS IN THAT PILE WHEN WE BOUGHT THE HOME WAS A DOOR, LEANING AGAINST THE WALL. IT WAS AN EXTRA DOOR, IN CASE IT WAS EVER NEEDED. OVER THE YEARS IN THE ARIZONA SUN IT DRIED AND CRACKED. AND WHENEVER IT RAINED THE DOOR GOT SOGGY AND EXPANDED. AT SOME POINT IT BECAME UNUSABLE. ONE SATURDAY MORNING I SAID TO MYSELF, "YOU KNOW WHAT, JUST GO CLEAN THAT JUNK UP. I CAN'T STAND THE MESS ANY MORE. LET'S JUST GET RID OF ALL OF IT."

So, I went outside to clean up the junk pile. Being the biggest eyesore, I wanted to start with the door. When I began to lift the door off the side of the house, I heard it. It was as distinctive a sound as there could ever be. Right away I dropped the door. I didn't want to touch it. I knew what it was. Anyone



right thing *in spite of fear*. Courage is not allowing fear to stop us from doing what we know to be right. What we know to be right, especially as Warrior Saints, is to live a crucifixional life, to live a life in which we sacrifice our will to do the will of God. Courage is my pool guy, Travis, observing, “I don’t like the snake,” and commenting, “but we’ve got to get it, and I’m going to act.” But we’ll get to that.

Fear comes with many faces, but the big three are

1. **The fear of what others will think;**
2. **The fear of failure; and**
3. **The fear that doing something will be hard.**

These three forms of fear often lead us to inaction – doing nothing when it’s time to act. As we will see, having courage means conquering these fears by doing the right thing in spite of them. It means looking our fears right in the eyes, admitting that they exist, and then kicking them right in the teeth.

## COURAGE IN CONTEXT

Thank the good Lord Jesus that Travis showed up. Travis is my pool guy. By the way, if anybody needs a pool guy, I’m going to give a shout-out to Travis. He’s the best. Not just because of this story, but he’s really good. So, Travis opened the back gate and said,

“Hey Fr. Chris, what are you doing?”

Pointing at the snake, all I could say was, “That.”

Without blinking he said, “Oh, we’ll just get it right now.”

“What?” I shouted. I was afraid of it. I mean, literally I was afraid of it. It was a rattlesnake!

Travis responded, “Yeah, no problem.” He had one of those long poles to scoop debris from the surface of the pool with, the kind with a net attached at the end. “It’s simple,” he said, taking the net and pinning the snake’s head against the side of the house. Now the snake was really going nuts. “Just grab it with these pliers and we’ll kill it.” Wait, what? Seriously, what was he thinking? “I ain’t touching that thing. No way,” I said.

Because I’m a giver and love other people so much, I want them to have opportunity to grow. I said, “Travis, tell you what. I don’t want to take this opportunity away from you. I’ll hold the pole and you can grab it.” He just let his head sag, as

if in shame, saying, “You’re such a pansy.” He relinquished the pole, grabbed the pliers and pinched the snake’s head so it couldn’t bite him.

As he was holding it and it was flipping all around, he told me, “Now go get your hedge clippers and cut its head off.” Seriously, this dude has issues. I didn’t really want to kill it, because in spite of its dreadfulness it was a beautiful animal. Since, however, it was fierce and as deadly as a predator could be, it had to be done. We cut its head off and ended the drama. There’s even Facebook pictures of the incident.

Throughout the whole ordeal something fascinating happened. I was afraid. I didn’t have the courage to deal with it and yet Travis had no problem. He just acted.

I said to Travis, “Aren’t you afraid of that stuff? I mean, you’re working in backyards every day, so you probably see that kind of stuff all the time.” And then he humbled me. Knocked the wind right out of my sails. He said,

“Of course, I’m afraid of it, but you’ve got to deal with problems, so I dealt with it.” Floored, all I could muster was,

“Oh.” He had courage and I didn’t.

## GOD’S INPUT

The great news is that God offers us comfort in the face of our fears. The Prophet Isaiah says, “For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you,’” (Isaiah 41:13). This is awesome confirmation that we are not alone as we face our fears and challenges in life. God is with us, holding our right hand. Let’s be clear about that part. I don’t think “God holding our right hand” is referring to a literal holding of our hand. It is not as if we were walking together on a beach with the proverbial two sets of footprints that become one, when God does the work for us. God doesn’t do our work for us. He is not a magician sitting on a big chair in the puffy white clouds waving a magic wand and making everything all right. That’s not the God I find in Scripture.

By saying that He is holding our right hand, God is telling us to



*trust in Him and to trust in His Way.* God is telling us that, if we listen to His words and live the Way He's asking us to live, we will conquer the monster of fear. What is that Way? By now, you already know what I'm going to say: crucifixional living. The willingness to sacrifice our comforts, desires, needs – even our selves – in order to do His will, that's crucifixional living. God is reassuring us that if we trust His Way and follow it, it works. Sure, it'll be difficult, but it's supposed to be – and you want it to be. Becoming a Warrior Saint means exactly that: you have to become a warrior. Warriors battle with their enemies, often earning scars and wounds, but it's the only way to win. Standing on the sidelines will cost you every time.

### PRACTICAL POINTS

Our practical point for dealing with the three big fears above is pretty simple: shift your mindset. That's it. It really is that simple. Conventional wisdom and even fear itself tells us that we should worry about what others think, that we should avoid failure at all costs, and that we should seek only to do easy tasks. What could be further from the truth? This practical point is that you must flip those thoughts upside down and shift your mindset. Make sure you have some people who find fault with you, fail as much as possible, and do the hardest things you possibly can.

First, the fear of what others will think is a major culprit in our inaction. We allow others' impressions to guide so much of what we do in our lives. Some have even called this need “approval addiction.” For some reason it's important that people like us, approve of us, validate us. That's probably built into each of us as relational beings. To conquer this need first requires a shift in mindset, in which you not only seek to be comfortable with critics, but where you actively seek critics. You read that right. Find more critics.

I love how Grant Cardone says it, “Baby, if you have five haters, you need to go get you five more!” He's totally correct in this regard. Having “haters” can be a good thing in so many ways. The first way is that it witnesses to the fact that you're “in action.” Haters reveal that you're doing something, moving, acting. People rarely, if ever, criticize someone for doing nothing. Sure, they may call you a lazy bum, but they're actually happier with you sitting on the sidelines because it means you're not competition. If

you get up, start taking action and producing, you then become competition to them. Their criticism is a witness to that fact.

To be fair, their criticism may be correct. We should always be humble enough to ask ourselves tough questions, so that we can improve. Sometimes, however, haters attack you and your work because they are ashamed of themselves. They're ashamed because they're sitting on the sidelines watching you do what they know they should be doing. They're jealous because they know in their hearts that they should be doing the very thing you're doing. They should be trying to better themselves. Haters attack others who make them uncomfortable, because they know they themselves are inactive. Rather than applaud you when you're in action, they attempt to make themselves feel better by criticizing you. It's usually a cover up for their own fears and insecurities. Remember, if you have some haters, go get some more. It means you're on to something!

The second shift in mindset is in regard to failure. We're so often afraid to attempt what we've been called to do because we don't want to mess it up. We don't want to fail. Think about it. From the earliest time when we can grasp the idea of responsibility, we're constantly taught that failure will produce bad results. If you don't stop climbing that tree, you're going to fall and get hurt. If you don't get all A's, you won't get into Harvard. If you invest in a risky business venture you could lose your money. You can't create a marketing campaign on your own. If you don't spend money on advertising, you'll never sell your product. She'll never go out on a date with you. You're writing a book? You'll be the laughing stock of the publishing world! And on and on. Perhaps more than any other fear, the fear of failure has left more people clinging to the sidelines of inaction.

The shift in mindset that Warrior Saints are looking for is quite different. We're actually hoping to go out there and fail. That's right, we're looking for failure. Of course, no one wants to fail *in the end*. Yet no one gets to the end unscathed. Every journey has potholes, speed bumps, and curves in the road. That doesn't mean you don't drive your car, does it? You have to make an effort. You have to try. Sure, you're going to fail sometimes, and in that failure comes the greatest learning and the greatest movement forward. Thomas Edison failed with



the creation of the lightbulb over and over again. Michael Jordan lost in the playoffs to the Celtics and Pistons repeatedly. The Apostle Peter denied Jesus three times before the Crucifixion. Still, these men didn't hide from failure: they used their failures as springboards to their successes. Edison gave us light, Jordan won six championships, and St. Peter became the rock upon which God built His Church. Shift your mindset to seek the risk of failure, for through it is the best way to success.

Finally, let's look at the concept of hardness or difficulty with a totally different mindset. Remember, the world wants us to take the easy way, but we actually prefer the hard. It's more fun and brings greater rewards. Sure, the rewards come at the end of the hard work, but it's actually gratifying, unlike the pseudo wins we get for taking the easy road, and popping the magic pill. I really do believe we like hard work, that we are built for it, and prefer it, but we have been brainwashed into thinking that *hard* is bad. All of the advertising and marketing with which we're bombarded is attempting to sell us *easy*. We don't really think about it; we just agree, and go on our merry way, but we're more miserable because of it. We actually want the hard work and the suf-

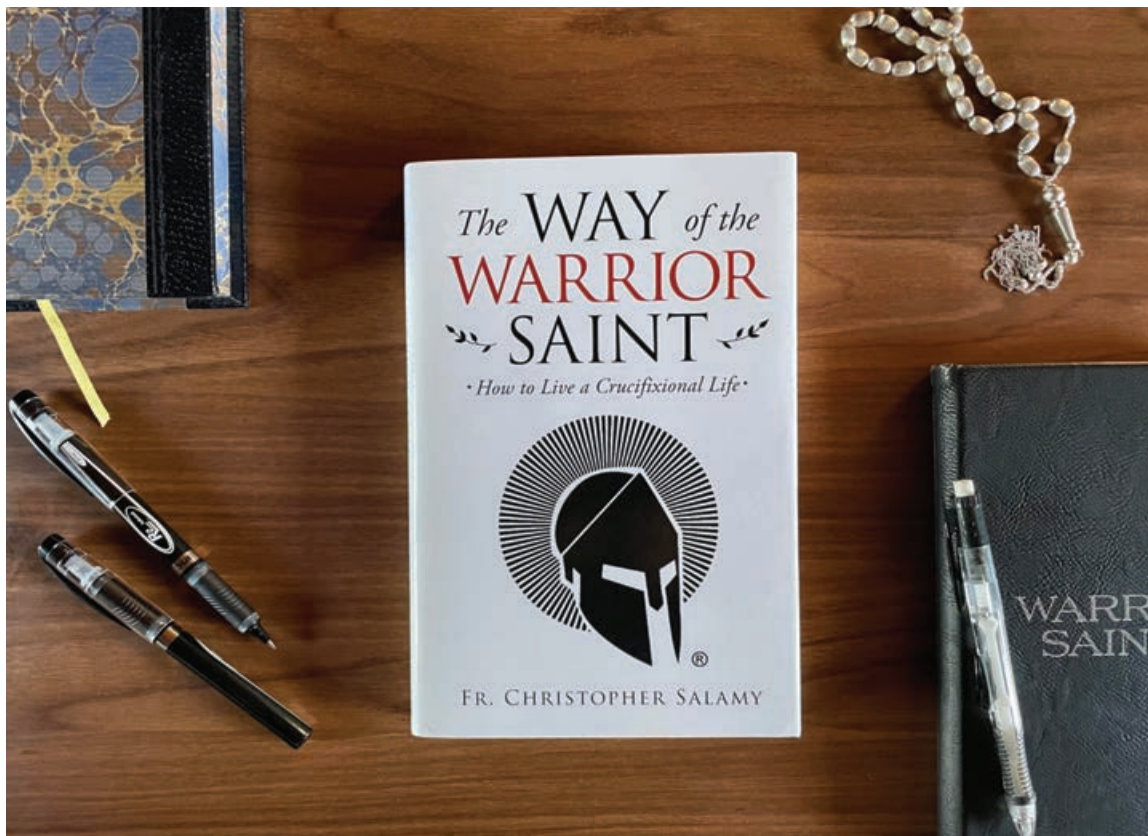
fering and the pain. It's way more fun!

My bride is the best thing that has happened to me in my life, but at the beginning she made me work for it. It took everything I could think of to convince her to go out with me on a first date. Though we both had a blast, there was nothing I could do to get her to go out on a second date with me. An Orthodox priest was not how she envisioned her future husband. So she told me No. And No again. And again. It was certainly the hardest failure I've ever had to face. I didn't quit, however. I kept learning how to be the man she needed me to be, priest or not. Eventually she agreed to another date. The rest, as they say, is history. We've been married for over twenty years and are blessed with the healthiest relationship I could have ever asked for. The joy I felt when she finally agreed to go out on that second date was worth all the pain and the suffering along the way.

As we examine our own lives, our own sufferings, and our own fears, it's time to reflect and say, "All right. It's okay that I'm afraid. I have fear, but I'm still going to act because I have courage."

Go get some.

Fr. Chris Salamy



"Courage" is the eighth chapter in a new book, *The Way of the Warrior Saint: How to Live a Crucifixional Life*. The full book can be found at [www.warriorsaints.org](http://www.warriorsaints.org).

"FROM THESE STONES"

DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM

# OUR NOT-OF-THIS -WORLD MOMENT

Fr. Joseph Huneycutt

**A**s I write this, the parish I serve has forty catechumens and a steady influx of inquirers. Where we used to see two hundred faces regularly on Sundays, suddenly we welcome over two-fifty. I am not boasting. Perplexed, scared, amazed, bewildered? *You bet!* But no podcast, retreat, article, book, sermon, or Christian witness moves this even close to my doing.

One of our longtime members came to her first Wednesday night's Family Night last year and was amazed that we had a hundred adults and children at our fasting meal between Vespers and Christian Education. "Oh wow! I never knew this many came," she said. "Yeah," I said, "half of them are catechumens; attendance is required."

*But really: What in the world is going on?*

First off, our parish is blessed with a certified Byzantine chanter, a wonderful choir director/choir, fabulous iconography, loving people, and we're located in the fourth largest city in the U.S. Alas, that's all been true for years. Secondly, in this whole Covid thing, the state of Texas is more open than most. This certainly helps, and to God and the governor, I'm thankful.

Now, if you'll forgive me, I'm going to "get real." Since every aspect of our lives seems to be politicized these days, there may already be readers who are disagreeing with me about something written above. This will certainly occur in what follows this paragraph; your mileage may vary. I'm a bit nervous, not wishing to lose friends over this – so, first, a story.

Years ago (trust me, it was a long time ago), some priest friends and I were discussing the latest Church controversy. All of us were of like mind, and as often happens, we began to talk about those on

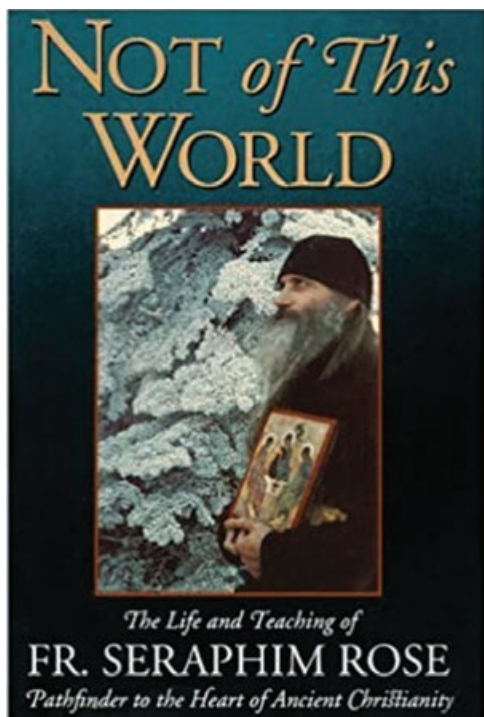
the other side. Another priest, his views unknown to us, made his way over. Unsure if he was "one of us" we filled him in on our opinions and asked his. He thought for a moment then quietly said, "Well, I have my own friends. Y'all might not like them either." Whoa. We all stood there, mouths agape. To our dismay, he continued: "But thank you for reminding me that I have not prayed for [so-and-so] lately."

You see how nervous I am? I tell you all of this to soften the blows that might be directed my way once I get to what I have to say. I mean, we all have friends and mine are a varied lot. So, I'm not going to mention any (well, *many*) names. Father Seraphim (Rose). See? Lost half of my readers right there, and they don't even know why. So, another story. Back in the early 90s there was a venture known as Rose Hill in Aiken, South Carolina. It began as an Episcopalian Retreat Center and transitioned into what was to be the first Orthodox college in the South. If I named everyone who was involved, directly or indirectly, with this endeavor we'd all be amazed. Sadly, there is not a Rose Hill College today. But, oh my goodness, the people it brought together in such a short time. For instance, there was a young layman working there by the name of Peter Heers. Yep. That one. Fr. Richard Hatfield, now known as Fr. Chad, spearheaded a gathering of Anglican clergy interested in Orthodoxy there in January of 1993. I was there, as were many who have been received into the Church.

In 1995 there was an impressive conference held at Rose Hill. Frederica Mathewes-Green participated as a panelist in the conference. Khouria later recommended the collected writings of the conference in *First Things* magazine:

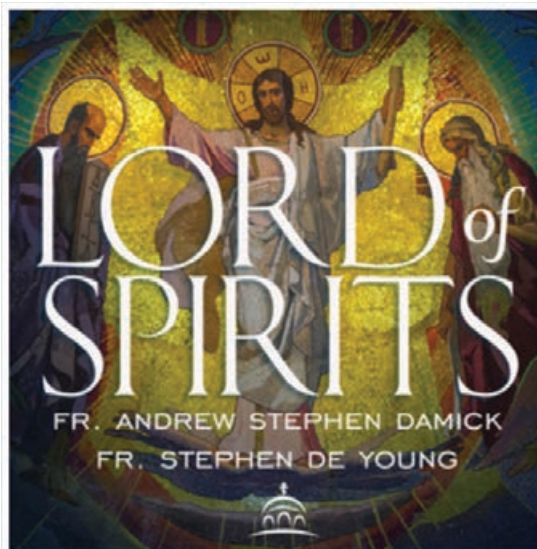
"Let all the anti-ecumenical forces of the





Christian World unite!” proclaimed James Cutsinger at the opening of the “Not of This World” conference held at the Aiken, South Carolina, campus of Rose Hill College in May 1995. The conference brought together traditionalist Christians from across the spectrum – all the sort that usually disdain ecumenism as debilitating and vacuous. Participants hoped to discover what united strength could be discovered in the ancient faith all shared, particularly for fighting the culture war. This volume collects papers from the main presenters – including J. I. Packer, Kallistos Ware, Peter Kreeft, Carl Braaten, and Richard John Neuhaus – together with responses by others and notes on the lively discussion that followed each paper. Rose Hill is a chiefly Orthodox institution, and this conference and volume bring orthodoxy – both upper and lower case – into an effort to express more fully the only ecumenism that matters: unity in the truth, which is to say, in the One who is the Truth. Warmly recommended.

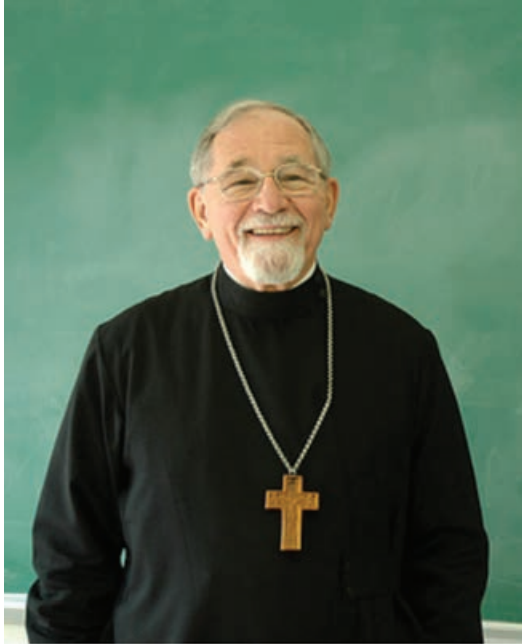
All who registered for the *Not of This World Conference* received a copy of *Not of This World: The Life and Teaching of Fr Seraphim Rose*. That tome was hot off the press (1993) and most of us recent converts devoured it. And while some still debate its merits –



at least at St. Joseph/Houston, most newbies are familiar with the writings and witness of Hieromonk Seraphim of Platina. He is often cited as a major influence in their pilgrimage.

Another major player in the sudden influx of inquirers and catechumens is the Internet. I once heard Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick tell a clergy gathering, “You might not be on Facebook, but your people are.” Believe me, they’re not just on social media. Often inquirers have already been

“catechized” by the *Lord of Spirits* podcast, Ancient Faith Radio, Jonathan Pageau, Fathers Peter Heers and Stephen Freeman, the late Thomas Hopko – even Jordan Peterson – long before they enter our temple doors.



In our parish’s catechism, we used to have a class on morals and ethics near the end of our term. This proved problematic in these social-media-saturated days, because suddenly the Church’s steadfast teaching on God-pleasing behavior stepped on toes sensitized by the hedonistic, even demonic, indoctrination of our current culture. Thus, we do the class on sexuality, abortion, fidelity, bioethics (and so forth) first.

Thirty years ago, when I was becoming Orthodox, there was no internet. There were books (a relative handful), retreats, and conferences. Friends, if I may still call y’all that, we are living in exciting and challenging times! As in the 80s when the Evangelicals came into the Fold, with many Episcopalians embracing the True Faith in the 90s, we are witnessing a major evangelistic moment. Through their witness, and especially that of the saints – good men and women, warts and all, struggling toward the Kingdom – we are seeing the fruits of their labors. *Don’t blow it!*

What I mean is that each one of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or





“I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their craftiness,” and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.” So let no one boast of men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future, all are yours; and you are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.

Face-to-face encounters with those whom God sends is still the *incarnate* means of catechism and conversion. The Holy Spirit leads people to the Church, argument rarely does; only sin drives them away.

A friend of mine (Fr. John Salem) recently said: “I tell catechumens that the reason we want you to experience a year with us before being received into the Church is: Once you witness what a hypocrite I am – *and everyone else is* – but you can still see the Light of Christ shining through . . . well, then

you are ready to be part of our one family united in Christ.”

May God give us the wisdom, patience, and loving witness to show newcomers that, though we be sinners – although we are in the world – in Christ we are united. *We are not of this world.*

Fr. Joseph Huneycutt  
Vice-Chairman of the Department of Missions and Evangelism



## Endnotes

1. The conference was organized in collaboration with *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*. For the conference proceedings, see *Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialogue*, ed. James S. Cutsinger (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1997).
2. <https://www.firstthings.com/article/1998/01/008-briefly-noted-7>
3. <https://www.amazon.com/Not-This-World-Teaching-Seraphim/dp/0938635522>
4. 1 Corinthians 1:12–13.
5. 1 Corinthians 3:19–23.

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS  
(FIRST OF A REGULAR COLUMN)

# REMINDE ME OF WHAT YOU ARE CRUCIFYING ME FOR

Fr. John Oliver

An organization about which we may hear a lot, but about which we may know little, the Southern Poverty Law Center, specializes in various projects of civil rights and racial justice. It also tries to keep track of what they call “hate groups” – congeries of persons who “attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their unchangeable characteristics.” Every year, the Center releases its *Year in*

*Hate and Extremism* report that lists those movements in the United States. How many did they identify in 2020? – 838, and rising.

Surprising? No, for it’s not hard to hate. Arguably, we live in an era of hate. People, leaders, institutions: when these excessively disappoint or dictate, hate may be the only feeling that seems to make sense. That which we would not say in polite company we now splatter over all kinds of airwaves.

We know, however, what hate does to a person: it splits him into pieces. Hate turns him into something he may have promised himself he would never become. Have you ever felt awful things in your heart, but struggled not to give in to them? Life then becomes a tension between what we feel and what we know to be right.



Hate, like heat rising from the page, hovers over the narrative of Christ’s final week on earth, between His triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His crucifixion. In a ghastly absurdity, Holy Week could also be called Hate Week. As we walk with Christ on each of His final days, we feel encroaching darkness through a number of agents. *Pontius Pilate*, Jerusalem’s governor, is one, who will resent

his job as he’s put in the position of having to judge an innocent man just because a mad crowd demands that he do so. The *religious authorities*, are another, who despise Christ as His message of love and forgiveness threatens their own of law and submission. The *Roman soldiers*, constantly and mercilessly, will physically hurt Jesus, though they don’t know Him. The *chaotic crowds*, in tragic misunderstanding, will herald Christ as He enters Jerusalem to begin His reign on earth, only to hiss at Him a few days later as their hope of worldly power hangs defeated on a cross. We will feel the hate of *the devil*, who will display his rage against the Son of God in all the violence he stirs up against Him. We will even feel something like hate in *the apostles*, who will rock and reel over what their movement has become.



Yet, no malice – *none* – will rise from the central figure in the middle of it all. No hatred will come from the only Person in the story who will be given true and teeming reasons to hate.

Mammoth Cave National Park is home to the world's largest known cave system. Once under the earth, the tour guide will sometimes arrange for all lights to be extinguished, all the beams that illumine paths and irradiate walls. Visitors suddenly discover a darkness so thick and concentrated that a hand cannot be seen before a face. Everyone gets nervous; some panic. When the tour guide turns on a flashlight, all instinctively turn their heads toward it. When all the lights go on, everyone breathes a sigh of relief.

Holy Week is like that: yes, the enclosing night will grow thick and concentrated, but the Light in the center will shine brighter as darkness grows darker. At first, Christ will be celebrated: Light will be everywhere! Soon, though, will come a threatening silence: to the crowd it will become clear that Christ does not bring a kingdom of pleasure, or comfort, or worldly success, but of an absurdly sacrificial love, and a hope in what cannot be seen.

Then, Christ will not return evil for evil, but will evince gentleness and goodness until the end, using His dying breaths not to rebuke or curse His enemies, but to pray that they would be forgiven. He will even plead their desperate naivety before His Father: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." They will neither know it nor believe it, but He will die for them, too.

Remember the Patriarch Joseph, whose loving father Jacob gave him that "technicolor dreamcoat" of many colors? In a fit of jealousy, Joseph's brothers seized him, threw him into a pit, left him for dead, lied about it, sold him into slavery, and shipped him off to another country to spend twenty-two years in horrible conditions. Joseph, however, rose in the

good favor of the Pharaoh. When his brothers came to Egypt to buy grain, they didn't recognize him; but he recognized them.

Joseph had been given true and numerous reasons to hate. He could have justifiably required his enemies to grovel and beg forgiveness. Naturally: we want those who hurt us to feel really bad about it, to confess their wrong and wallow in guilt for awhile. Yet what did Joseph say to his hateful brothers when they discovered his identity? "Do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, do not feel bad

for what you have done, for God is the one who arranged all this" (Genesis 45:5). With hate ubiquitous, are we not silenced when we see such goodwill on display?

As Holy Week wears on, Church hymns will give voice to Christ's deeply human hurt: Remind Me what you are crucifying Me for? Is it for raising your dead? Healing your sick? Restoring sight to your blind and hearing to your deaf? For what crime are you crucifying Me? Is it feeding your hungry, protecting your widows, uplifting your downcast?

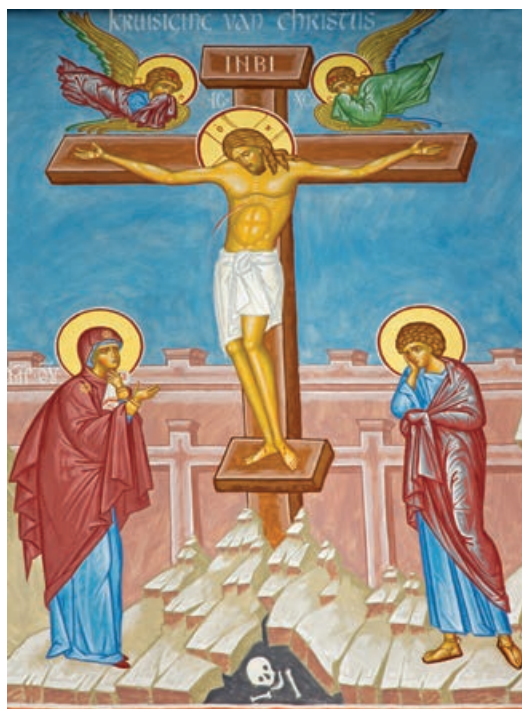
Yet hate will be the one emotion not found in the

Person most provoked to feel it. Instead, on radiant display will be His love for His enemies. This divine love won't be about the manufacturing of pleasant feelings for those who spurn it, but, like a redwood steady in both summer's warmth and winter's chill, even in fire's heat, it will simply *be*.

If such love sounds like more than our weak wills can manage, it is. Love is a "God thing." Love for crucifiers, for betrayers, for spitters and scourgers; for strangers, distasteful and disagreeable; for the fussy and the unfit, is *definitely* a God-thing.

So, we turn back with humble prayer to the radiant Light on display during Holy Week: "Lord, do within me what I cannot do within myself."

Fr. John Oliver





Daniel Powell

## ON CHANGING INTO THE LIKENESS OF GOD: **METAMORPHOSIS**

IN THE SECOND WEEK OF GREAT LENT, WE FOCUS ON THE POWER OF THE WORK OF OUR LORD THROUGH THE CROSS, AND OUR NEED TO CHOOSE HIS PATH FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR LIFE INTO HIS LIKENESS. AS WE CHOOSE HIS WAYS, WHICH ARE ABOVE OUR WAYS, AND HIS PATH FOR OUR HOLINESS, WE BEGIN TO REALIZE OUR STATUS AS EXILES FROM WHAT GOD INTENDED AND INTENDS. THE PHRASE "IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF IT" (JOHN 17:16) SHOULD COME TO MIND AS WE SEEK THE CITY WHOSE BUILDER IS GOD. WE ARE NOT CITIZENS OF THIS WORLD (MARK 12:17) AND WE SHOULD NOT LIVE AS IF WE ARE, LEST IN SEEKING TO SAVE OUR LIFE WE LOSE IT, AND FIND THERE IS NOTHING TO BUY OUR LOST SOUL (MARK 8:37).

To be Christian, we must fix our gaze on Christ to learn what it is to be human (Hebrews 12:2). In the Eucharist (communion), the humanity of Christ is made visible as the substance of our union with Christ, for apart from Him nothing comes into being or has any meaning (John 1:3). The path He took through the cross, by obedience, provides a path for us to move from the exile in our temporal state to His eternal presence among the many rooms in our Father's house, in the new City of God, returning us from our exile to the promised land that Joshua and Caleb previewed in faith (Numbers 14).

If we desire this, then with faith and works we shall follow where His feet have walked and focus our efforts in prayer on what He teaches, not the world. Our Lord uses all creation to tell us this story and direct our path. One such lesson, preceding the cross, is taught to us in an icon,

in which Christ is on a high mountain with Peter, James and John, and is transfigured. It is this revelation to them that shows the difference made by leading a godly life.

The icon is entitled "Metamorphosis." Rarely, for our culture, do I prefer words from Greek, Russian, Arabic, or other language on an icon, to English, because the word in another language is often difficult for viewers to understand. Too often we hide behind prayers and songs with words in languages we do not understand. Sometimes they do not flow from prayerful hearts, but only reinforce a false piety based upon nostalgia, and not *anamnesis*. Thus it is as St. Paul described: we "become as a noisy gong or clanging cymbal," and unintelligible.

*Metamorphosis*, however, became an English word and with the proper denotation. It is in biology, a life science, that we learn of metamorphosis. It is, for example, the



wonderful transfiguration (transformation) of the caterpillar into the butterfly. The caterpillar that later becomes the monarch butterfly lives on and below the surface of the ground, receiving energy by consuming plants. It has no higher thoughts than to survive, yet it follows God's plan. It began its life as an egg laid on the leaf of a milkweed. ("Land of milk and honey" comes to mind, as do many other images of milk as a vital source of nutrition to the newborn.) Once it has emerged from the egg, as if in the garden of life, the caterpillar begins to consume the leaf it needs in order to grow. It repeatedly sheds its skin as it grows, putting off the old for the new (1 Corinthians 13:11, Mark 2:22). As the end of its life as a caterpillar nears, it ascends the tree (a symbol for the cross in our lives). It forms its own coffin using the energies it received from the plants, and, so to speak, wraps itself in its own "tomb" on a branch of the tree. If the cocoon is poorly prepared, it will not survive the season. The caterpillar has no idea of what lies ahead, but instinctively and obediently follows the path prepared for it by its Creator. At the right time, it is called down from the tree, like Zacchaeus and the repentant thief on the cross, and it emerges from the tomb, leaving its burial cloth, an empty tomb, with no stains on the new body showing the prior struggle. It is a sojourner on the earth, preparing for its call from the tomb as Lazarus, to Resurrection. It is transformed in a most unexpected and marvelous way, now free from the body bound to the earth.

Having once descended, it now is able to ascend in the new body, and hover and fly over creation, as though a renewed spiritual and physical creation. What once had no beauty or majesty that attracted us, is now seen to be most magnificent, even angelic. Rather than consuming matter on the earth, it can now cause creation to blossom in the future, by pollinating the flowers. Thus it makes them more splendid than Solomon's attire, and adds to their life and the beauty of creation. While still perishable, it still serves those that follow, known and unknown, by its efforts. Yet it will not receive the intended fullness of this resurrection and the full majesty of what is seen through this glass darkly. Full resurrection and common union are yet to occur, for this is but a foreshadowing. The beautiful unfolding came from within.

Everything needful for this process was built into the DNA of the caterpillar by its Creator. I have observed this process many times, with great attention to the details. Shall we not see the same miracle in that which He made in humanity? In the Metamorphosis icon, we see Peter, John, and James in awe of the Transfiguration of our Lord. They are still very connected to the earth, awaiting

full enlightenment, as we are. Moses and Elijah, representing God's Law and proclamations of truth and beauty, and the living and the dead, are shown as those who have passed through the first tomb. They now serve those who have yet to travel the path of the cross and the tomb, and of transfiguration and resurrection. Both groups are connected by the Giver of Divine Energies, our Lord. He is fully God and fully man, who now reveals this mystery of *hypostasis* (union with humanity), and what we may become.

God is the God of the living, not the dead, for the dead have chosen something other than God by not preparing their transforming coffin during their life on the earth. Those who seek to lose their life (through repentance and asceticism), gain it, because they seek to restore the likeness of God in the created image. They move from caterpillar to butterfly by properly preparing in this life and for the life to come. They have a better understanding of the path and a desire for God. Our preparation is not mindless: it comes from the recognition of our condition, from repentance with confession, and from regeneration with acts of selfless love for the Creator and all in His image. In doing these, we prepare for transfiguration and resurrection. God is not concerned about caterpillars or butterflies, is He, or is it written for us who must change? (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:9f.). Is it not so that we may see the deeper meaning and so order our life? Are we not more important than a caterpillar, just as we are more important than the sparrow? Has not God given us more than instinct to follow His path? And this we shall see and do, if we allow God to heal the human will that He assumed in becoming man. He is the transfiguring power, undivided, simultaneously truly human and divine.

We glimpse, through the veil and the glass darkly, the uncreated Light. We see God, whom we can know and experience. Christ is central in the Transfiguration, because apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. While we do not yet know what we shall be, we know we shall be like Him. For this we are eucharistic (thankful communicants with God). The Transfiguration should carry a great significance in our lives for many reasons. The icon brings the message of hope, and a reminder that, while we are exiled, we are not forgotten. We will be enlightened if we choose to follow Him, not in ignorance, but willingly. The Lord has prepared a path to a city whose builder and maker is Himself, the One we know. We will be in His image and likeness if we prepare. We must choose the path of metamorphosis.

Daniel Powell

# THE SLOTH

Stephania Lynnette Goldy

*"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19).*

Sometimes I sit on the couch and think about the things I should be doing. I think about them. Or I sit and look outside. Just look. It takes energy to get up and clean house. My computer work that I want to do is not getting done because that means I would have to get up off the couch. It is easier for me to think I am contemplating my day. Expend-ing energy is hard work, and what is the point: I am slothful. Lord, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk.

I am open to easy suggestions for overcoming sloth. Hard suggestions can be given, but the chances of my taking them are very, very slim. The sloth is a cute critter and is surely huggable. I want one, but I heard it eats worms. I am not ready to be eaten, for I am a worm. I would rather sit here and hug the sloth. Keep it close and snuggle. Someone else can feed it, but they will not. If I do not feed the sloth, it will leave and go hug someone else, I am sure. For now, however, I am enjoying the hugging. The sloth keeps me warm when I am feeling chilly. If I get up off this couch and do something, I would warm up, but for now I like sitting here with my sloth. My books no longer call to me because my sloth is sitting on them and I cannot hear them. I know they are there, but I do not care. There is my prayer corner, but it takes too much energy. I would rather hug my sloth. Sometimes people resemble their pets. I am starting to look like my dear sloth. My sloth leads me away from prayer. He leads me away from fasting. He leads me away from repentance. He leads me away from love. He takes away my joy. He feigns peace, and his patience is a lie. Kindness and goodness are only costumes he puts

on. He is only gentle in the way he eases himself into my life to destroy my faith. Finally, sloth takes control of my life as he leads me to Despair.

However, Despair is not the enemy. The enemy is my lackadaisical attitude. That lazy sloth. It's his fault. Begone, lazy sloth! As soon as I shout the word, *Begone*, the mind of my heart turns to Christ. Wow! That's all I had to do: all this time, just shout "Begone"? Hardly. Somewhere deep inside me Christ lives. He heard my cry of help and rose up inside me and slew the enemy. Now, instead of sitting on the couch with my sloth, I have my prayer rope, and my icons, and my prayer book, and the psalms, and, of course, the

Scriptures. Learning to read the Church Fathers and Scripture, asking questions of what can I do to fulfill His will today, praying about the questions and listening for the answer, and just sitting

with God (yes, on the couch again, but sometimes outside with his creation) the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, has made all the difference. This practice of Lectio Divina that has been part of the Church for two millennia is literally a God-send. *"But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart" (Luke 2:19)* Instead of hugging my sloth, I am actually doing something – praying – and then I can go about my day.

Tomorrow I receive the sacrament of confession. I thank God for this opportunity to know I am forgiven, to be reassured. Thank you, God, for your love and mercy. As I fall, You help me get up – every time. Every time.

Stephania Lynnette Goldy, Obl.SB  
Director of Oblates with the Monastery of Our Lady and St Laurence,  
Canon City, Colorado  
Communicant of St John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church,  
Pueblo, Colorado





# GOD'S GIFT OF THE SENSES (ESPECIALLY HEARING), AND OF MUSIC

Daniel Powell

My parents gave me a valuable lesson, albeit implicitly: “Never miss an opportunity to keep your mouth closed and your ears open.” Various saints (including St. Theophan the Recluse) have spoken of the role of the senses, like that of hearing, in spiritual illness and health.

Our nature is equipped with five physical senses, principally associated with five organs. Four of these organs have something in common and distinguish them from the fifth: our eyes for sight, our nose for smell and breath, our flesh for touch, our ears for hearing, and, the most distinct, our mouth for different senses and actions (tasting, breathing, eating, speaking). All senses seem to have a type of capacity and filter, but perhaps the mouth the least of all. The senses inform the intellect, but they ought not to govern it. They should help enlighten the human soul, and not extinguish, or crush it, nor distract it from Him who created them for our use. They are, as St. Gregory of Nyssa says in *The Hexaemeron*, to inform us. The first four senses and organs are informative, as gates to the soul. The fifth is far less so, as it is less simple, and thus most challenged in operating in simple likeness to God.

The eye is both a portal and window to the soul (Matthew 6:22). It may behold the beauty of the Lord (Mary Magdalene in the garden, John 20:18) and the Creator's works (Thanksgiving Akathist). As a passive, but directed “consumer,” it is never sated, though it may grow clouded and harbor darkness. It is meant to absorb light into the soul as vision grows in clarity. By sight we are drawn toward what is needful. By it we walk in the light and see where there is darkness, so we may not stumble. (“But if any one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him,” John 11:10; and “But the path of the just is as a shining light, that shines more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is darkness; they know not at what they stumble,” Proverbs 4:18–19.) The visible heavens and earth guide us on the path of knowledge of

God. (“The heavens declare the glory of God...,” Psalm 19; see also Isaiah 60:4, Matthew 6:22–24, 1 Corinthians 12:2, John 9:1–41, Luke 18:35–43, and Mark 8:17–25.)

Through the nose we smell things (and through it, of course, we breathe). Those odors can become deeply embedded in our memory, and be strongly associated with our experiences at that time. When we smell the same odors again, those deep memories can be awakened powerfully. The sense of smell is perhaps the most pleasing of the senses, in its ability to unite the other senses and memory in prayerful anamnesis. One thinks of the “smells and bells” of liturgical prayer, as a sweet aroma and a fragrant offering. Smell is thus connected to the offering of prayers to the Lord, and to our offering of ourselves to be kindled by Him. (See 2 Corinthians 2:14–15, Leviticus 1:1, and Ephesians 5:2.)

The skin, the largest organ of the body, covers the body, and thus protects it without taking anything in (usually). The nerves in the skin permit finer gradations of sensation than simply “feeling.” The skin is associated with the “the flesh,” which is often cited as the most difficult to submit to *theosis*. The passions find strong couplings through the flesh, which is the body and the sensory organs in opposition to the Spirit of God (Romans 7:5, 18, 25; 8:1–5; see also, Genesis 1:27, 2:7, 3:21, Ezekiel 37, John 1:14, Matthew 26:40–43).

It is through nerve endings in the skin that we feel pressure, heat, cold, and pain. It is the sensory organ with the shortest range, and this, too, may be instructive. We instinctively seek to restore a lost unity with another by *proximity*, a warm embrace of another or the offer of an embrace. Words are not essential at such times: touch is enough. (See 2 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Corinthians 6:16, Genesis 2:24 and 2 Samuel 6:7, the latter showing one unprepared for the contact, in contrast to Matthew 9:20–22, in which one was prepared.)

The mouth is the organ of taste – “O taste and

see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). Through taste, we often identify what is healthy to eat and what is toxic. The mouth is also an alternative conduit for breath, but it is more noisy when it does! As with the nose, the mouth allows the exchange of what is useful for life from the air, to expel that which is not. The mouth also consumes in a much different manner than eye, nose, ear or skin takes in anything. It has less benefit to the individual's soul, though it may deeply help or harm others by its action. ("What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man," Matthew 15:18; "Out of the mouth of babes Thou has perfected praise," Matthew 21:16). Those unaffected by disturbance, distortion, or perturbation of the other senses and organs are able to use the mouth as designed. The mouth has redemptive qualities if it is used in a way that benefits the hearer, as exemplified by the *Logos*. Our words do not subsist, but they do have effects. (See James 3:5, 3:8; Proverbs 18:21; 1 Peter 3:10; Romans 10:9; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 59:17; Isaiah 24:14; and Psalm 141:3ff.: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth and protecting door round about my lips"; "Let our mouths be filled with your praise, O Lord, and the righteous shall hear it and be glad.")

Finally, we come to the ear and the role of music. Our faculty of hearing, too, is ever active, discerning order from noise, as we naturally flee discord and seek harmony and order. Putting edifying words to music deepens their physical and spiritual resonance, for constant reminder and recall, as it moves the body and soul in ascent and participation, and for these we are made. Music may certainly be felt through the body, but the primary conduit is the ear, and hearing that is finely tuned to perceive frequencies and patterns. It routinely perceives from near and afar, much more than the other senses, as it can hear what is not yet seen or is invisible. The ear is ever inundated with vibrations, from nature and people. Noise is that which is offensive to the hearing, as such sounds are typically unnatural or are warnings. The peaceful mind learns discernment for tuning the ear and soul away from *logismoi*. Of the many sounds we hear, music resonates throughout the body, motivating us to move by the influence of the soul (David danced before the Lord; 2 Samuel 6:14–22). For with pleasant sounds, music, and words, the soul warms and the heart is glad. Thus, the words of the Psalms are most powerful,

as is evident even in David's and Saul's interaction. (David's playing of music for Saul quietened the *logismoi*; 1 Samuel 16:14–23).

The energy of music delivered to the ear is unlike that received through the other organs, as the energy communicates throughout the body and couples with human energy, individually and corporately in the *ecclesia*. By the ear, we are able to receive the comforting voice and words of others, and these too dive deeply into the heart and soul for eternal deposit. Thus we are encouraged to use music and words for the healing of spirit and soul ("... speaking to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks at all times for all things unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," Ephesians 5:19–20). Harmful sounds and words, too, have powerful effects, most difficult to undo later. "The poor man cried and the Lord heard him." (Psalm 34:6)

We are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). We are far more than an assembly of organs and senses. The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both (Proverbs 20:12). Neither eye has seen nor ear heard nor has entered into the mind of man the things God has prepared for those that love Him. Each of the senses and organs given us has a role in collaborating with the Spirit of life breathed into us, and for participation in the divine Life.

The senses ought to aid in our deification, but not rule it. In addition, we are more than an assembly of sensory organs and neural pathways; we are persons made to live as designed, to be in the image and likeness to God, insofar as we participate in *theosis*. Let us not lean on our own understanding, but on Him who is the Giver of Life. May He come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls. Let us, with all we are, seek Him in the time in which He may be found, for the days are short and the Bridegroom cometh! (Matthew 25:6). (See Isaiah 40:1–10, Ecclesiastes 12, Luke 12:20.)

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15).

All these things you know, but perhaps you will find consolation that even the least of all may come to some improved awareness and glorify God.

Daniel Powell  
St. George Church, Terre Haute, Indiana



# COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

## ST. ANTHONY'S "COMMUNITY DAY OF REMEMBRANCE"

A beautiful Saturday in June provided the backdrop for an outdoor prayer service at St. Anthony Orthodox Church in Bergenfield, New Jersey. The parish and members of the community gathered for "A Community Day of Remembrance" to memorialize those we lost in a difficult year, and to commemorate those who helped keep us safe.

Parishioners and members of the community were invited to submit names of family or friends who passed on because of COVID-19 or social unrest, to pray for those still suffering, and to thank our first-responders, nurses, doctors, teachers, and other essential workers. Nike Bach, President of the Parish Council, said, "We were pleased to have members of the community join us in our outdoor, ecumenical prayer service, and we hope to see them at our social and fundraising events when this virus passes."

Father Michael Ibrahim celebrated the traditional Trisagion

Prayers for the Dead and a Moleben for Thanksgiving for the living, and to remember first-responders. He was assisted by Archdeacon Peter Boulukos, and members of the St. Anthony and

sisters in the community. What we can best share with the community is the beauty of our services – to bring God's glory and mercy to those around us!"

The event was held June 19<sup>th</sup> as the nation marked the first federal holiday, Juneteenth, commemorating the emancipation of African-American slaves. Prayers were offered in hopes that all men, women, and children worldwide can live in health, peace, and freedom.

St. Anthony, the nation's first Pan-Orthodox Church, has a long history of celebrating its services in English and of reaching out, not only to the Orthodox Community, but to the community in and around its hometown. Our vibrant, multi-ethnic parish takes part in a number of activities, including the Walk-In Dinner Program, dedicated to providing meals to Bergen County's homeless and hungry.

Spirit of Orthodoxy Choirs in a service that brought together members of the church and community leaders. Local City Council members attended the service and remarked how welcoming the St. Anthony family is.

Subdeacon Stratos Mandalakis, who conducted the Choir, commented that "our Outreach Committee felt the need to do something for the community. The many months we all spent in isolation/survival mode left little room to help our brothers and





# A WEE DRAM: A STORY FOR GENTLE HEARTS AND A SENSE OF HUMOR

Deacon Gregory Farman

“Thank you, Father.” George seemed to smile the words as much as say them.

I smiled too. I could have guessed what would come next, because George is a man of routines. Once a month, generally on the evening of the second Saturday, he stays after Vespers to make his confession. The transgressions he confesses are without fail harmless, but that Saturday he must have been more than usually grateful to receive absolution.

He reached for his briefcase, opened it, and brought out a bottle of Macallan 12-year-old Scotch. “This is for you, Father,” he smiled again. “When you share a wee dram with your friends, remember to pray for me.”

This was a surprise. George owns a liquor store and often gives me a bottle of something nice when he comes to confession. But this was more – much more – than I had expected.

As he stepped lightly out through the narthex I began blowing out candles and tidying up for Divine Liturgy the next morning. I hurried a bit, because outside it was growing dark, and I still had to walk several blocks to my little apartment across the park. A few minutes later I slid the bottle into the pocket of my cassock, stepped outside, and locked the entrance.

I had taken only a few steps when I heard footfalls behind me. There was nothing alarming in that. Ours is a quiet town. It’s not unusual to meet an acquaintance on the street. I paused and turned to see if it would be anyone I knew. When I saw who it was I stifled a groan and set my face so as not to show how annoyed I was. It was Steven.

All the pastors in the neighborhood know Steven. We had taken to calling him the circuit rider, because he made the rounds of all the churches, telling tall tales of terrible tragedies that had befallen him. He was a great storyteller, even when drunk. That Saturday night he didn’t appear drunk – at least not yet – so I made up my mind to listen

patiently and hold onto my wallet.

“Ah, Father Mark, it’s so good to see you,” he enthused. “And such a pleasant evening it is. It’s a little late for you to be leaving the church, so I imagine you must have been having a good conversation with one of your parishioners. I’ll just walk along to keep you company on your way home. You know I live in the neighborhood now, at the old Sears store they turned into affordable apartments. Have you visited it yet? It’s only a block the other side of the park. But that reminds me, you told me once that it’s your tradition to do house blessings. Maybe you can come by next week to bless my little place? I’d be delighted to show you around and maybe introduce you to the other residents. But I have to say that you might not make that good an impression with that bottle in your pocket. You know I have no scruples about a priest who takes a little drink, but some of my new neighbors might think badly of it. I couldn’t help but notice what you’re carrying. It might give some people the wrong idea. Some might even think you were carrying off communion wine from the church for your own personal consumption.”

He said all this so smoothly that I didn’t notice his hand lifting the bottle from my cassock pocket. In the gathering dusk his eyes brightened as he examined the label.

“Ah, now, this is something special, but you really shouldn’t be carrying it through the park on your way home. I’ll take care of it for you, though. When you come to bless my apartment we can share a wee dram.”

Without missing a beat Steven peeled off and disappeared into the park with my bottle. I stood there stunned, torn between aggravation and admiration. Such cunning! Such audacity! These can be admirable qualities. After all, Jesus told His disciples to be as shrewd as serpents and as gentle as doves. But Steven had crossed a line. Our Lord



might approve of audacity, but surely not larceny.

I had a good idea where he would be headed because I often saw him on a bench near the statue of William Shakespeare on the other side of the park. I expected I could find him there. He would probably be holding court among fellow free spirits, and they might already be sharing a wee dram of my whiskey.

I walked that way slowly at first, trying to think of some way to turn this around. Then with the kernel of an idea, I stepped out more deliberately. As I rounded the corner I saw the scene I expected: Steven brandishing the bottle while his admiring friends listened from the bench to the story of how he had acquired it. They barely noticed as I walked up to interrupt the performance.

"Steven," I said, "I'm so glad to see you! Thanks for finding my bottle. It was a special gift from one of my parishioners and I was afraid I might have lost it. I'll take it with me now, and I'll bring it with me to share when I come to your house blessing next Wednesday at four p.m. It's on my calendar now, and I know where to find you. Be sure to have a candle. I'll bring the holy water. I hope you will invite some of your friends."

I slid the bottle back into my pocket and walked toward home, relishing the startled silence I left behind. As shrewd as a serpent and as gentle as a dove.

Deacon Gregory Farman  
Saints Constantine and Helen Parish, Carrollton, Texas







# A CAT IN THE CLOUD, OR A WINTER'S REFLECTION

The mailbox is, if we re-earlier to-nearing my time to retire for the evening, and having already dressed for that, I walked outside to get the mail. The air was warm for it being winter. It felt like spring, and yet there was still snow on our lawn next to the porch. The afternoon shade had kept it from melting. My mismatched pajamas and my fuzzy bathrobe kept me comfy on this warm, almost balmy, evening. The ambiance was like a melodious hymn. I watched the bunny scurrying across the yard as if he were late for his bedtime. I casually walked down

was still in our tonight, that received any day. As it was time to retire for the evening, and having already dressed for that, I walked outside to get the mail. The air was warm for it being winter. It felt like spring, and yet there was still snow on our lawn next to the porch. The afternoon shade had kept it from melting. My mismatched pajamas and my fuzzy bathrobe kept me comfy on this warm, almost balmy, evening. The ambiance was like a melodious hymn. I watched the bunny scurrying across the yard as if he were late for his bedtime. I casually walked down

our long driveway to the street where our mailbox stood. After retrieving the mail, I looked up at the dark sky, almost completely covered with all sorts of cloud shapes, and saw a cat-face smile at me. Smiling in return, I whispered hello. The cat cloud only stared back, despite my expecting it to respond in some way.

Back at the house, the porch swing invited me to sit. My hands brushed over the cushions and they felt clean enough in the dark, so I accepted the invitation. The view in front of me was so full of God it nearly took my breath away. I meditated on the scene. The snow-covered grass, the bare aspen trees and yucca plants all silhouetted against the darkness, the remembrance of the scurrying bunny, the distant neighbors that I imagined were relaxing unaware of the outside beauty, and even the faint traffic sounds seemed to reflect God to me. Somewhere in the sky there was a fingernail moon, probably hiding behind the cat-face. Several minutes





went by while I took in the entirety of the scene. I thanked God for the day, for this special evening, for His beautiful creation reminding me of Him, this gift of the place where I live, for my life, my health, my family, even for the struggles of the day, and for my Church. I prayed for safety for travelers, and health for those who were sick. I prayed for those who had no one to pray for them. I asked forgiveness for my sins and thanked Him for Him. The black wool knotted rope I was wearing on my wrist started to itch a little and its cross seemed to point to me. I removed the rope from my wrist and prayed, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.” One hundred times. Repeating the words of this ancient prayer reminded me of Who our Lord is, and of His great mercy and love.

I was at peace in His presence, sitting on that fifty-year-old swing in the dark, on this warm winter night, listening to the quiet of eternity. I thought about the past couple of hours of this evening, prior

to going outside to get the mail. I wondered, if those hours of my life had been a stage play or a movie, and I was an actor playing a character, would I like the way I was portraying that character? Did I, the actor, make the character believable? Would the audience recognize the character as advertised? One of the goals of a good actor is for the audience to soon realize that they no longer see the actor, but instead all they see is the character. Instead of Tyler Hoechlin, we see Clark Kent as Superman, or Judi Dench becomes Queen Victoria, and you never wondered what happened to Judi.

My brothers and sisters: the “character” we as Christians portray every day to everyone is Christ. Not that He is ever a character we play. Perhaps, however, this metaphor might bring home to us who we are: at the least, an actor playing a role, but more importantly, a Christian putting on Christ. One of the goals of St. John the Baptist was for us not to see him, but to see Christ. We should

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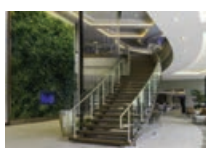
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decrease so Christ can increase and be seen. Are we portraying Christ as He should be seen, as He wants to be seen, as He deserves to be seen? We may feel we are not worthy to portray Christ, but that is our job as Christians. We are expected to do our job. With God's help, we can.

This evening on the porch swing, I asked myself who would have believed that I was portraying Jesus, today or yesterday. I cannot fix the past, but I can move forward. Jesus teaches us that when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, take in a stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and go to someone in prison, then we are feeding, giving, taking in, clothing, visiting and going to Him. If, for some reason beyond our control, we cannot do all these things, then friends, know this: there is no law against love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. May we give out of our abundance these spiritual fruit to others. May we seek to serve Christ in those in need. May we put on Christ, so we can be Christ to others. May we ask ourselves: can anyone see Christ in me, or am I just a cat in the cloud staring back at them? Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Lynnette Goldy

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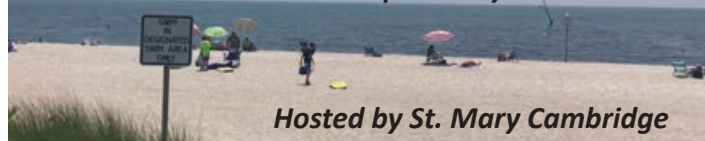
**HOSTED BY ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER, LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA**



## PLC 2022

Diocese of Worcester & New England

*Join us on the Cape July 8-10!*



*Hosted by St. Mary Cambridge*

Outdoor  
Lobster Clambake

Bible Bowl

Teen Beach Events

Oratorical Festival

Antiochian  
Women's Brunch

Young Adult  
Activities

Order of  
St. Ignatius Dinner

Hafli

Hierarchical  
Divine Liturgy with  
Bishop JOHN

**CAPE CODDER**  
RESORT & Spa

*Special Conference Rate of \$209 + tax /night*

*First 50 adults to register get a  
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*Conference Rate available for up to 3 days  
before, or up to 2 days after, the PLC!*

*Visit [www.stmaryma.org/plc](http://www.stmaryma.org/plc) for more info!*



# Commemorating Bishop BASIL's 30th Anniversary

**Preserve, O Lord, our Master and Chief  
Priest and Grant Him Many Years!**

**DOWAMA PLC**

**St. George Cathedral - Wichita, KS**

**June 15 -18, 2022**

**[www.dowamapl.org](http://www.dowamapl.org)**





WITH THE BLESSING OF HIS EMINENCE  
METROPOLITAN JOSEPH  
AND HIS GRACE BISHOP THOMAS



*save the date*

# 2022 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

JUNE 29 - JULY 3, 2022

ANTIOCHIAN VILLAGE CONFERENCE CENTER


THE DIOCESES OF  
NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, D.C.  
OAKLAND, CHARLESTON AND THE MID-ATLANTIC

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**“FOR OUR DELIVERANCE  
FROM ALL WRATH’: DEALING WITH  
ANGER IN AN ANGRY SOCIETY”**

**REV. FR. THEODORE PULCINI**


ANTIOCHIAN HOUSE OF STUDIES  
SUPERVISOR OF THE DIRECTED-PROJECTS  
RETIRED PASTOR OF ST. MARY CHURCH  
CHAMBERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA



**“INTRODUCING THE YOUTH &  
YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY  
TASK FORCE”**

**REV. FR. NICHOLAS BELCHER**

CHAIR OF THE YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT  
MINISTRY TASK FORCE  
PASTOR OF ST. GEORGE CHURCH  
LITTLE FALLS, NEW JERSEY



**SAVE THE DATE**

**JUNE 15-18,  
2022**

**DOWAMA  
PARISH LIFE  
CONFERENCE  
WICHITA, KS**

**Reservations: Hyatt Regency**  
<https://www.hyatt.com/en-US/group-booking/WICRW/G-GECA>

**THEME:** Unless you are converted and become like  
children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven  
— Matt 18:3



# Barbecue, Blues, and Beatitudes



Join us in **Memphis, June 15-18**  
for the **2022 Parish Life Conference**



**Register today:** [antiochianevents.com/miami](https://antiochianevents.com/miami)

**DIOCESE OF MIAMI & THE SOUTHEAST**

Host Parish: St. John Orthodox Church, Memphis, TN

Be a Part of History



What could be better than  
Phoenix in the summer?  
Phoenix.  
In the summer.  
With the entire Archdiocese.

Join us for the historic  
2023 Archdiocese Convention  
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[www.AC2023AZ.org](http://www.AC2023AZ.org)

#ac2023az

*Available from Archdiocese Bookstore at Antiochian Village*

**THE LITURGIKON**



THE BOOK OF DIVINE SERVICES  
FOR THE PRIEST AND DEACON

FOURTH EDITION



## The Children's Relief Fund



I greet you on behalf of all the children of the **Children's Relief Fund (CRF)**, past and present. We pray that you receive this letter in their gratitude and appreciation for the love and concern you have shown them in our Lord's name. We pray for your continued health and prosperity in this New Year.

This letter brings you our *"2021 New Year Appeal."* The purpose of this program within the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America is to provide funds for the children in need in Lebanon and Palestine, and the children of Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

The **CRF**, under the *"Department of Charitable Outreach,"* has been a godsend to hundreds of needy children and their families. We are so proud and privileged to help and support them financially – but more importantly, to show them our love and concern.

We will continue to assist these children, just as we have since the Fund's inception in 1983. We have provided close to **4 million dollars** in aid, but we can't do it alone. Your past participation has brought much joy to so many young suffering innocents. ***100% of your donation goes directly to the sponsored child and no money is used for administrative services.***

You can help change the life of a child by being a sponsor for as little as \$400 a year, just \$7.69 per week, \$1.10 per day. Donations in any amount are always welcome. Once you sponsor a child, we will send you their name, age, address, and a brief biography. Your child will correspond with you, sending you letters and pictures about their life. You will be able to develop a special bond and personal relationship with them.

***Your assistance will improve the lives of these children and give them a chance for a better future.***

For those of you who are already sponsoring a child, we



offer you our most profound thanks. Please continue your love and support. New sponsors are encouraged to open a window of concern and join this humanitarian effort to lift the burden off these children.

In anticipation of your kind response, we thank you for your generosity, and pray you enjoy the New Year with health, happiness, and prosperity. May God bless you and yours and give you strength in the coming days.

Deborah Brown  
CRF Administrator  
(917) 991-7192  
[db0253@aol.com](mailto:db0253@aol.com) or  
[childrensrelieffund@gmail.com](mailto:childrensrelieffund@gmail.com)

You may donate through PayPal on our website at:  
<http://www.childrenrelieffund.org/donate-now.html>

Please make check payable to:  
**Children's Relief Fund**  
**P.O. Box 90072**  
**Brooklyn, NY 11209**

