

The Lion

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June 2017

GUIDING THE ARK OF SALVATION - THE THEANTHROPIC ROLE OF THE BISHOP

by Bp THOMAS (Joseph) and
Peter Schweitzer

as presented at the Church of St
Patrick, Warrenton, VA

*Continued from the April
2017 St. Mark's LION*

THIS THEANTHROPIC character of the Church not only sets her apart but provides us with indications concerning how we relate to one another within the Church. Specifically, it gives us insight into how the bishop, the icon of Christ, is to relate to priests, deacons, and laity. St. Ignatius the God-Bearer, Bishop of Antioch, links the Bishop and Jesus Christ together to such a degree that everything which happens to a visible Bishop of the Church is attributed and ascribed to the invisible Bishop, Christ our Savior.

The following is precisely what the Saint says: "For the honor, therefore, of Him Who desired us, it is right that we obey (the Bishop) without any hypocrisy; for a man does not merely mislead this Bishop who is seen, but seeks to deceive Him Who is invisible." [vii]

In a spiritual talk entitled "The Place of the Bishop in the Orthodox Church", Archimandrite Cyprian (now Bishop) asked, "What is the Church?"

1. The Church is the Assembly of the People of God for the celebration of the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, wherein the local Church actually becomes and is revealed as the Body of Christ, as a Theandric organism, in which the Holy Trinity dwells.

2. The visible center and head of the Eucharistic Assembly is the Bishop: It is he who leads the Assembly and preaches the word of God; it is he who offers the Eucharist, as an Icon of Christ, the Great High Priest, and as the one who presides in the place of God, according to St. Ignatius of Antioch.

3. In the early Church, only the Bishop offered the Divine Eucharist in each local Church; that is, there was only one Eucharist, and this was centered on the Bishop.

4. The Bishop, when he offers the Divine Eucharist, offers Christ in His wholeness, imparting the Holy Mysteries to the Faithful with his own hands; in ancient times, the People of God partook of Christ only from the living Icon of Christ, the Bishop.

5. Therefore, the Bishop not only embodies the local Church, but also expresses in time and space the Catholic Church, that is, the whole Church; for that which embodies Christ in His wholeness, and wherein one receives Christ in His wholeness, is that which embodies the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Wherever Jesus Christ is, says St. Ignatius, there is the Catholic Church.

6. For precisely this reason, when one is united



with the Bishop in the Mystery of the Divine Eucharist, then he is also united with the Catholic Church. St. Cyprian of Carthage emphasizes this ecclesiological truth in the following striking terms: The Bishop is in the Church and the Church in the Bishop; and if one is not in communion with the Bishop, he is not in the Church.”[viii]

The synergy between the laity, the priests and deacons, and the bishop is required if we are to imitate the theanthropic quality of the Lord Jesus. As Christ was obedient to His Father, so too we have a duty to be obedient and cooperate with the bishop in imitation of Christ. Since the relationship between the members of the Church and the bishop is a necessary one, it is an ascetic practice which will bear fruit unto eternal life.

This apostolic teaching, consistently confirmed by the holy fathers, is grounded in the theanthropic nature of the Church. Without it, the divine-human character of the episcopal office would be lost. As the icon of Christ, the bishop imitates his master as the minister of conciliation in the Church, uniting all those desirous of salvation in Christ. Drawing upon this parallel, the bishop is to be obedient unto death to the teachings of Christ and His Church in the service of love to His people. If there is one word that may encapsulate the relationship of the bishop to the priests, deacons, and laity he serves, it is love. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Perhaps this can be no better exemplified than in the life of our father among the Saints Raphael Hawaweeny of Brooklyn. Saint Raphael’s entire life manifested the love of Christ for His people. As Christ’s love knew no boundaries, Saint Raphael’s holy zeal knew no end. Like the saintly hierarchs Saint John of San Francisco and Saint Nektarios of Aegina, Saint Raphael’s love for his people was manifest in his tireless apostolic efforts, his scholarship, and his pious life. As Saint Nektarios and Saint John are venerated in their blessed repose by the faithful from various backgrounds, cultures, and languages, so too Saint Raphael is fondly recalled by Orthodox Christians of different jurisdictions and languages. The similarities concerning the three sainted bishops do not end there. All three hierarchs toiled in foreign lands, demonstrated unquestioning obedience to their supe-

riors even in trying circumstances, and suffered for the sake of the Gospel. As Father David Bleam notes, “When Dr. Ibrahim Arbeely and the Syrian Benevolent Society asked for Fr. Raphael Hawaweeny to be sent to Brooklyn, NY to minister to them, Fr. Raphael was being asked to leave the Kazan Theological Academy in Imperial Russia. He was being asked to leave the glorious splendor of czarist, Orthodox Russia to go to a non-Orthodox country. He had spent all his years surrounded by Orthodox culture, growing up in Damascus, Syria and being educated in Halki. Now he was being asked to go to a religiously foreign culture here in America. He had been surrounded by the glories of Orthodox architecture, art, liturgical music, and monastic piety. Now he was being asked to go where there was no monastic life and very few Orthodox Churches.” And yet he did this with apostolic zeal in obedience to His Lord Jesus Christ.

Saint Raphael “exemplified the image of a truly traditional Orthodox bishop. He received the faith from his forefathers and he sought faithfully to hand that faith over to his spiritual children. He was a great man of prayer. He loved and lived the liturgical life of the Church and it was his spiritual support. He was not an innovationist; he did not change anything. He brought to his pastoral work no agenda other than to be faithful to the charge which he had received. It was the people he served who consumed his every thought and every scheme. How to reconcile enemies? How to restore the lapsed? How to raise the children? How to plant a mission? How to educate a priest? The legacy of his accomplishments is outstanding: he founded thirty parish churches, authored or translated fourteen books, including both the Small and the Great Euchologion, founded St. Nicholas Cathedral in Brooklyn, created and authored many articles in *The WORD*. But these accomplishments do not reveal the true sanctity of his soul nor do they give us the measure of the man. These are to be found rather in the lives of the people he led to Christ and His Church. The thousands who attended his funeral and paid their last respects all recognized in St. Raphael the image of the God he loved and served. Like his Chief Shepherd, St. Raphael laid down his life for his sheep. Like the great pastor, the Apostle Paul, he made up in his body that which was lacking in the sufferings of Christ (Colossians 1:24). He was not a hireling; having loved his own, he loved them to the end. It is this love which united him to

God and it is this love which unites him to us, his spiritual children. It is this love which sanctified him and it is this love in which he dwells in the heavenly Kingdom. The words of our venerable and God-bearing Father John Climacus find their embodiment in St. Raphael: ‘Love grants prophecy, miracles. It is an abyss of illumination, a fountain of fire, bubbling up to inflame the thirsty soul. It is the condition of angels and the progress of eternity.’”

In this brief portrait of Saint Raphael of Brooklyn we have the ideal of a bishop and how he relates to his flock. Demanding strict asceticism from himself, he was gentle and loving with his clergy and the laity who sought his counsel and solace. As a true shepherd of Christ’s flock, he was vigilant in protecting his spiritual children from false teachings and error. At the time of his repose, Saint Raphael had founded 30 Orthodox churches spanning the United States and including Canada and Mexico.

As Saint Raphael has taught us, the bishop is to serve the flock of Christ as its spiritual father, collaborating with the priests and deacons, by rightly dividing the word of truth. (2Tim 2:15)

The theanthropic nature of the Church guarantees its authenticity, indivisibility, and its mission—the eternal salvation of Christ’s flock. Just as Noah’s ark and the Mosaic tevah ensured their safety from physical peril as typological structures, the Orthodox Church guides and protects those who desire eternal salvation. The role of the bishop is to preserve the integrity of the salvific vessel and proclaim through his life and preaching the divine economy in the midst of turbulent seas. The bishop does not act alone, just as salvation is not achieved through God’s intervention solely but requires the active response and participation of man, so too, the Church requires a synergeia between the bishop, his priests and deacons, and the laity. The Lenten Triodion perfectly summarizes this in the vesperal stichera of the Second Sunday of Great Lent celebrating the memory of Saint Gregory Palamas,

“What hymns of praise shall we sing in honor of the holy bishop? He is the trumpet of theology, the herald of the fire of grace, the honored vessel of the Spirit, the unshaken pillar of the Church, the great joy of the inhabited earth, the river of wisdom, the candle-stick of the light, the shining star that makes glorious the whole creation.

What words of song shall we weave as a garland, to crown the holy bishop? He is the champion of true devotion and the adversary of ungodliness, the fervent protector of the Faith, the great guide and teacher, the well-tuned harp of the Spirit, the golden tongue, the fountain that flows with waters of healing for the faithful, Gregory the great and marvelous.

With what words shall we who dwell on earth praise the holy bishop? He is the teacher of the Church, the herald of the light of God, the initiate of the heavenly mysteries of the Trinity, the chief adornment of the monastic life, renowned alike in action and in contemplation, the glory of Thessalonica; and now he dwells in heaven with the great and glorious martyr Demetrius, whose relics flow with holy oil.

Inspired by the divine Spirit, as a winged angel thou hast come to the aid of the pious Emperor, fighting against the foolish-minded Barlaam, who in his madness blasphemed against the glory of God; and thou hast justly gained the victory over him.

Wholly filled with heavenly wisdom, O glorious saint, thou hast shone as a light in the world, teaching the doctrines of Orthodoxy. In thy love for true wisdom thou hast conceived the fear of God within thy heart, and given birth to the words of the Spirit.” [x]

[vii] St. Ignatios, *Patrologia Græca*, Vol. V, col. 665A (Epistle to the Magnesians, III.2)

[viii] Archimandrite Cyprian, “The Place of the Bishop in the Orthodox Church”, *From Orthodox Tradition*, Vol. XVI, No. 3&4, pp. 8-17. Translated from the Greek and originally taken from an address delivered by Father (now Bishop) Cyprian of the Holy Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina in Fili, Greece, on October 6, 1997 (Old Style), at the annual convocation (held that year at the Novotel Convention Center in Athens) in honor of the Name Day of Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Fili.

[ix] <http://www.antiochian.org/life-our-father-among-saints-ra-phael-hawaweeny>

[x] Trans. by Mother Mary and Arch. Kallistos Ware, “The Lenten Triodion”, *Vespers for the Second Sunday of Great Lent*, pp. 314-15 (South Canaan, PA: St. Tikhon’s Seminary Press, 2002).



From the Ordination of The Rev'd Father James Tochiara on 14 May at St. Mark's Church. Bishop Basil of the Diocese of Wichita Ordained James as Priest, elevated Vladimir Christopher McDonald as ArchDeacon, Ordained Daniel Thomas Brainerd as Subdeacon and Adam Seth as Reader. Fr. John served as Celebrant at the Mass and Fr. James as Concelebrant on the singular occasion this is authorised.



THE 5TH SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA

ROGATION SUNDAY

Preached at St. Mark's Church, 21 May 2017
The Rev'd Archdeacon Vladimir McDonald

At that time: Jesus said unto his disciples: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it to you.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

ROGATION DAYS, or in Pagan times, a custom of "Beating the Bounds". As is often the case, especially in England, the Church took over a current pagan custom, and made it Gods own.

The original idea appears to have been that the land-holder had gone round the land that he "owned" and in a nod to the "gods" of air and wind and water and the earth, beat the edges of the property with willow sticks, to show that he understood, he would not have any of this without that the "gods" were good to him.

In the version that the early church proclaimed; God gave us the earth to feed and nurture us, the animals to feed and clothe us, and we show our understanding of this by "beating the bounds" of the Parish, we acknowledge the fact that we do not actually "own" the land; we are the stewards of Gods bounty. Also this helped the parish, to all intents and purposes, the Village, establish every year, its boundaries. For it was usually the case that the parish would butt up against another parish, and this would also establish the legal boundaries for tax purposes' As always, one is expected to render unto Caesar, that which is Caesar's; that which is Gods, unto God.

An interesting phenomena, that has come to us, this 5th Sunday after Pascha, and less than a week till Ascension. A significant juxtaposition of events that have such a bearing on who we are as Christians.

In the Rogation we find that as "stewards" of the teachings of our Lord, for that is our "Ground", we are admonished to look after, purify (by our living), the Gift of the passion of Our Lord, keep it close, and when asked, reveal the truth to those that wish to believe, and hopefully those that would believe, if they could see Our Lord, within us.

In the Ascension, we have the revelation of Our Lord, to be, as He says, The Son of the Father, who is returning to Him that made Him, so that the wonder and the Gift of the Holy Ghost may descend upon us, and commence to lay out before us the Love of Our Lord in the purity of His Love.

So I say again that the two events are closely aligned, and should be seen as complementary.

I am happy to read that the Disciples did, it would seem, finally understand Jesus, in that they believed, possibly for the first time, that He was who he had been saying and showing them he was, throughout His ministry. A little as John was the Forerunner of Jesus, one could say that Jesus was laying the ground work for the Holy Ghost, preparing the "land", those that believed He came from the Father, for the day He would return to the Father. A monumental feat, that whilst not beyond God to effect, often beyond us to believe.

Even now of course we have difficulty at times, abrogating our hopes and desires to His directives, though we know this is the right way for us to go, that His "way", the Way of the Pilgrim, will bring us to that Heaven we so desire

Why do we fight it, why do we rebel against the good that is Jesus, the purity that would bring us closer to Our Lord, who wishes nothing but peace and spiritual prosperity for us in this life, and the next?

Therein lies our dilemma, for at times I think we only look at what Our Lord tells us about our place with the Father in Heaven, that we will attain to the peace of our Lord, be with Him, sit with Him, at the time of our earthly death; we forget that we can have that peace here on earth now. Oh it isn't all sun and light and surrounded with the vapor of celestial incense, it is often death and destruction, Armageddon (writ small at the moment possibly), but that is all out there. I am talking of inner peace, that which the world cannot remove, cannot spoil, if we don't let it. Anything can be ruined obviously, but the Love of God has to be actively reviled, it cannot be taken once given, and it is always there to be taken up by us, and nurtured, and protected. We are, or should be, the Stewards of that Love, that is embodied for our ease of understanding, in the form of the Holy Ghost.

At that time: Jesus said unto his disciples: Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it to you. +

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY

A Sermon at St. Mark's Church
by the Rev'd James Tochiara

From the Second Chapter of the First Epistle General of Saint Peter: *For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.* +

THE READINGS tell us that this is Good Shepherd Sunday. If you are like me, then immediately, our minds see the common picture: Jesus as the Good Shepherd, his face serene as he leads fuzzy and sweet little lambs—one lamb draped upon his shoulders—surrounded by the green pasture mentioned in the famous psalm.

Relax. It's okay to imagine the picture. Unlike the weather today, the spring sun is shining. A gentle breeze brings us pristine air that our lungs long to breathe in, naturally leading us to the calming and healthful effects of deep slow breathing. As you exhale, your neck and shoulders become soft, and your circulation flows freely throughout your body. The birds are chirping, and the bees are buzzing. The grass is green, the sky is blue, and the clouds are a fluffy white. Yonder grow some shady trees near a babbling brook. Yes, my brothers and sisters, we have come here to rest. Welcome.

So that's it? The Lord Jesus is our Good Shepherd, and now bliss forever? It is good to rest, but there are two sides to every coin, and this is no exception. The image of the Good Shepherd is lovely, but in our day and age, it has become dangerous. It was intended as an instant reminder of the Scriptures, but we have forgotten the Scriptures and now the image has taken on an unfortunate life of its own. In our degraded times, this image of Jesus seems to beckon us, "Come into my church. Everything is soft and cuddly here. Escape from the cold and harsh world, banish all thoughts of reality, and live in a fantasy of a happy place." We might as well put our thumb in our mouth and just start sucking. Of course, we are here to rest, and to relax, and to find peace in the presence of God, but he is the Shepherd of our souls, not a cuddly piper who leads us away from reality.

Let us turn once again to the 23rd Psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures..." Ah, there's the comforting image. But wait, it goes on, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..." Pastures on one side, the shadow of death on the other. This is the valley of the shadow of death: our life in this world. We are not in the valley of eternal death—the valley of Gehenna, the eternal hell. Here, we are in the shadow of death. We live, but there is a shadow over us.

Notice what the psalm describes. God's army has fought a fierce battle and triumphed, and now their war chief and true king, God himself, leads them to a green pasture for a glorious victory banquet. "Thou hast prepared a table for me in the presence of mine enemies..." At this banquet, our war chief shows us great favor by adopting us into his clan and bloodline. "Thou hast anointed my head with oil..." We are anointed—chrismated—to share his leadership.

The title of Good Shepherd is a very specific way of referring to God. It doesn't really have anything to do with sheep. When God leads us through perils and saves us, and afterwards gives us a victory banquet full of peace and grace and favor, it is then that we call him by the special title of Good Shepherd. We use this title for Jesus after he leads us through the experience of his death. Watching our Lord and Master, watching our very God die, is extremely dangerous and fraught with perils. But he rose up on the third day, and he finished teaching his apostles and disciples how to offer the Eucharistic worship of Melchizedek, and how to offer his sacrifice in his new Temple. This is his victory banquet, and this is why we call him the Good Shepherd. He has fought our battle and saved us, and he has given us the banquet of peace and thanksgiving—battle and banquet means he has truly earned the special title of Good Shepherd.

The picture of Jesus leading fuzzy little lambs is fine—it's good for small children and outsiders. It is pleasant and relaxing, but like the Christian symbol of the fish, it is meant to remind us (baptized and chrismated adults) of a secret and hidden meaning.

What would a real icon of the Good Shepherd look like? I think it would have to be a diptych—on one panel, an icon of the Crucifixion, and on the other panel, an icon of Jesus vested as a high priest and bishop, offering the Eucharist in the Garden of Paradise. The one shows

Jesus as our war chief and hero, and the other as the host of our victory feast. Now, you know the secret and true teaching of the Good Shepherd.

Unlike all the other churches, we know that our Eucharist is not merely some meal of fellowship. We share the Lord's table because he has elected us to be his soldiers, and he has given us the privilege of his war counsel. The Eucharist is a meal of fellowship, but it is the fellowship of the warriors who belong to Jesus, the Light of the world, warriors who follow him into death and follow him into heaven. When you call Jesus the Good Shepherd, you should realize what that makes you. You are warriors of light—you are soldiers of the dawn. Bear your persecutions with patience, and without complaint, as St. Peter teaches us.

If someone tells you, "I don't like Christians," sorry, that doesn't rise to the level of persecution. What is persecution? Well, first you have to do something real in order to be persecuted for it. Posting a cross on your Facebook page doesn't count.

Let's remember Madre Inez who started the orphanage in Guatemala. She did something. Then the government threatened to shut it down. Who shuts down orphanages? This is persecution for doing good. Let's remember the Coptic Christians being bombed in Egypt, or the Syrian Christians suffering genocide under the so-called Islamic State. If you want to claim persecution, then you'd better build an orphanage. And if you aren't being persecuted, then keep on building orphanages, and monasteries, and mission churches, and help those who are being persecuted. That is what the warriors of light do.

Our Lord teaches the same in the gospel. The Good Shepherd sees the wolf, but he doesn't run away like the hireling who is working for money. The Good Shepherd is a hero of war, fighting the wolves who cast the shadow of death. Eventually, he lays down his life for the sheep, not so much as a shepherd, but as a great hero of old, a hero for all time. This is the secret teaching of our mysteries and sacraments that lies behind the cryptic symbols of the Scriptures.

The glory of Jesus of Nazareth is undying. He is our leader because he is the Light, he is the Dawn, and we belong to him at precisely that moment he appears to be naught but a shepherd dying on a cross, and we appear to be naught but sheep afraid of the Roman wolves. But at

the victory banquet of the Universal King and the Lord of Light, we receive inheritance from our king, we receive light from The Light, we receive words from The Word, and we are made like him, warriors of light.

See here, there is no roast mutton, no massive goblets of mead or huge tankards of ale that would befit crude warriors of the flesh. We have here the bread of angels, and the cup of salvation offered to those who have passed through death. We are not sheep, but we are like the Patriarch Jacob, the Israel of God—a human in sheep's clothing, hiding under a covering of wool—we wrestle with God and see angels ascending and descending, wise as serpents so that we might build up a great nation, the Kingdom of God. Rest here awhile before the battles that must come, and receive the Body and Blood of your war chief and hero. Speak not of this mystery to his enemies, but conquer all fear, and give thanks that you are returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls (1 Peter 2).

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The LION

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Address correction requested

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