

The Lion

Lent 2014 Vol. CXL, No. 03

*An Unofficial Newsletter for Members Only of
Saint Mark's Parish, Denver, Colorado, Founded 1875*

The Lion is not a cure for Malaria, Bago Bago, Scurvey or diseases of the nervous system and is not sold as a medical remedy.

Homily of Archimandrite Zacharias of Essex

February 7, 2014

Diocese of Wichita Clergy Brotherhood Retreat
St. George's Cathedral, Wichita, Kansas

I JUST want to say a few words. First of all, I thank God, who has given us this great blessing, this great privilege, to be together for these days and share in the mystery of our faith, and in the living hope we have in our Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour. I am very grateful to His Grace who invited me. I am very grateful for his prayers which enabled me to do this obedience. Of course, I didn't do it as I ought to, and I ask forgiveness from all of you. And I trust in your prayers today in the liturgy.

I wanted to say just a few words, since we are in the octave of this beautiful feast of the Presentation of Our Lord in the Temple – His entry into the Temple and His meeting with Symeon, a man just and devout.

There was once a staretz, an elder, who said, "Do you want to know God? Do you want to see His light? It is very easy. Just approach Him with a painful heart and pour out your heart to Him." And of course this is right, because in this world, as we read in the Book of Acts, Christ is suffering, and His way is the way of the Cross. And this way is a frightening way. The apostles, when they followed the Lord ascending into Jerusalem for His last visit, His last Passover, they were amazed and frightened and in great fear they followed Him. This is because until then the way was not clear of the curse of death. Now for us the way may be difficult, but it is clear of death. The Lord has overcome death with His own voluntary and sinless death, so the way is now filled with consolation, that consolation which Symeon the righteous expected, with a living hope in his heart, until a deep old age.

We are the disciples of this way, the way of the Cross, and we are the new people belonging to the Body of Christ. As we said the other day, our identity is by far, above all other identities, the identity of being members of the Body of Christ. In the Old Testament, the people

who believed in and expected the coming of the Saviour received circumcision to seal their faith and their belonging to the chosen people of God. In the New Testament, now, we receive through baptism the circumcision of the heart, which is not made by the hand of man, but by God. In other words, we receive a seal that we belong to the Lord, that we shall continually taste of death for the sake of His commandments, in order to be able to receive His incorruptible life.

In the Old Testament, we number ancestors of the Lord; in the New Testament, we number descendants of the Lord. And the descendants of the Lord receive this circumcision of the heart – that is to say, they are people who always have a pain in their heart. They have contrition in their heart, first for their own sins and their own uselessness, because we all come short; and then they bear a pain for the salvation of the whole world, of their fellow men in the whole world.

In the epistle for today, it says that the world that lives in the vanity of its conscience has the understanding darkened and the eye of the heart blinded. When we don't have this pain in the heart, we are strangers to the Head of the Body, because the Head of the Body wears a crown of thorns, and the members of the Body cannot be without pain. As the epistle today says, The nations shook off from themselves every pain (cf. Eph. 4:17-19), and that is why they were immersed in the pit of the passions and their understanding was darkened and the eye of their heart was blinded.

But we, the descendants of the Lord, who bear the marks of His Spirit and who bear the circumcision of the heart, bear always a certain pain – the pain of repentance. And this pain continually cleanses the inner eye of our heart, so that we come to see the traces of His providence and the traces His presence in our life, and in this way we learn how to walk before the Lord.

We are, in a way, always in a certain motion. Our life is in motion: it comes and goes. Even when we sleep, our spirit is in motion; our visions, our desires, are still active and we are in motion, though maybe the body rests for a while. It is important to have true direction, and this true direction is given to us by this pain of heart which harmonizes with prayer.

In the Old Testament, the Lord gave manna to the Jews in the desert, and for each one of them manna became everything that they needed for their survival. In the New Testament, the people of God who bear the marks of Jesus – the circumcision of the heart – bear always this inner spiritual pain, which is another, spiritual manna. The ones who have this pain are able always to rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep.

And this is necessary for us – forgive me for my daring, I speak to my fellow priests, who have taken this ministry of reconciliation of people with God – we need this pain of heart, because this pain of heart will become to each one who approaches us whatever he needs. We shall weep with those that weep, and we shall rejoice with those that rejoice, and we will be comforters of the people. As our God is a comforting God, the God of mercy and every consolation, so we His servants become comforters of souls.

It is easy to know God when we have a contrite heart, because it is easy to relate with Him, as we said, because by nature He is a God of mercy and of every consolation. He doesn't want any external slavery; He only wants for us to open our heart and receive His mercy.

Now, as we proceed to the liturgy and are about to say those frightening prayers of the Holy Comforter, let us approach with all our heart. Let us do what the liturgy teaches us to do: to give thanks always for everything and also to pray for that for which we need to pray. We give thanks for all the things God has done for us. We give thanks for all the gifts of our fellows, our fellow priests and our fellow Christians. We give thanks for the gifts the Lord bestowed upon His saints in such abundance, and, just after the consecration, when we say, And more especially for our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-virgin Mary, we give thanks for the great things the Most High did for her.

So when we give prayers continually for all that God has done for us and for all the world, for all His saints, and especially for the great things He did for the Mother of God, who became the bridge to bring down the Creator to earth, then all these gifts open up for us to participate and share in them. That is why in the liturgy we become rich, and we come out of it consoled. It even says in the psalm, As those that dream (v. Ps. 126:1), because the consolation of God is divine and incorruptible. I wish this consolation for all of you, and by the prayers of our bishop I demand also your prayers so that I may proceed in the holy liturgy to say the words of the anaphora; and may God grant me to say them in a worthy manner, through the prayers of our bishop and through your prayers. §

In the face of severe weather conditions for driving and flying into Wichita in the first week of February, a total of seven men from St. Mark's attended the clergy Retreat with Fr. Zacharias and Bp. Basil and seventy-seven of the clergy of the Diocese. We were very edified by the talks, the devotions, and the fellowship. Our participation was by far the largest enrolment from any parish. To make a Retreat at St. John Baptist monastery in Essex, England you must write ahead by letter. The monastery forbid Internet on site as a preservation of quiet and peace.

Lenten Devotions

The ***Ash Wednesday*** will be observed with Ashes and Mass at 7:00 AM, 12 Noon, & 7:00 PM on ***5 March 2014***.

The Vestry sponsored ***Shrove Tuesday Supper*** will be offered at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, ***4 March 2014***.

The first of the ***Friday Lenten Suppers*** will be offered at 6:15 PM on Friday, 7 March to be followed by Stations of the Cross at 7:00 PM.

Sunday of Orthodoxy, 9 March, Vespers at Assumption of the Theotokos Cathedral of Denver 4610 East Alameda Avenue • Denver, Colorado 80246 at 6:00 PM with reception to follow.

The second of the ***Friday Lenten Suppers*** will be offered at 6:15 PM on Friday, 14 March to be followed by Stations of the Cross at 7:00 PM.

Lenten Vespers at Transfiguration on 16 March, Sunday 6 PM

The third of the ***Friday Lenten Suppers*** will be offered at 6:15 PM on Friday, 21 March to be followed by Stations of the Cross at 7:00 PM.

Lenten Vespers at S Augustine's on 23 March, Sunday 6 PM

The fourth of the ***Friday Lenten Suppers*** will be offered at 6:15 PM on Friday, 28 March to be followed by Stations of the Cross at 7:00 PM.

Lenten Vespers at S Hermann's on 30 March, Sunday 6 PM

The fifth of the ***Friday Lenten Suppers*** will be offered at 6:15 PM on Friday, 4 April to be followed by Stations of the Cross at 7:00 PM.

Lenten Vespers at S Catherine's on 6 April, Sunday 6 PM

The sixth of the ***Friday Lenten Suppers*** will be offered at 6:15 PM on Friday, 11 April to be followed by Stations of the Cross at 7:00 PM.

Palm Sunday is 13 April with Mass at 8:00 and 10:00 o'clock with blessing of Palms

Maundy Thursday is 17 April with Mass and stripping of the Altars at 7:00 PM

The Watch before the Blessed Sacrament will continue through the night until the morning of Good Friday.

Good Friday Liturgy, 18 April, is at 12:00 Noon with pre-sanctified Communion. The Liturgy is repeated at 6:00 PM without Communion and followed by Stations.

There is no Liturgy on Holy Saturday morning, just Matins.

The Paschal Vigil begins on Saturday evening at 8:00 PM with the Vigil Liturgy.

Easter Day Mass at 8:00 and 10:00 o'clock.

As always, Holy Week and Paschal week are privileged and so the holy Days are transferred... St. George to 28 April and St. Mark to 29 April.

Sermon for Sexagesima 2014

Preached at St. Mark's Church, Denver, Colorado
by the Rev'd Deacon Vladimir Christopher MacDonald

22 February 2014

St. Luke viii. 4-15

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

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

WHAT can one say about this Gospel that is new and fresh and has great Christological significance?

Well, we can probably drop the Christological bit, and return to where our Lord is most happy with us, the simple message of this Gospel. The Word is Broadcast to Humanity, and some of us get it, absorb it, and try our very best to live it; the rest are a hodgepodge of part-time believers, sometime believers, and the rest who at this moment are sitting somewhere, reading the paper, on their second cup of coffee. Or worse still, Out Running! Running, but maybe you do not want to hear my diatribe on running. Truth be known, it's because I am not very good at it; and I digress, maybe even more than usual.

To return to the subject at hand, the absorption of the Word into our Hearts and Souls, there to be nurtured in equal parts, by the Love of God, and our Love for God.

Did I say simple, well I might have misspoke a little. In a World that clamours for our attention 24/7, that pulls us, manipulates us every which way to Christmas; to find, what I have called in the past, "that still, small, space in our hearts", where we can actually hear the Truth is not so simple. It is not that we do not want to hear, it is not that we do not wish to have the Word of God delivered to us by Our Lord Jesus Christ himself, it is I believe, that we do not know how to turn off the World, and as the years progress and we get older, the more difficult it becomes.

Watch people as you go home this morning, wait till your sitting at a Traffic light, I do not wish you to be unsafe; but watch how many of them can lift their eyes up from the smart phone keyboard/screen. I am not knocking smart phones, (thanks to my dear lady wife, I get to use an iPhone, and I love it), but I think that I still have enough control to "Look Left, then Right, then Left again", before stepping out into the road to cross. I do not see that level of control that often these days.

So where am I going with this, other than ripping into modernity which I am really not doing, other than having a little fun.

The Gospel lays out a pattern of behaviour that corresponds, to a greater or lesser extent, to the majority of humanity. We do not have to look very far to see what level of commitment we ourselves have to this project to save our souls. Are we brave enough to admit any shortcomings we may have in the pursuit of this truth, or do we bury our heads, or more properly, our hearts, into the sand, or under the rock? And, more interesting, do we do this with malice, or lack of understanding. Do we tell God to take a hike, or is that the outcome of us not really hearing the call, as I have mentioned above, and therefore not understanding the call when it comes.

Not that simple after all, is it.

Well, yes it is, if we follow a simple set of guidelines that have been set before us by God, the Church Fathers, and if we take 10 seconds to listen to it, our Heart and our Soul.

We have to stop! We have to stop the constant thrusting forward to that elusive Human goal, success in Life. Ladies and Gentlemen, that success will only come, and be truly rewarding if we have Our Lord in that life with us. Will he give us that worldly success, no, but he will celebrate with us when we have given ourselves to his Love and Protection so that we can be truly successful within our Humanity that is given freely to God for His use and protection.

I am truly not trying to confuse you all, though I may well have, by my backwards and forwards with the Truth. It is easy, no it isn't, well yes it is if you follow this path, no it isn't, because to follow that path is nearly impossible for a mere human, etc., etc. To make sense of all this, we should as always, return again, to the source, the Gospel.

Our Lord lays out in this Gospel, exactly who will be the happy recipient of His Fathers Love; it will be they who with a contrite heart, lay themselves open before the Lord, and say "Here you go, I am yours". That is what this time before Pascha gives us, no very much encourages us, to do. We are told all through this particular time that we must be watchful of ourselves, make sure we have control of ourselves, back off of life in general, try and find that "space" where we can be open to the Truth of God.

I want to be louder than that. I feel we should raise our voices to God, I feel we should make noise towards Him, let Him know in no uncertain terms, that we are again ready to take on the responsibility of Faith, of Belief, of Trust, of Love. I say ready to take it on again, not in the

sense necessarily of having “lost” that faith, for as I have said before, if you do not have it, or are not actively seeking it, why are you here. No, I mean that we tell our Lord that we know that without Him, we will stray onto that rocky ground, or the thinly covered hard ground. We are Human, not really to be trusted with our own souls without His help and oversight, and therefore are presenting Him with that entity, so that He may nurture it for the Father, along with our faltering help. I have said this before, and it is no less true now than in the past that we have to be prepared to give of ourselves to move our Souls towards that prize of which we seek, life with and of God for now and eternity. It does not come without a price, but we are so very fortunate, the price has been paid, by Our Lord on Calvary. We only have to give ourselves over to His love, tell Satan to move along there, (like Dixon), and take our place amongst the brethren that have been saved before us; we will be in illustrious company.

So take this upcoming Lenten season to thrust ahead with your quest to improve your spiritual life, by reading again of what happens to those who do not take the Word of God to heart, who do not recognize their shortcomings, and are likened to the tares and weeds that thrust up in front of us, every step we take, and will finally be cut down at the harvest, and consigned to the fire. It is a sobering thought, thought by God and the fathers, to be appropriate to this time in the Church year

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

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

Please notice the tri-fold advertisement for the

Men's Lenten Retreat 2014
The Transformation of the Inner Man

presented by Fr. John Bethancourt
at the Capuchin Centre for Spiritual Life
900 Cathedral Avenue, Victoria, Kansas

14 to 16 March (Friday evening through Sunday)

“The fee of \$120 covers all costs, including lodging and meals... A peaceful weekend of prayer, instruction, fellowship, sharing, and quiet in the retreat setting of the Capuchin Centre for Spiritual Life.”

The advertisement directs reservation/payment to the V. Rev'd Paul O'Callihan at St. George's Cathedral, Wichita,

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The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Preached at St. Mark's Church, Denver, Colorado
on 2 February, Sunday, 2014
by the Rev'd Deacon James I. Tochihara

From the Second Chapter of Saint Luke: ***Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.*** +

THE FEAST DAY that we celebrate today is a feast with many names. We celebrate it as the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but it is also known as the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple, and The Meeting of our Lord Jesus Christ, referring to the meeting between the prophet Simeon and Jesus, and last but not least, some people still refer to this feast day as Candlemas because this is the day to bless candles in the church. So, let's go back to the beginning.

According to the Jewish Law, women were ritually impure after giving birth and had to remain in a kind of state of quarantine, and this probably reflected biological common sense as much as anything. After a certain period, forty days for a male child, sixty-six for a female, a woman could reenter the religious and ritual life of the Jews by offering the sacrifice of a lamb and a turtledove, or two turtledoves if the woman was poor. Our Lady Mary would have most likely also performed a purifying bath. This ritual bath, called a mikvah, was the origin of Christian baptism. The mikvah was for cleansing and purifying in all sorts of situations, for men and women, and could be performed daily if one desired.

Did our Lady really need to offer sacrifices and perform a mikvah? What impurity could she have incurred from bearing the Eternal God in her body? She had no impurity, but as in the case with Jesus receiving a mikvah, or baptism, from John, she fulfills the law even though it is unnecessary. It would seem that our Lady and our Lord are the first hypocritical Christians, following empty rituals that do nothing for them. Why would they perform all of this lip service, this pretend piety that just goes through the motions?

My brothers and sisters, what we see here is the theory of priesthood that Jesus learned and practiced, learning it first from his mother. I would call this theory of priesthood the “overkill” theory. A ritual isn't done until it's done, done again, and overdone one more time. Why is our Lord baptized even though he hasn't sinned? Why does our Lady undergo purification even though she is clean? Why this

overkill? Because the ritual being accomplished is the sacrificial offering of our Lord's body on the altar of the cross. It is for our sake, for the sake of our doubting minds and grumbling spirits, so that we will not be able to find fault with any moment of our Lord's life before his death. And God preserved at every moment the holiness of the Blessed Virgin Mary so that no fault could be found in Jesus through his mother.

Our Lord and our Lady purify the pure and justify the righteous, they hallow the holy and wash what is clean. They know that those people are out there, outside the church and inside the church: the nitpickers, the fault-finders, the overly critical and overbearing, the people who object on all the technicalities. Not only will these people criticize so that they don't have to be bothered (God forbid that they should find something good and true, and show a little simple gratitude), but they'll find fault to destroy your faith as well.

Thank God that our Lord and our Lady exercised their most humble and generous ministry. Unnecessary sacrifices and unnecessary rituals became necessary for our salvation. Jesus and Mary, in every action, exercised their priesthood and purified again and again the body of our Lord and the body of our Lady from whom he drew his sustenance. From the moment that the angel declared unto Mary and she conceived by the Holy Ghost, her life and her son's life became a pure offering to the Father so that Jesus could save people from their sins. So that we might believe, every act reiterated again and again that Jesus lived to be crucified, and that his crucifixion was fully intentional and done according to the religion and the scriptures of the Jews.

We ourselves still follow the overkill theory of the priesthood, as Jesus taught and as the Apostles passed down to us. We ask the Lord to have mercy nine times. We repeat the Agnus Dei three times. We make the sign of the cross over and over. Why is that? Because we are making 2000% sure that this is no accident. We are invoking the presence of the all-holy God, and we're not pretending, we're not going halfway and then backing out, we're not just thinking about it because we're not really sure. This is it. This is for real. We make it real. It's no coincidence if we follow every line in the book. We ask, and we shall receive, so we'd better be ready. Every repetition and every sign of the cross is an opportunity for us to focus our spirits that much more.

And our focus is the same as St. Simeon's in the Temple. Mary and Jesus would have been nothing more than a mother and her son waiting in line at church for a common ritual. They could have been an Orthodox mother and son waiting in line for communion. But then, St.

Simeon sees them. He pulls them out of line, because he recognizes something special about Jesus. In the intensity of his prayer, Simeon sees a glorious light shining from the child. The same light as the Shekinah, the shining presence of God in the Temple. The same light that shone from the face of Moses after he spoke to God in the holy of holies. The same light that will shine from Christ on Mount Tabor at his Transfiguration. In the power of the Holy Ghost, Simeon sees this light: the light that will lighten the Gentiles of the earth, and that will reveal the glory of God's people Israel.

And that is the whole reason why we believe, and why we pray. Because of the power of the Holy Ghost. The Hebrews of old believed because of the power of the Holy Ghost. There was a power that seemed to follow Moses, strange miracles happened around him, and mighty deeds and wonders came from the spiritual world. It was natural to believe and to worship this power, to say that this is the power of the God who has chosen them.

We are no different. We worship Christ because there is power in his Name, power in his death, and power in the memorial of his death and last supper. Just as St. Simeon felt this power and saw the light of Christ, we are here to worship this power which is the will of the Father and the priesthood of Jesus Christ. The will of the Father was established before any of us were born, so we must worship this power accepting the path he has already chosen to trace, and knowing that we can make no demands. Nevertheless, the power of the Name of Jesus, the power of his death on the cross, brings healing, forgiveness of sins, and spiritual life. We may understand nothing about this, but we know that we must worship this power that has chosen us.

Simeon says that Jesus is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. All of this came true, and is still coming true. There is much in each of us that must fall, and much that needs to rise again, and many thoughts in each of our hearts that must be revealed. We pray to the Father in the name of Jesus our Lord that the power of the Holy Ghost may come upon us. May the light of Christ be revealed to our hearts.

By the wisdom of our Lord's priesthood, by the purification of his holy mother, there is power in our Lord's Body. There is power in his Blood. There is power in the Eucharist that he commands us to celebrate. Our Lord has offered a pure offering and he commands us to partake. In the Holy Ghost, our spirits shall be slain and fall, but his power shall raise them up again, and then every one of us shall have thanks and praise for God.

From the Second Chapter of Saint Luke: *Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.*

V Epiphany 2014

Preached at St. Mark's Church, Denver, Colorado
on 2 February, Sunday, 2014
by the Subdeacon John W. Brainerd

Catechesis on the great and manifest day of our Lord Jesus Christ, spoken by St Theodore on Quinquagesima Sunday.

BRETHREN AND FATHERS, it is a universal law on this day for those who live in the world to stop eating meat and one may see among them great competition in meat-eating and wine-bibbing, and even spectacles of outrageous pastimes which it is shameful to speak about. It is necessary to participate with moderation and to give thanks to the Lord for what we have and to make worthy preparation for the banquet before us; while they possessed by the wiles of the devil do the opposite, demonstrating that they have accepted one rather than the other. Why have I mentioned these things? So that we humble monks may not direct our thoughts in that direction, nor desire their desire, which is not worthy of desire, but rather of misery; let us rather turn to consider the Gospel we are going to listen to, thinking, while the canon is being chanted, about the great and manifest day of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the judge will stand the sheep on his right but the goats on his left. And to those on the right he will utter that blessed and most longed for invitation, Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; while to those on the left he will utter that most unwelcome and piteous sentence, Depart from me, accursed, into the everlasting fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels. These words are full of dread, fear and alarm; they should make us, and them, as we reflect fall down and weep and make God merciful to us, before he has come to test those who listen. But although they are thus, let us, I beg, hear and heed the message of the Gospel, striving keenly to serve the Lord with fear and trembling, removing all wickedness from the soul, introducing instead all knowledge of good works, compassionate pity, goodness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, and whatever else is good and estimable, that when we have led lives worthy of the Gospel of Christ we may become heirs of the kingdom of heaven, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom belong glory and might with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen. §

Colossians 3:12-13 – *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”*

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

IN TODAY'S EPISTLE, Saint Paul addresses the Church in Colossae, a town in what is now western Turkey. In verse twelve, Paul calls the Colossians the elect of God. The Church in Colossae was largely made up of non-Jews. Even though the Council of Jerusalem had recently met, confirming the Church's position that one need not first become a Jew and obey all precepts of the Mosaic Law to be a Christian, calling the members of the Church in Colossae was controversial. Paul wanted to make it clear that all the brethren, in all the Churches, Jew and Gentile, shared equally in the Kingdom of God.

Paul goes on to outline how the Christian brethren in Colossae must treat one another to best accomplish their own salvation and that of their church brethren. And, as you might imagine, Saint Paul's admonishments apply equally to the brethren in first century Colossae, as they do to the brethren here today, in twenty-first century Denver. Finally, as I have just returned from the diocesan clergy retreat this week led by Archimandrite Zacharias, I hope to glean from Fr Zacharias' words, a word or two that might perhaps provide further insight into today's epistle lesson. From my brothers who attended this week's retreat I ask in advance for forgiveness, for my poor reproduction of Fr. Zacharias' thoughts and wisdom.

One of Fr. Zacharias' talks last week was entitled, "Building the Temple of God in ourselves and in our fellows." He began by reminding us that one of the names Jesus uses for himself is The Way, as John 14:6 says, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life..."* Many of us here today have been on the way for many years. We must be aware that even though we have been on the way many years, we must not relax. Even for those of us that have been on the way for a short time, we must not relax. It is important to examine ourselves to see if we have relaxed or become negligent. In our lesson today Saint Paul gives us specifics

on what it means to live the life of the Christian, a checklist for our vigilance on the Way.

In verse 12, Saint Paul writes, "*Put on...bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering...*" First, the word 'bowels' here is used to indicate great depth, such as "the bowels of the earth", meaning its deep interior. So, Saint Paul is telling us that as disciples we must be profoundly merciful to one another, always showing every kindness to all our brethren. Humbleness of mind and meekness means we must continually curb our impulses to call attention to ourselves and dominate our brethren. Instead, we must find ways to defer to others, and be, as Saint James says in his epistle, "...*be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*". Longsuffering means we must be willing even to accept criticisms and attacks from others, allowing their defects and errors to go uncorrected by us. "*Judge not, that ye be not judged,*" Our Lord says in Matthew 7:1. Fr. Zacharias told us that even when we justify ourselves, and don't even retaliate, we still tear down our fellows. He said that rather than to fight against the wave of evil, "...*the victory is to go under the wave of evil, and come up on the other side.*"

In verse 13, Saint Paul continues his explanation of care for our brethren, "...*forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*" Here, Saint Paul tells us when conflicts arise, we must first show forbearance towards one another, that is caution in our judgment and actions, again "...*swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.*" We must find ways to forgive one another at all costs. Perhaps you are starting to feel like all this is too difficult, really too much, and why indeed should I forgive every ignorant slight, condone every moronic behaviour? Saint Paul sense our hearts quail at his words, and explains at the end of the verse that, "...*even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*" Every arrogant thought we allow to dwell in our minds, every word we say that injures another's reputation, every deed of malice or neglect we perform, each one is a slap in the face of Our Lord, a nail in His hand, an insult to His selfless sacrifice of Love for us. But, He freely forgives us, offering us His other cheek to slap, holding out His other hand to the nail, carrying His cross up the hill of Calgary once again, to offer His sacrifice for us. So too, we must find it in our hearts to forgive our brethren every insult, every slight, no matter how small.

I hope at least some of you are thinking, "Wow, that is not going to be easy at all." If so, that is good, as it means I am communicating. Loving ones neighbour is not easy. Archimandrite Zacharias said a number of times during his talks, "*These are hard sayings.*" In fact, the title of his

talks for our retreat was To Live a Christian Life is Impossible. All One Can Do Is 'Die Daily'. Fr. Zacharias explained to us that an aspect of Our Lord's Incarnation was the revelation of His zeal for us. We must place our hope and trust in Our Lord's zeal for us, that is we must trust Him, even to go so far as to, "*Keep thy mind in hell, and despair not*", as Saint Silouan teaches us. But, how do we act upon this trust? We must learn to pray for ourselves. When we find ourselves discouraged, when we find ourselves failing to live as we think we ought, when we find ourselves lonely and sorrowful, we must take each of these occasions, turning to Our Lord and saying, "Lord, have mercy on me, the sinner." We can offer each of these moments to Our Lord, and take each as an opportunity to ask Our Lord to enter our heart, and make it a suitable dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. Next, we must learn to pray for our brethren. Each time we feel slighted by another, each time we feel insulted or betrayed, we can take this opportunity to pray for our brethren, calling to mind Our Lord's zeal for each of his children, and asking Our Lord to kindle some tiny portion of His zeal in our hearts. Fr. Zacharias told us that if we can gain some small zeal for the building up of the temple of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of our brethren, we become coworkers with God in our fellows' salvation.

In verse 17 of our lesson today, Saint Paul says, "*And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*" Saint Paul explains that in each thing we do, at work, at play, when we first wake in the morning, when we go to bed at night, we give thanks to God. Fr. Zacharias too advised us to find ways to pray prayers of gratitude. He said to thank God continually for all His blessings. Sometimes, our hearts are hard, and we cannot find it within ourselves to forgive our brethren, or ourselves perhaps. Fr. Zacharias said that our prayers of gratitude can soften our hearts, allowing the gift of forgiveness to creep in. So, make time during your day to thank God. Thank Him for each gift He gives you. Occasionally, God gives me the gift of remembering to thank Him for things in my life. Lately, I have been trying to thank him for small things, things I might take for granted, like the gift of my modest skills with computers, or the fact that my car starts, or for the internal combustion engine, or for big things, like the gift of my beautiful wife and lovely children in my life, or the gift of this wonderful world in which he has given me to live. You don't have to wait until something big happens to thank God. He has time to listen, whenever you have time to talk.

To me, these few verses of Colossians from today's epistle are an aching beautiful description of what the

Christian life looks like. I would like to be bold, and offer my humble advice to each of you. Take a moment each day this week, and read through this lesson, look it up in your prayer book, look it up in your Bible, take a bulletin home with you, if you like. But read through it; it is only six short verses. Take a minute, and reflect on them. Does anything in particular come to mind? Does a particular phrase or word catch your eye? Does anything speak to something that is happen in your life that day, or something that is going to happen? Try opening your heart to God during this time.

So, where does this leave us? Saint Paul outlines in today's epistle reading qualities he sees as necessary for the spiritual health of each of us. His words, together with those of Archimandrite Zacharias and Saint Silouan provide a guide to the life of the Christian brethren, both in first century Colossae and twenty-first century Denver. By learning to treat your brethren with kindness, with mercy, with humbleness of mind and meekness, by turning your hearts away from resentments and instead towards forgiveness and gratitude, you will find yourselves able to make a place in your hearts so that you may, as Saint Paul writes in verse 16, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

Forgive me.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

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

Richard Luke Treadwell and his family are moving to Houston, TX at the end of February as his wife, Agata, has gotten a promotion with her Company. The move is not any more welcome to Luke than to us. Sorry to see them make this move. Luke has resigned his Math teaching job in Denver and will seek a similar teaching job in Houston.

Thanks to the Altar Guild for providing so much back-up in changing the vestments and candles and such for the Requiem Mass and burial and mercy meal for Evelyn Huseby. Evelyn served on the Altar Guild so long as her health permitted. She died at 94 years. We appreciated the dozens of red roses provided by the Altar Guild for Evelyn's burial at the Logan graveyard. *Rest eternal grant unto her, O Lord.*

What is at stake

Christian Values In An Age of Globalization Symposium

by Metropolitan Hilarion of the Moscow

Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church

Presentation by the Chairman of the Department of External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, at the *Christian Values In An Age of Globalization Symposium*

London, February 21, 2014

Dear participants of the symposium,

TODAY THE TOPIC OF CHRISTIAN VALUES acquires special relevance. The modern-day secular consciousness looks upon religious values as secondary in relation to the dominant liberal democrat standards, the interpretation of which is becoming ever far removed from traditional Christian morality. Therefore the dialogue on Christian values is a most important testimony to faith in the face of contemporary society that has renounced its religious roots.

Not a single world civilization has existed without immutable spiritual and moral maxims, which we call values. The history of humankind has known various values, notions of worthy and unworthy behaviour and of a just structure of society.

For many centuries these values flowed from a religious consciousness, they were formed within the framework of the believer's perception of the world. Within the framework of this presentation the problem of Christian values will be viewed mainly in the European context, which has direct relevance to us.

Moral and ethical values in historical retrospective possess a universal character. However, the theory that common human morality is universal by virtue of the fact that a certain moral codex common for all civilizations is inherent in all peoples and nations cannot sustain criticism.

We can indeed discover common moral norms by studying the history of ancient civilizations. And yet, while paganism was dominant in these civilizations there existed in them both human sacrifices and cannibalism, both polygamy and polyandry, and many other things which humankind renounced under the influence of monotheism.

We cannot look upon the ancient pagan cultures as evidence of a universal understanding of morality. Moreover, the continent of Europe before its illumination by faith in Christ cannot be included in the concept of universal human morality.

If, for example, we look at the legal documents of the ancient Slavs, then we notice that whoever had committed a crime could be sold into slavery by his fellow tribesmen in order to obtain greater compensation for those who have suffered. Such practices do not allow us to conclude that there is an unconditional morality rooted in human nature that has not been illumined by faith in Christ.

The Old Testament shows us how the life of the chosen people changed fundamentally after it had received the revelation of the one God and followed the path of observing the divine commandments. The ten commandments which God gave to the people through Moses became the spiritual and moral foundation upon which Israelite society was built.

This does not mean that all of the Israelite people without exception observed the ten commandments. The books of the Bible are replete with examples of non-observance of the commandments, the refusal of individuals and a whole nation to follow the divine truth. Yet this truth, this moral basis became the foundation upon which society was built, the spiritual clasp which held together the entire people and made it a single organism. Rejection of this truth was perceived as a sin and was correspondingly punished.

The same occurred in the history of the European nations when they accepted the Christian faith. Together with Christianity the European nations received both the Old Testament commandments and the New Testament morality based on the teaching of Jesus Christ. This at root changed the life of the peoples of Europe and raised them to a new level of spiritual and moral development.

Today we can often hear the argument of religion's critics as to why, if our ancestors were so religious, was our past so scarred by so many wars, sufferings and injustice? The answer to this question is quite simple: the people were given the commandments but they did not observe them.

Indeed, in our day the majority of the world's population – Christians, Muslims, Jews and representatives of other traditional religions – agree upon the ten commandments, and yet some of them do not observe them.

Many people in their everyday life ignore those values which form the basis of our civilization. It has been said: 'Thou shalt not kill', and yet people kill and even justify killing; it has been said: 'Thou shalt not commit adultery', and yet society has created an entire industry of promiscuity.

Today on the continent of Europe there is taking place a conscious and consistent deconstruction of the system of values upon which for centuries the lives of our ancestors

was built. If we turn not to public opinion and not to the position of believers but to the official documents of the European Union then we can find clear confirmation of this.

The preamble to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states that the common values are the dignity of the human person, freedom, equality and solidarity, democracy and the rule of law. Within this list, as in other fundamental documents of the European Union, there is no mention of Christian values, the contribution of Christianity to the centuries-old process which turned the barbarian tribes inhabiting the territory of Europe into a great civilization.

I recall the sincere but unsuccessful attempts by the European Christian communities to restore historical and moral justice by insisting on the mention of Christianity in the basic documents of the European Union. The authors of Europe's future were deaf to the voice of common sense, pointing out that a reference to the Christian heritage may offend the feelings of representatives of other religions or atheists.

In fact, secularism is in no way a neutral venue for all religions. On the contrary, this is a perception of the world that is rejected by all religious traditions.

Militant secularism has declared war on the religious worldview as such as it proceeds from completely different premises and leads to completely different results.

The Church's most important task is to help the human person in his struggle against sin and the passions which destroy the person and lay waste to his soul. The secular worldview proceeds from the fact that the concept of sin has no right to exist: there is nothing sinful in itself, what is wrong is only the impingement by one person on the rights and freedoms of another person. And as regards personal morality, then each person is free to define the scale of moral values around which he can orientate himself. What is sinful and amoral for one person maybe be justified and encouraged by another. The main thing is that everybody lives in peace and harmony.

I was born and grew up in a country where the authorities violently uprooted religion and imposed atheism. Throughout the whole expanse of the Soviet Union there was a monstrous experiment in destroying religion as such. The idea of educating a new universal human person, a citizen of the world devoid of religious prejudice was for the peoples of the Soviet Union a genuine historical experience. We paid dearly for this ideology which cost the lives of millions of people who did not fit into the Marxist-Leninist notion of the bright future.

The experiment in the deconstruction of religious values was an experiment on the very nature of the human person. It was reflected in Russian literature. Thus, the writer Mikhail Bulgakov in his story *The Heart of a Dog* in allegorical form depicted the formation of the new person from a dog by means of a surgical operation by transplanting a dog's heart into a person. This experiment led to the creation of a human-looking animal which knew no moral norms. The writer used this grotesque image to convey the idea of the meaninglessness of human existence if a human does not have a human soul, if his entire life is motivated solely by instincts and passions, if he is deprived of a conscience.

I am fully aware that among non-believers there are people who lead a morally exemplary life, as there are among believers sinners and criminals. Religion is not a panacea for moral degradation, in the same way as atheism does not necessarily lead to a life of vice. However, there is a cardinal difference between the believer and the contemporary bearer of the secular worldview.

The former, when committing a sin, is aware of the sinful nature of his act, whereas the latter does not believe sin to be sin and elevates vice to a norm, justifying this on the basis of specially created ideological paradigms. These paradigms lay at the basis of the new moral codex which radically departs from the religious tradition and is aimed at creating a new type of person devoid of absolute moral orientations.

The humanism which modern-day secular Europe has declared is a superstructure on the Christian foundation. However, liberal thinkers prefer not to notice this. Beginning with the Age of the Enlightenment, political and philosophical thought has taken the direction of breaking with its Christian roots. Having extracted from the Christian tradition the doctrine of freedom, the enlighteners have laid down the vector of development which has led today to the abolition of Christian morality as such. Concern for human dignity, understandable in an age of absolutism and tyranny, has led over the centuries to the creation of the legal and social mechanisms for the encouragement of a sinful way of life.

The thinkers in the Age of the Enlightenment fought against the dominant ideology of the time which they believed to be dogmatic and obsolete. However, modern history has created on the basis of their teaching a dogmatized system of political standards which are intolerant of and indeed aggressive towards religion. And we Christians are already feeling this intolerance and aggression which revives in our memory the persecution of the Christians by the pagans in ancient times and the persecution of reli-

gion by the militant atheists more recently.

When Christians are forbidden from openly confessing their faith, when Christian symbols are removed from the public arena, when even wearing a cross around the neck may be interpreted as an infringement of public order, images of the recent past are revived in our memory. I remember well how in a Soviet atheist school the teacher tore the cross from around my neck as she had accidentally noticed the chain beneath my shirt collar. And today we can hear of how in democratic Europe an airline employee was forced to remove her cross, supposedly in the name of tolerance, peace and harmony in society.

I shall give concrete examples of the difference between Christian and secular morality. Both the Christian and liberal tradition speak of the dignity of the human person, of the value of human life. Yet this value is understood in different ways.

The Christian tradition declares that human life is inviolable from the moment of conception, proceeding from the fact that every embryo in nine months time will become somebody's son or daughter. The secular consciousness, however, tends to view the embryo as a mass of chromosomes and stem cells which can be used for rejuvenation and prolonging the lives of other people by means of the destruction of the embryo itself. One may justify the manipulation of embryos by various good motives, but we should not forget that experiments on people in the National Socialist death camps also benefited science. The question is whether we need this benefit, are we ready to use the benefits which have cost human life?

It transpires that in modern-day democratic society the declared notion of the dignity of the human person and the value of human life extends only to certain categories of people. It is not extended to unborn children whom it is considered permissible to put to death without any pangs of conscience. It is not extended to seriously ill people who are offered the possibility of "exiting with dignity" by means of euthanasia – the legalized murder in a number of countries of the elderly, terminally ill adults and even children.

When speaking of dignity we must also recognize the fact that the human person may mislay or even lose his dignity. From the Christian perspective the dignity of the person is directly dependent on the person's moral choice, his capacity for virtue or sin. "The use of freedom for the purpose of evil inevitably entails the diminution of the person's own dignity," states *The Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church On Dignity, Freedom and Human Rights*. Secular ideology rejects the connection between dignity and morality, yet beyond this connection

the theoretical notion of the dignity of the human person does not become practically realized, remaining merely a declared abstract value.

What is freedom? This concept has key meaning for the Christian tradition. "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty," says St. Paul (Gal. 5: 13). However, he does not mean freedom as moral anarchy but the liberation of the human person from the power of sin, of passions, of instincts; it is the inner freedom which is founded on the observance of God's commandments.

From the perspective of Christianity, the freedom of the human person is inseparable from moral responsibility. Human freedom possess a great power for it likens the human person to God, yet it contains an explosive potential if it goes against God. Freedom may be compared to a nuclear reaction which is of benefit only where it is active in a nuclear power station and not when it is turned into a destructive weapon. Moral responsibility is the system of spiritual security which preserves the human person from disintegration under the influence of the power of one's own freedom.

Of course, freedom is an immutable value, yet in any religious tradition it exists in moral and ethical, national and cultural, and other contexts. Even in countries with a majority of Christians there may exist differing concepts of the framework of freedom. The universal value of freedom as such cannot be viewed as a *carte blanche* for committing all sorts of sinful acts.

We are obliged to note the great crisis of freedom as a value caused, among other things, by the discrepancy between the declared relationship towards the freedom of the human person and the real relationship. Thus we ought not to believe that the numerous documents on the freedom of the human person have solved the problem of slavery. According to Human Rights Watch the everyday trafficking of people as slaves may be as many as 900,000. Throughout the world there are an enormous number of people who are involved in criminal networks linked to human trafficking, drug dealing, prostitution and the procuring of sexual slaves.

Today there are a number of European countries where prostitution is legal. Its presence is justified ideologically by the person's right to choose their sexual partner as they please and the right of the other person to make money by any means possible. I say this not in order to condemn those women who sell their bodies. If they return to the Church in repentance, as happened with St. Mary of Egypt who was transformed from a prostitute into a great saint, the Church receives their repentance and forgives their sins. Yet the Church can never agree to their way of

life being elevated to a norm or recognize as normal the behaviour of those persons who use their services.

When the woman caught in adultery was brought to Christ he said to those who demanded that she be stoned to death: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." He not only did not condemn the woman but saved her from death. And yet he said to her: "Go, and sin no more" (Jn. 8: 2-11). If we are to follow the secular notions of free choice and human dignity, then the Saviour of the world ought not to have said these words but recognize her behaviour to be normal and say: "Go and continue to do the same."

In following the example of Christ the Church condemns sin but shows mercy to the sinner. In 2006, thanks to the intercession of His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II, in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates a Ukrainian woman, who was threatened with criminal prosecution including the death penalty for committing an abortion, was shown mercy. In the Patriarch's letter to it was stated that the Church does not justify abortion, believing it to be a sin, but at the same time she calls for mercy to be shown towards the woman.

Solidarity is yet another category in the list of values in the Human Rights Charter of the EU. Yet within the context of a consumer society it is very difficult to speak of genuine solidarity and brotherhood, the concepts of which were formed by Christian moral teaching. Solidarity is impossible without taking into account the interests of one's neighbour, without the love of neighbour as commanded to us by God, and at times with sacrifice which naturally limits the free choice of the human person, his striving for comfort. Solidarity is impossible where the only limitation of the freedom of the human person is the freedom of others and their legitimate interests.

Social unity naturally presupposes love of neighbour. However, in the conditions of identity crisis many people renounce their firmly-rooted national, cultural and religious ties by being guided in communication with each other by the principle of the supermarket where each person chooses the partner that suits him most at that particular time. As a rule, this approach leads to the atomization of society. As family values disintegrate, relationships of solidarity are in a deep crisis even on the parent-child level.

An obvious example of the deconstruction of the natural ties between generations in the name of wrongly understood solidarity and freedom is when the state is encouraged to interfere in family life, known as juvenile justice. This phenomenon is based on placing parents in the position of hired workers to whom society has entrusted the guaranteeing of the rights and freedoms of children under

the control of the state's forces of law and order. It does not have to be pointed out that this approach, justified as the protection of the rights and freedoms of children, destroys the family. Society's solidarity with children who supposedly suffer from parental abuse in many instances becomes a gross infringement of the basic rights of both children and parents and the family as a whole, when a neighbour's reporting is sufficient for the removal of children from the family into a children's home.

In the conditions of secularism solidarity and brotherhood lose their moral sustenance. Of course, their declaration retains their importance, yet it is impossible to make brotherhood compatible with the relations of a trade exchange which have become a part of interpersonal communion. This is witnessed by the world economic crisis. It has shown the enslavement of society, the members of which in the hope of acquiring personal wealth are ready to endanger the minimal welfare of millions of poor people around the world.

A brief examination of European values which are developing within the framework of a global world leads us to the following conclusion. These values have been violently torn, often against the wishes of many, from their moral context which for centuries was formed in a Christian civilization. Values are meant to help build up a just world, but it is impossible to build this world on the basis of an ideology that views the world without God and without faith. A world without God, without absolute moral values rooted in divine revelation, irrevocably turns into the realm of the rule of slavery and lawlessness.

The Holy Russian Church, which has paid in millions of lives for the godless Soviet experiment, can and must testify before the adherents of militant secularism to the fact that a society torn from its spiritual roots and faith has no future. §

Your prayers for our latest catechumens meeting on Sundays at about 12 Noon in the Parish Hall. Mark and Mahrya Proper are parents of four young children, Augustine (8.5) Eliana (6.5) Elisha (4.5) and Jael (2.5) years of age. We meet next to nursery as these children and others are very energetic and love to run and play in the parish hall and out on the piazza San Marco.

The study book we are using is "*The Faith*" by Carlton and we are taking about two chapters each week.

The Vestry are now meeting at 9:05 AM on the second 'full weekend' of each month as a convenience to those who attend either the 8:00 o'clock or 10:00 o'clock Mass.



Dr. Daniel and Kimberly, with thanksgiving to God, are pleased to announce the birth of Caleb George Crawford. Andrew and Christiana are delighted to have a baby brother.

In honor of the Antiochian Women's month in March our Church women will host a ***St. Patrick's Day Luncheon at 11:30 AM on Sunday, 16 March***. The proceeds will go entirely to the rescue and support of war orphans in Syria which is a cause endorsed heartily by our Metropolitan Philip and the Holy Synod. The latest horror is the invading thugs are lobbing mortar shells on the orphanages and monasteries to the North of Damascus. So, anything we can do, by prayer and action, to help them is a ministry of compassion and very needed. If you cannot attend, a check to the ***St Mark's Church Women*** will help directly.

THE LION
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address correction requested

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