

# The Lion

A merely parochial tabloid for members only of St. Mark's Parish, Denver, Colorado. These contents do not represent the opinions or doctrines or particular judgements of any sentient being visible or invisible of any species from any galaxy.

November and December 2017

## TRINITY SUNDAY

2017

Preached at St. Mark's Church, Denver, Colorado  
by the Rev'd Deacon John Satorus Woolley

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

**I**N OUR ORTHODOX WESTERN RITE this day is kept as the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, or "Trinity Sunday". Today we celebrate God's revelation of himself to us, to his Church, as One God in Three Persons. You've heard that formula many times – One God, Three Persons –, but for some of us, perhaps, the formula doesn't communicate very much reality. We hear the words, we recite the words even, but what do they mean? How are we supposed to picture or think about a mysterious something that's three and one, one in three? We've heard about the Church's \*doctrine\* of the Trinity, but – what does that doctrine \*mean\*? What is this \*threeness\* in God (and that's what the word "Trinity" means, threeness), what is the \*oneness\*, the \*unity\* in God? How can we possibly understand all this?

Well, if the Church has doctrines – teachings, that is – about the Trinity, the threeness and oneness of God, then it must be the case that we can learn what the Church teaches, what those doctrines are. So here goes.

First point: God is One. There is One God, only one, absolutely unique, undivided, existing from all eternity to all eternity, unchangeable, infinite, the source of all being, the Creator of the universe and everything in it, absolutely powerful and wise and holy and good and

beautiful. There is no other God. There could never be any other God. There is nothing else in all the universe even kinda sorta similar to God. "Hear O Israel, the LORD your God, the LORD is one." Hold that in mind; that's the first point.

And now, the second point: The One God is \*three\* Persons. The Father is the One God, and the Son is the One God, and the Holy Ghost is the One God. And yet there are not three Gods, but one God. The Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are each the \*same\* God, because it's impossible that there could be another. Everything that is true of the One God is true of each of the three Persons. God is eternal – without beginning or end or change –, God is almighty – his power is entirely unlimited by anything outside himself –, God is absolutely holy and just and good. And so it follows that the Father is eternal, almighty, holy; the Son is eternal, almighty, holy; the Holy Ghost is eternal, almighty, holy. (Yes, I'm paraphrasing the Athanasian Creed here.) But there are not three things that are eternal, not three almighties, not three holies – but one only God. Everything that God is, the Father is, and the Son is, and the Holy Ghost is.

To say all this a different way, there is only one \*thing\* that is God – one "substance", theologians say –; and there are three Persons, who are, each one, that one thing that is God. One substance, three Persons. One \*what\*, three \*who\*s.

Most of us, probably, have heard a preacher, or a Sunday school teacher, or a pious Christian trying to be helpful, undertake to \*explain\* the Trinity. Especially when Trinity Sunday rolls around, there's a temptation for preachers and teachers to say to themselves, "Hey, it's Trinity Sunday. I have to teach about the Trinity. I know what I'll do! People are all confused about the Trinity, so I'll explain it in easy terms so all my parishioners (or all my Sunday school students) can understand all about it." This is a temptation for preachers, because while we certainly have doctrines \*about\* the Holy Trinity (and it's definitely worthwhile for each of us to try to come to an understanding of what those doctrines say), the Trinity is *not* a doctrine. The Trinity is God – the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost. God. And nobody, not you, or me, or even Bishop Basil, or even \*Saint\* Basil, can wrap his head around God and say, "Yeah, I've got it now, I understand the Trinity." We can't do it. God the Holy

Trinity is infinitely greater than anything our tiny minds can conceive or touch or grasp.

We think, mostly, using images. If I say something about a bright green dog wearing a kimono and smoking a cigar, you can picture that. Even though you've never seen it, and (thank goodness) neither have I, still the words convey an image to our minds. But if I say "three Persons who are all one single being", not only have we never seen anything like that, we can't even make a mental image of the thing we're trying to think about – and that confuses us. So when our preacher tries to explain the Trinity \*simply\*, usually what he's doing is trying to present people with an image they can use to understand the Trinity, so it's no wonder that most of these simple so-called explanations of the Trinity start out, "Well, the Trinity is like ..." something.

You've heard that kind of explanation. "The Trinity is like a shamrock; it's one plant, but with three leaves." Wrong! The threeness of God is not like the three leaves of a plant. (And by the way, I'm virtually certain that Saint Patrick never used that particular illustration.) Why is it wrong? Because the three leaves of a shamrock are each \*part\* of the shamrock; but God the Holy Trinity \*has no parts\*, and each of the Persons is the entire God. How often do we hear someone make this mistake, and say, for instance, that Jesus is "part of God"? No! Don't fall for it. Skip the shamrock.

Or you've heard the same mistake in a different form – "God is like an egg. It has a shell, and a white, and a yolk, but it's all one egg." No! That's the same error, thinking that God has parts and the parts somehow add up to God. No shamrock, no egg.

Or someone might say "The Trinity is like water. Water can be ice or liquid or steam, but it's all the same thing, water; and that's what the Trinity is like." Wrong! The three Persons of God are not like matter that can freeze or melt or boil. God isn't the Father one minute, and the Son a while later, and the Holy Ghost the next afternoon. The three Persons are eternal, unchangeable – God.

Or – an "explanation" I actually heard once when I was a child –, someone might say "God is like your father. When he's with you, he's being your father; when he's with your Grandma he's her son; and when he's with your mom, he's her husband. Father, son, husband, but all one man; and that's what the Trinity is like. When God is being the Creator, he's the Father; when he's Jesus

living on earth, he's the Son; and when he's living in our hearts, he's the Holy Ghost." Oh so wrong! The three Persons of God are \*Persons\*, not merely relationships, not one person (like my dad) related to other people in three different ways, playing three different roles as it were. The Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are, from all eternity, who they are. (And what they are – the one God.)

There's another Trinitarian error I should mention. A very clever priest named Arius, at Alexandria in Egypt in the 4th century, thought he had come up with a simpler and better explanation for these things than what the Church teaches. Arius taught that only the Father is \*really\* God, and that the Son and Holy Ghost are just powerful beings that the Father created – sort of like super-angels. They can be \*called\* God maybe, because they're very wise and powerful, but they aren't really God, not in the complete sense. From which evil nonsense, God protect us.

So, if God isn't like a shamrock and he isn't like water and he isn't like my Dad – what \*is\* he like? And the answer is simply, nothing. \*Nothing\* is like God. No mental image, no picture or diagram or explanation, can ever encompass God's being. Nothing you or I can think or say or figure out can even begin to express the absolute reality of who and what God is.

What are we to do, then, faced with a God we \*can't\* understand? The answer to that is, love. Love God, worship him, trust him, obey him, praise him – but don't \*ever\* think for a moment that you're going to comprehend him or be able to explain him. If we could, if we could fit our tiny ignorant sinful human minds around some "god", that would simply be proof that it wasn't the \*real\* God. I want a God that's bigger than my mind. Our true God, the Holy Trinity, loves us and has revealed and given himself to us; that's enough, and far more than we could ever imagine, more than ever we could desire or deserve.

Now one last question. If all this that I've been saying is true, if we really can't understand the Trinity, if we actually can't get our minds around the Threeness of the Persons of God ... why did God ever reveal these things to us at all? Why didn't he just leave us, like the believing Jews, worshipping him as the one God, and not bother our poor aching heads with all this Trinity stuff? The answer is – and this answer is the deepest and sweetest of all

mysteries – the answer is that God reveals himself to us as the Holy Trinity because he loves us as persons, as who we are, and he desires that we should love him \*and know him\* as the three Persons he is. To know him, not merely as we know facts, not as we know something we study or think about; God, the eternal triune God, wants us – wants me and you – to know him personally, to know who he is. He loves us so much, so tenderly, so generously, that he invites us – us! – to enter into the eternal secret of his own life, making us partakers of his perfect life of love and joy and holiness, Father and Son and Holy Ghost, glorious forever, beautiful beyond praise, holy and loving beyond all thought and all knowledge.

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

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## Father Rutler's Weekly Column

November 19th, 2017

### STRENGTH IN CLARITY

The Baptist church in Sutherland Springs, Texas has been made a shrine, for the massacre there has left it a hallowed place for mourners. A red rose marks where each of the victims died, and then there is one pink rose. That is for the unborn baby that died in the womb. To the frustration of some, Texas is one of 38 states that recognize an infant in utero as a victim when the mother is assaulted. Federal law also accords legal rights to the unborn in cases of federal and military crimes. A pink rose is at least a tacit acknowledgement that a human life existed before birth, and Catholics know that life is life, with no varying shades. This is one example of how truth prevails despite attempts to obscure it.

Confusion has also muddled marriage. When marriage is refashioned into an oxymoronic “same-sex marriage,” along with ambiguity about procreation and the permanence of natural marriage, the social order loses interest in it altogether. Even among self-professed Catholics, whose population has increased in the last forty years, there has been a 60% decrease in weddings.

As the Religious life is a consecrated form of spiritual marriage, opaqueness about such commitment has caused the virtual evaporation of many communities. In the past five years alone, with the exception of communi-

ties solid in doctrine, there has been a loss of over seven per cent among women religious, while orders of men declined somewhat less.

St. John Paul II spoke clearly about priestly charisms, and during his pontificate the number of seminarians worldwide increased from 63,882 to 114,439. The years of Pope Benedict XVI saw the numbers grow to 118,257. Since then, in a time of confusion in the Church and society as a whole, there has been a consistent global decline. In our own vast archdiocese, of the small handful of recent ordinations none was a native New Yorker.

Yet often where there is clarity of doctrine and high morale, the picture is bright. In 2015, the most recent year for statistics, there was a 25% increase nationally in ordinations. The archdiocese of St. Louis, with a Catholic population roughly less than a quarter the size of the archdiocese of New York, has considerably more seminarians, and the dioceses of Madison, Wisconsin and Lincoln, Nebraska, relatively small in population, each have about twice as many seminarians as we have in “the capital of the world.”

In the pro-life movement, on the federal level there are positive developments correcting the anti-life legislation of recent years. And where better instruction is provided, Catholic marriages are becoming more purposeful and stable. Then too, a new generation of young priests sound in doctrine and liturgy is appearing. There is strength in clarity. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (1 Corinthians 14:8). §

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What happens to the Fourth Sunday in Advent when Christmas Day is on Monday?

Given the admirable habit of Sunday Mass and Holy Day observance, we propose to offer the usual Sunday Masses at 8:00 and 10:00 o'clock for Fourth Advent on 24 December. In the early evening the Vigil Mass (yes there is still a Vigil for Christmas... all in gold vestments and very Christmassy) at 5:00 PM. Afterward an 'In the night' Mass of Christmas at 10:00 PM. Christmas Day Mass is to be offered at 11:00 AM. The devout may attend as fitting. Frs. James and John will, D.v., serve with assistance from Deacons, SDeacons, etc. Armchair Liturgical Experts/Expats are on call 24/7 except during nap time.

# THE LOST SPLENDOR OF PLAINCHANT

Kevin Rooney

**WHY IS GREGORIAN CHANT** called ‘plainchant’? Where did that ‘plainness’ come from? Why does it appear to be the only genre of Orthodox sacred music to sound entirely ‘plain’? Was it always that way, or did it change in the past? Are we singing it incorrectly today? Could it be possible the whole ‘plain’ interpretation is somehow contrary to the Orthodox musical tradition, and, if so, then what did Gregorian chant sound like before? Was there some pristine splendor that we have since lost?

These questions came over me in summer 2011, when I had just finished school with a couple of years of Byzantine chant training from the local parish I attended. Prior to that time, I had grown up in an Orthodox Western

Rite parish trained in the use of Gregorian chant. However, the sweet sounds of the East had left me forever enchanted by the evocative rhythms, the ornate melodies, the strong but smooth vocal technique, the fancy ornamentation, and — most enamoring of all — the ability to improvise from the heart, without looking at the page.

Yet my occidental heart was dismayed that these features of heavenly music were hardly anywhere to be found in the plainsong of the West. Byzantine chant, like nearly every other kind of non-Western Orthodox music (of which there are plenty), was anything but ‘plain’.

Actually, it might be said that today we sing hardly any plainchant at all in the Western Rite. Of course we do psalm tones, antiphons, old hymns, and certain mel-

odies from the Mass Ordinary, but only a tiny fraction of that body of music is implemented nowadays. Many of us remember the famous CDs from the ‘90s of Benedictine monks chanting ornate plainsong in Latin. But how many have actually wondered where to find those ornate songs in our liturgies?

For comparison, in any musically strong Byzantine Rite parish, on an ordinary Sunday one might hear the lively syllabic poetries of the Matins Canon, the grandiose solemnity of the Doxasticon, and the voice of a lone subdeacon chanting the Epistle with the strength of a horn, with little effort. But nowhere in today’s Western Orthodox services are the memorable Great Responses, the melismatic grandeur of the Alleluia jubilation, or

the transcendent melodies of the Communion Antiphons, let alone the groundwork for ‘competitive chanting’ between deacons that St. Gregory the Great took measure against.

Since then, I’ve sought to learn from literature as

much as I could about this largely untapped genre. How delighted I was to find an enormous portion of it published in numerous books over the past century and a quarter by Solesmes Abbey in France. That’s the Catholic monastery famous for ‘restoring’ Gregorian chant in the late-1800s and for standardizing our beloved square notation used in plainsong. Yet the most elegant parts of the Gregorian chant repertory have not been faithfully rendered into English, and some parts have never been published even in the original Latin.

Well, where did those melodies come from in the first place? Surely our tradition goes back farther than the 1800s. So my curiosity took me deep into the sources of those publications: the renowned medieval manuscripts,



handwritten books between eight and twelve centuries old, rediscovered in the 1800s, from which the modern chant was restored. These books contain melodies of astonishing age, notated not by square notes on a staff but by strange pen strokes, slashes, curves, angles, dots, and peculiar shapes, reminiscent of the notations used in the Byzantine East.

The meaning of these signs was a hot topic of controversy throughout the last century, because their great variety suggested some kind of ornate rhythm, which has no place in the simplistic all-notes-are-equal interpretation of plainsong. At least, everyone in chant scholarship agreed that, whatever these archaic signs truly meant, the original authentic rhythm of Gregorian chant, whatever it was, was clearly more complex than what we follow today.

But is that the end of the story? Are we fine with the unsettling possibility that our ‘plain’ chanting style today is out of touch with the rhythms of our fathers, now lost to the tides of history?

Skeptic that I am, I tried the music out myself. The *Graduale Triplex*, the *Graduale Novum*, and many other chant publications out over the past 50 years are conveniently full of melodies depicted, as usual, with square notes, but also with the corresponding strokes, dots, and curves of the Early Medieval manuscripts handwritten above them.

Well, the Byzantine cantor in me could not help but read those strokes, dots, and curves as fixed note durations. The temptation to sing Gregorian chant not with free rhythm but with actual metered rhythm, with a beat, was just too great!

In desperation, I scanned the Wikipedia articles on Gregorian rhythm studies for alternative perspectives that might have been proposed. Lo and behold, my suspicion was nothing new.

The proposal that Gregorian chant originally had meter began in the mid-19th century, before Solesmes’s restoration of the chant, and was gradually improved over the following century, culminating in the groundbreaking works of Fr. Jan Vollaerts and Dom Gregory Murray in the 1950s and ‘60s. These men made a solid case, with an ocean of evidence, that the many signs that I observed in the manuscripts actually depicted fixed note durations: quarter notes and eighth notes. This interpretation was backed by quotations of the Latin Orthodox

Church’s authorities on chant — including St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Bede the Venerable, and the famous father of Western music theory Guido of Arezzo —, all of whom said consistently that the Western Church’s tradition of melodic rhythm in the first millennium was fixed, not free. Even more intriguing, both the manuscripts and the authorities testify that this great rhythmic custom was lost in the 11th century.

What a marvel! Could it be real, this lost rhythm in the Gregorian melodies? How does it truly sound? Is it as beautiful and spiritually uplifting as plainchant? Is it more practical to sing? What are its implications for the current customs of psalmody and chanting? Should we abandon the plainchant interpretation for its inaccuracy and go back to this more authentic — or, should I say, more Orthodox — tradition of sacred music?

We’ve already begun to pick up where past authors left off. Last decade, Jan van Biezen discovered an even pulse in the music — exactly as my inner Byzantine cantor suspected — coupled with a smooth vocal style similar to that of Eastern chants. I’ve tested his interpretation over the past three years on every plainchant melody I could get my hands on, and the results are absolutely mesmerizing. Consequently, I had a translation of his discoveries into English prepared, which was recently published by our own Lancelot Andrewes Press under the title *Rhythm, Meter and Tempo in Gregorian Chant*, in the hope that it would stir inquiry and constructive criticism.

By getting the word out, I hope to ‘raise awareness’ of this lost splendor, of which many of us had not been aware. If the metered-rhythm interpretation of Vollaerts, Murray, and Van Biezen, indeed of the Orthodox Fathers, is true, then we may have found a way to further beautify our music, to unlock previously untapped corners of the liturgical repertory, and to simultaneously reconnect with our spiritual ancestors of the Western Orthodox mode of worship. When such an opportunity arises, how could it not be of the Holy Ghost? Perhaps it behooves us, then, to look into this opportunity with hope, and to recover whatever of that splendor we can, for the glory of God in His churches. §

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*Rhythm, Meter and Tempo in Gregorian Chant*, from [www.andrewespress.com](http://www.andrewespress.com) and [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) with stunning reviews.

*Those who are obsessed with their unrepented sexual misbehavior certainly don't want a literally divine, literally resurrected Christ around, or an authoritative Church, or even objective truth, and certainly not a real Hell. But the Enemy's Son clearly believed and taught all these things. So His authority has to be undermined... (1)*

## CHRIST, THE CHURCH, AND AN UNBELIEVING SOCIETY

Part III of a Series on Church & Society

by the V. Rev'd James Rooney

**I**N THE LAST ARTICLE, we addressed the Old Testament contrast between the expectations laid out for the people of God and the values of the surrounding societies amidst whom Israel lived. The Israelites were admonished by God to choose to serve Him, and to refuse to serve and be influenced by the world around them; it was said that “choose and refuse” were the words which could be used to sum up the message of the Old Testament.

Christ, fulfilling, not abrogating, the Law and the Prophets, articulated the same message, albeit a much deeper, more demanding, version. As we see in the underlying theme of the Gospel of St. John, the Lord is always calling us into a more profound experience of Himself and of Truth. This is manifested in the manner in which He counselled us to expect the world to react to us and to our Faith. Simple statements give clear summation to what He said:

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.” [Mt. 10:16 (read through to verse 23)]

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.” [John 15:18]

“They will put you out of the synagogues;” [John 16:2]

From these texts we can glean a number of principles which the early Church learned and applied in its relationship to the societies around it and the civil authorities who governed those societies.

First, the terms “society,” “world,” “state,” “Caesar,” are not limited to references to the secular realm or the government. Resistance to the Church can come from family members who disagree with us or don't understand us [Mt. 10:21], from political leaders whose opposition to us is part of their “platform,” from members of society who are influenced, not by the principles of the Faith, but by the values of the society around them, or, in our contemporary case, by the media. Those who resist the Church can even be religious leaders [Mt. 10:17], that is, people who are religious or who even claim to be Christian but who have adopted the values of the fallen society around them.

These may very well think that their opposition is an aspect of their faith [Jn. 16:2]. Opposition to Christ and to His Church will come from all sources, and will render the notion of “choosing” to be both difficult and, at times, costly.

Secondly, Christ informs us that the world does not know God [Jn. 15:21]. It may speak of God, but it does not know Him; if it did, it would act as He has revealed He wants us to act, that is, according to the principles of true faith revealed in the Incarnation. The theology which we believe, the values which we choose to live, the Faith which we hold, are not able to be comprehended by the world around us, and this is so because it exists in a “fallen” condition which does not lend itself to knowing the God whom we have encountered. There will be a chasm of misunderstanding between the world and God, between the world and the Faithful.

Third, He tells us that the society around us loves the deeds of darkness [Jn. 3:19-21], and this arises from the fact that it hasn't experienced the “illumination” which comes from encounter with God, it has only known the “darkness” which stems from misunderstanding, doesn't know God, and it is comfortable only with what is familiar to it. In other words, society has developed a different comprehension of reality and a different value system than we, and hence, is not attuned to the nuances of world view based upon the existence and action of God. Those outside the Church [society] have become so comfortable with this realm of “darkness” that they do not desire to hear the declaration, either in proclamation or lives lived, that they might be mistaken. Thus, they will resist, in order to “protect” themselves.

Fourth, Christ makes it clear that our world does not like the “Light” of God [Jn. 3:19], even sees it as a threat. We might say that “the light” here means the knowledge of God, the experience of God, the willingness to live one's life according to Divinely revealed principles, in essence, all those characteristics which stand one in opposition to the ways of the world. Make note of how many non-Christians in our society view Christianity, not as life giving, but as a religion which denies people any of the “normal” pleasures of life. This is a grave misunderstanding. Hence, there is the sinful tendency to “flee” from the light of God.

In contrast to the way of the world, the faithful are to seek to know God, to act according to the precepts which He has revealed in Christ, to seek and to love the Light, to embrace it and not be threatened by it. To do these things will render us as contrasts, even contradictions to the world in which we live.

If we grasp these first principles, then we will begin to enter into a life perspective which will conflict with that of the world around us. Our very presence will prove a challenge to, and a reminder of, society's lack of understanding. Ultimately, such a blind society may conclude that we are a throwback to a darker, less enlightened age, a possible detriment to contemporary moral and philosophical progress, and it may begin to think that it is doing a good deed to subjugate, to denigrate, to penalize, to silence Christians, or, at the very least, to "educate" them [Jn. 16:2-4].

Having said this, the Lord renders several admonitions which instruct Christians in their response to a world which does not, cannot, understand Him or His followers. First they are to be "wise as serpents, and innocents as doves." [Mt. 10:16] It is important for Christians to know with whom they are truly doing "combat." If we are "wise" we will know that we are not contending with the people in this world, but with the powers of darkness, i.e., the devil and his demonic forces [Eph. 6:12]. Wisdom will never underestimate him, or the motivation behind what drives the world to resist Christianity. At the same time, Christians are to maintain their own innocence; we cannot call the world to repentance and to God while simultaneously living in deliberate sin. Suffice it to say, by praying and confessing our own sins regularly, by striving toward the holy virtue of humility, and by deliberately not reacting to what others say and do, we can contribute toward maintaining our own innocence in the struggle of life.

Christ also tells us NOT to fear [Mt. 10:28], yet we are inclined to fear resistance, ridicule and even persecution. Fr. Zacharias Zacharou likes to contrast what he calls the "psychological" with the "spiritual." (2) The "psychological" usually refers to worldly ways of addressing reality; fear would be one expression of the psychological. When Christ says do not fear, he wants us to react to and understand reality in a "spiritual" way, in a way that contrasts with what our fallen nature is inclined to do, which is to fear. There is no reason for us to fear those in the world; they can do nothing to us eternally.

He tells us not to worry about what we will say when challenged by the world [Mt. 10:19]. Most of us tend to feel that we will not be able to give a good defense, and this anxiety tends to "hamstring" us with anxiety. What we learn from the example of the Apologists in the second century is that we don't have to convince the world about Christ; we only have to "lay it on the table," that is, to simply state what is obvious to us, that Christ IS. He is the one who does the convincing; we simply bear witness.

I believe that the Lord also wants us to remember always that we know the outcome of this scenario; HE WINS! Like the telling of a good story, we have already read the book, literally, and we know the outcome. This, by the way, is the inherent message of the book of Revelation, the last book in the Bible; in the end, Christ and those who follow Him, are victorious [HE already is]. It is important to keep this in mind as we contend with the societies around us; they may look like they have the upper hand, but they NEVER do. In the end, the way of the world loses. Remembering this will aid the development of a proper attitude.

Finally, it is permissible to avoid confrontations, if possible. He said to "flee to the mountains," [Mt. 24:15-16] and early Christians understood that this statement permitted them to hide from persecutors, rather than to face confrontation. S. Polycarp, in the mid-second century when his Church came under persecution, went into hiding. He was betrayed, and when arrested, he made a very bold witness, but he hid first. S. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage in the mid-third century, retired to the desert when the Decian persecution erupted in 250. He pastored his Church from exile, writing a number of pastoral letters to them and admonishing them in the faith. When the persecution ended, he returned to his See, but when persecution resumed under the emperor Valerian in 258, he remained with his people, was arrested and, ultimately, executed. The point here is that we CAN avoid confrontation in good conscience, but we need to remember that, eventually, there may be no avoiding it, and, inevitably, we may have to confront those who challenge us.

Does one hear the concepts of "choose" and "refuse" here? We choose to know a differing reality, the Way proposed by God Incarnate and we choose to act according TO that reality, in spite of the fact that the world around us has chosen otherwise. We choose to view our actions and thoughts in the context of the reality we have chosen, and we refuse to give the fallen world the influence over us that society seeks for us. In other words, we choose the Way of Christ, and we refuse the way introduced by fallen Adam.

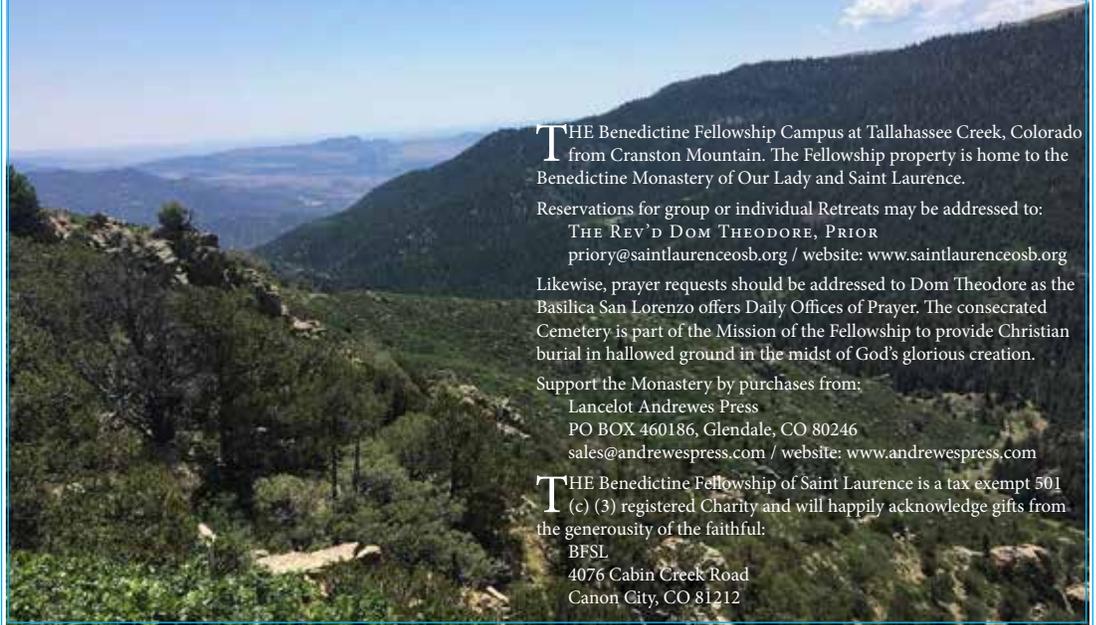
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1) Peter Kreeft, *The Snakebite Letters: Devilishly Devious Secrets for Subverting Society As Taught in Tempter's Training School*, p. 54.

2) Fr. Zacharias Zacharou, *The Enlargement of the Heart*: 'Be ye also enlarged' in the Theology of Saint Silouan the Athonite and Elder Sophrony of Exxex, pp. 149. [This concept is mentioned in each of Fr. Zacharias' books, so examples could come from a number of different texts)

# A Western Rite Orthodox Calendar 2018

Based on the Byzantine Paschalion (Easter Day, 8 April 2018, is one week later than the Gregorian date). All dates dependent, e.g., Ascension Day & Whitsunday, are also one week later. The fixed dates, e.g., Christmas Day, are according to the Reformed Julian Calendar which is commensurate to the Gregorian Calendar for the next 800 years. Ecclesiastical Calendrical calculations defy science. They are a form of relics to be venerated.



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Also, the 2018 Daily Office and Mass Lectionary for the English Office is available for \$29.00 in-

cluding postage to USA addresses from the above website and postal address.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING WITH GREENS AND THE CLEANING, POLISHING SILVER, CANDLE STICKS, IS PLANNED FOR SATURDAY, 23 DECEMBER FROM 9:30 O'CLOCK WITH FINISHING TOUCHES LIKE THE CHRISTMAS TREE, ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

**CHRISTMAS MASSES BEGIN WITH:**

**THE VIGIL MASS OF CHRISTMAS EVE AT 5:00 PM ON 24 DECEMBER, SUNDAY**

**THE 'MASS IN THE NIGHT' BEGINNING WITH LESSONS AND CAROLS AT 10:00 PM**

**THE CHRISTMAS DAY MASS AT 11:00 O'CLOCK ON 25 DECEMBER, MONDAY.**

An appeal for pledges to the operating expenses of St. Mark's Parish is included in this issue of the LION. We also have a generous external commitment to overseas Missions and Orphanages which raised several thousand dollars this past year. Bp. Basil's appeal for the Diocese of South Syria was met with about \$4,000 by the faithful.

## The LION

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*Address correction requested*

For the LION and other essays regarding the Orthodox Western Rite see : [www.westernorthodox.com](http://www.westernorthodox.com)

For the Benedictine Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence see: [www.saintlaurenceosb.org](http://www.saintlaurenceosb.org)

For books / icons supporting the Benedictine Fellowship of Saint Laurence & the Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence see : [www.andrewespress.com](http://www.andrewespress.com)