

**JAIRUS' DAUGHTER**  
***Healing of St. Veronica***  
***Taking up our Cross***

**October 29, 2023**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke**  
**Revision E**

**Gospel: Luke 8:41-56**  
**Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20**

In the West, today's Gospel lesson is read from either Matthew at this same time in the church year, or from Mark in mid-July.

Understanding the role of the Twelve Apostles is crucial to understanding the Church. Their names are on the foundations of the gates of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10-14) and they will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:22-30). But yet, they did not just fall out of the sky on Pentecost ready to evangelize the earth. And the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was not just a magic elixir that enabled them to do anything. Rather, they had some struggles of their own that they needed to go through. And the Lord spent time with them to train them in what they should do. And the Holy Spirit then enabled them to do that. Today, we will look at some of the training the Lord used to prepare them for Pentecost.

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**Background for the Gospel Lesson**

On the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke, the Gospel lesson was about the Gadarene demoniacs who lived in the tombs, broke their chains and cried out day and night after cutting themselves with stones. Jesus and the Twelve rowed across the Sea of Galilee to heal these poor guys, then rowed right back. On the way over to Gadara, they were rowing into a fierce storm and Jesus calmed the storm. The Twelve reacted, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" (Mark 4:41).

Upon their arrival back in Capernaum (which is today's Gospel lesson), Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. Right after that, He sent the Twelve out two by two to heal the sick, cast out demons and raise the dead all by themselves (Matthew 10:8). Today's Gospel lesson, then, is part of the training program. In just two years, Jesus would be sending the Twelve out to evangelize the earth, but at this point they're struggling to figure out who He is!



There are (at least) three stages of recognition that the Twelve experienced:

1. As Messiah when they were called and shortly thereafter (John 1:41). This alone is not sufficient. “Messiah” means “the anointed one”; King David and Aaron the High Priest were also anointed.
2. As the Son of God following some of these incredible miracles (Matthew 14:33). This is a crucial recognition! Satan also recognized this and trembles at it (James 2:19).
3. As I AM in terms of the Word of the Cross where they take up their cross also (John 8:38). Satan doesn’t do this!

### **Gospel: Luke 8:40-56 (Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43)**

When Jesus arrived back in Galilee after healing the Gadarene demoniacs, he was met by a crowd that included the ruler of the local Synagogue (probably Capernaum). The ruler asked Jesus to come to his house to heal his daughter. On the way, a woman touched the hem of Jesus’ garment and was instantly healed of a flow of blood (or hemorrhage).

#### **History of the Synagogue:**

The traditions of the synagogue go back to Moses (Acts 15:21). However, as an institution, it probably originated with Ezra and the return from captivity in Babylon (see Ezra 7:9-10). There was a formal service at the synagogue on the Sabbath, but it wasn’t the same as at the Temple in Jerusalem since no animal sacrifice was done at the synagogues. Focus was on the reading – probably by chanting – of the Scriptures, where certain parts of the Scriptures were required to be read at certain times of the year. [For example, Exodus 12:24-27]. The music was probably a little different also since the “instruments of David” were only used at the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 23:5, 1 Chronicles 25:1-7, 2 Chronicles 29:25-28).

Synagogues were located throughout the world wherever there was a Jewish community. On Paul’s missionary journeys, it was his common practice to stop at the synagogue on the Sabbath. Some synagogues received him, while others didn’t (compare Berea to Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-13).

The ruler of the synagogue had a role similar to pastors in churches today. He conducted the public worship, appointed who should read the Scriptures and prayers, selected someone to preach (if he didn’t preach himself), and supervised care of the building and property. Most synagogues also had elders and attendants. The elders formed a council for judgment in civil and religious matters and the attendant had the care of the scrolls as well as the job of executing the punishment of scourging and teaching the children to read.

Later on, after Pentecost, many priests became obedient to the Faith (Acts 6:7) and so did some synagogue rulers such as Crispus (Acts 18:8) and Sosthenes (Acts 18:17) in Corinth.

#### **A Little Faith Goes a Long Way:**

Both Jairus and Veronica, the woman with a hemorrhage, exhibited a little faith – they came to Jesus convinced He could help. Both also had their faith tested a little also. Jairus had to

stretch his faith from believing Jesus could heal sickness to believing He could raise the dead. Jesus also encouraged Jairus to do so. Jairus' faith was further tested with the public ridicule from the mourners.

Cyril of Alexandria stated<sup>1</sup> that Veronica had given up all hope of being healed by men and conceived a wise plan to seek the Physician from above. She may have taken courage by seeing Jairus leading Jesus to his house to prevent his daughter from dying. However, she touched Jesus secretly in order to avoid being punished for touching a holy man while she was unclean. Jesus perceived power going out from Him and did not let the woman remain concealed. By revealing Veronica's faith, Jesus benefitted us all, and also encouraged Jairus to trust in His grace.

“Veronica was a woman afflicted with an issue of blood, the prey of a severe and violent malady, which refused to yield to the skill of physicians, and set at naught all the appliances of human remedies. For she could not be healed by any, even though she had unsparingly lavished all her substance upon those who promised to deliver her from her disease. When, therefore, the unhappy woman had given up all hope from men, and now survived only for utter misery, she conceived in her a wise plan. For she had recourse to the Physician Who is from above, from heaven, as One Who is able readily and without effort to affect those things that are beyond our power, and Whose decrees, whatever it be He would accomplish, nothing can oppose.”

“Her faith in this was perhaps occasioned by seeing Jairus leading Jesus to his house, to prove Himself mightier than death, to prevent his daughter from dying. For she thought perchance within herself, that if He was mightier than death, and the destroyer of corruption, how much more can He also alleviate the malady that afflicts her, staunching by ineffable power the fountains of her issue of blood! She drew near, therefore, and touched the hem of His garment; but secretly and not openly; for she hoped to be able to escape notice, and, as it were, to steal healing from One Who knew not of it. But why, tell me, was the woman careful to escape notice? For why, should she not draw near to Christ with more boldness than that leper (Luke 5:12), and ask for the remission of her incurable pain? For he said, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean’. Why should not she act like those blind men, who when Christ passed by called out and said, ‘Have mercy upon us, O Lord, Son of David’? (Matt. 20:30). What then was it that made that the sick woman wish to remain hidden? It was because the Law of the all wise Moses imputed impurity to any woman who was suffering from an issue of blood, and everywhere called her unclean; and whoever was unclean, might neither touch anything that was holy, nor approach a holy man. For this reason, the woman was careful to remain concealed, lest as having transgressed the Law, she should have to bear the punishment which it imposed. And when she touched, she was healed immediately and without delay.”

“But the miracle did not remain hidden; for the Savior, though knowing all things, asked as if He knew it not, saying, ‘Who touched Me?’ (Luke 8:45). The holy apostles with good reason said, ‘The multitudes throng You and press You’. He set before them what had been done, saying, ‘Somebody touched Me; for I perceived power going out from Me’ (Luke 8:46). Was it then for love of glory

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<sup>1</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 198-199.

that the Lord did not allow this instance of His godlike working, the miracle, I mean, that had happened to the woman to remain concealed? By no means do we say this, but rather, that it was because He always keeps in view the benefit of those who are called to grace through faith. The concealment of the miracle, then, would have been injurious to many, but being made known, it benefited them in no slight degree; and especially the ruler of the synagogue himself. For it gave security to the hope to which he looked forward and made him firmly trust that Christ would deliver his daughter from the bonds of death.”

From the healing of the woman’s hemorrhage, we have an example of the use of physical objects for spiritual purposes. Jesus taught that one thing sanctifies another. Here power went out from Him (Luke 8:46) via a touch of the hem of His garment. The Master sanctified the garment and the garment sanctified the hem. Jesus had criticized the scribes and Pharisees for saying that whoever swears by the Temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the Temple, he is obliged to perform it. Jesus pointed out: Which is greater, the gold or the Temple that sanctified it? (Matthew 23:16-17). Thus, one thing sanctifies another. This is also the case with icons, holy water, holy oil and many instances of relics of the saints.

We in the West are unaccustomed to dealing with holy relics. In 2 Kings 13:20-21 is an account of a man being raised from the dead by touching the bones of Elisha. And in this account, it was completely unintentional; no faith at all existed on the part of the burial crew. The relics of Elisha had been sanctified by the power behind the life of Elisha. Similarly, during the two years that Paul was in Ephesus on his Third Missionary Journey, handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul’s body were used to heal diseases and cast out evil spirits (Acts 19:12). Again, one thing sanctified another.

When Jesus stopped and said, “Who touched me?” (Luke 8:45-46), the woman was petrified. She had made the Teacher unclean and He had caught her doing so! Anyone with a bodily discharge was unclean, and so was anyone who touched them (Leviticus 15:1-7). But the Son of God cannot be made unclean unless He so permits, as He did on the Cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, uncleanness touching the Clean One became clean also. After she fell at His feet and confessed, He said, “Be of good cheer, your faith has made you well!” (Luke 8:48)

John Chrysostom compared<sup>2</sup> the woman to the synagogue ruler. Besides the synagogue ruler being a well-known public figure and the woman being an outcast, Chrysostom said:

“Do you see the superiority of the woman to the ruler of the synagogue? She did not detain Him, but he required His presence; she took no hold of Him, but only touched Him, but he required the laying on of His hand (Matthew 9:18). Even though she came later, she was the first to go away healed”.

Chrysostom also pointed out<sup>3</sup> that Veronica did not approach Jesus boldly since she was ashamed of her affliction and considered herself unclean. Under the Law, her affliction was considered a “great uncleanness”. According to the Mosaic Law, she was unclean for the entire twelve years of her flow of blood (Leviticus 15:25). Likewise, anyone touching her bed or

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<sup>2</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

<sup>3</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

anything she sat on was also unclean (Leviticus 15:26-27), as was anyone touching her (Leviticus 15:7). Being unclean, she was equivalent to a leper and couldn't participate in the worship or sacrifices of Israel. Since by touching Jesus, she would make Him unclean also, this may be why she touched only the hem of His garment (Luke 8:44), as if that would make a difference to the Pharisees.

John Chrysostom further pointed out<sup>4</sup> that Jesus did not allow Veronica to be hidden, even though she was "unclean". This accomplished four things: 1) It put an end to the woman's fear that she had stolen the gift and remain in agony of conscience. 2) He set her right knowing that He knew what she was doing. 3) He exhibited her faith to everyone such that everyone should emulate her. 4) He encouraged Jairus, the synagogue ruler, who was about to lose his faith that Jesus could help him.

In speaking to the crowd, "Jesus said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, 'Master, the multitudes throng and press<sup>5</sup> You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, 'Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me'. Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace'" (Luke 8:45-48).

Cyril of Alexandria stated<sup>6</sup> that this event demonstrated that Jesus was God. There was the miraculous event, but there was also what Jesus spoke, "I perceived power going out from Me". All created beings possess power as a gift of God, not of itself. As God, Jesus could perceive power going out from Him.

"This is a fit subject for our admiration. Veronica was delivered, being saved from a state of suffering that was bitter and incurable; and thereby we again obtain the firm assurance, that the Emmanuel is truly God. How and in what manner? Both from the miraculous event itself, and from the words where He spoke with divine dignity. For He said, 'I perceived power going out from Me' (Luke 8:46). But it is above our pay grade, and probably that even of the angels, to send forth any power, and that of their own nature, as something that is of themselves. Such an act is an attribute appropriate solely to the Nature That is above all, and supreme. For every created being whatever that is endued with power, whether of healing, or the like, possess it not of itself, but as a thing given it by God. To the creature all things are given, and done in it, and of itself it can do nothing. As God, therefore, He said I knew that power has gone out from Me."

"Veronica now made confession; and inasmuch as with her malady, with the disease, I mean, which had afflicted her, she had put off the fear, which made her wish to remain concealed. She proclaimed the divine miracle; and therefore, was very fitly deemed worthy of His tranquillizing words, and received security that she should suffer from her malady no more. For our Savior Christ said to her,

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<sup>4</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

<sup>5</sup> That is, everyone close to Jesus was touching Him due to the crowd.

<sup>6</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 199.

‘Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace’” (Luke 8:48).

Jesus met Veronica in late 28 AD, and word of what happened spread around rapidly. By the Spring of 29 AD, John the Baptist had just been beheaded by Herod, the Twelve Apostles had been sent out to heal the sick and raise the dead and Jesus had just fed the 5000 and returned to Galilee. Along the way back to Galilee, Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee. When He got out of the boat, many thousands of people met Him, where everyone now wanted to touch the hem of His garment to be healed. Veronica had started a new trend!

“Then those who were in the boat (the Twelve Apostles) came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God’ (due to the miracle of calming the storm). When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well” (Matthew 14:33-36).

John Chrysostom stated<sup>7</sup> that we not only touch the hem of Christ’s garment but we also touch His whole body at every Liturgy when we partake of the Eucharist. It is not the priest’s hand stretched out to us, but the hand of Christ Himself.

“Let us also then touch the hem of His garment, or rather, if we be willing, we have Him entire. For indeed His body is set before us now, not His garment only, but even His body; not for us to touch it only, but also to eat, and be filled. Let us now then draw near with faith, every one that has an infirmity. For if they that touched the hem of His garment drew from Him so much virtue, how much more they that possess Him entire? Now to draw near with faith is not only to receive the offering, but also with a pure heart to touch it; to be so minded, as approaching Christ Himself. For what, if you hear no voice? Yet you see Him laid out; or rather you do also hear His voice, while He is speaking by the evangelists.”

“Believe, therefore, that even now it is that supper, at which He Himself sat down. For this is in no respect different from that. For neither does man make this and Himself the other; but both this and that is His own work. When therefore you see the priest delivering it to you, account not that it is the priest that does so, but that it is Christ’s hand that is stretched out.”

Athanasius of Alexandria stated<sup>8</sup> that, unlike the heathen and the Arians, we worship Christ Who is both God and man. We don’t divide the body from the Word, like the Arians; nor do we question Christ declaring Himself God. Veronica believed and recognized this.

“We do not worship a creature. Far be the thought. For such an error belongs to heathen and Arians. But we worship the Lord of Creation, Incarnate, the Word of God. For if the flesh also is in itself a part of the created world, yet it has become God’s body. We neither divide the body, being such, from the Word, and worship it by itself, nor when we wish to worship the Word do we set Him far apart from the Flesh. But knowing that ‘the Word was made flesh,’ we recognize

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<sup>7</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, L, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Personal Letter to Adelphius, LX, 3.

Him as God also, after having come in the flesh. Who, accordingly, is so senseless as to say to the Lord: 'Leave the Body that I may worship You'? Or who is so impious as to join the senseless Jews in saying, on account of the Body, 'Why do You, being a man, make Yourself God?' (John 10:33). But the leper was not one of this sort, for he worshipped God in the Body, and recognized that He was God, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean' (Matthew 8:2). Neither by reason of the Flesh did he think the Word of God a creature; nor because the Word was the maker of all creation did he despise the Flesh which He had put on. But he worshipped the Creator of the universe as dwelling in a created temple and was cleansed. So also, the woman with an issue of blood, who believed, and only touched the hem of His garment (Matthew 9:20), was healed. Also, the sea with its foaming waves heard the incarnate Word, and ceased its storm (Matthew 8:26), while the man blind from birth was healed by the fleshly spitting of the Word (John 9:6). What is greater and more startling, even when the Lord was hanging on the actual cross for it was His Body and the Word was in it, the sun was darkened and the earth shook, the rocks were split. And the veil of the temple rent, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose; for perhaps this even offended those most impious men."

Hilary of Poitiers stated<sup>9</sup> that Jesus may have appeared ignorant of who had touched His hem, but He also reads the thoughts of everyone. He may ask and appear ignorant, but He is just expressing His humanity. He does not know that which it is not yet time to declare, or which is not deserving of His recognition.

"The Lord Jesus Christ, then, Who searches the heart and the minds (Revelation 2:23), has no weakness in His nature, that He should not know. As we perceive, even the fact of His ignorance proceeds from the omniscience of His nature. Yet if any there be, who impute to Him ignorance, let them tremble, lest He Who knows their thoughts should say to them, why do you think evil in your hearts? (Matthew 9:4). The All-knowing, though not ignorant of thoughts and deeds, sometimes enquires as if He were, as for instance when He asks the woman who it was that touched the hem of His garment (Luke 8:45). Or the Apostles, why they quarreled among themselves (Mark 10:35-41), or the mourners, where the sepulcher of Lazarus was (John 11:34); but His ignorance was not ignorance, except in words. It is against reason that He should know from afar the death and burial of Lazarus (John 11:11-15), but not the place of his sepulcher. Or that He should read the thoughts of the mind (Mark 2:8-12), and not recognize the faith of the woman (Luke 8:46-47); or that He should not need to ask concerning anything (John 16:30) yet be ignorant of the dissension of the Apostles (Mark 10:41). But He, Who knows all things, sometimes by a practice of economy professes ignorance, even though He is not ignorant. Thus, in the case of Abraham, God concealed His knowledge for a time (Genesis 18:17-18); in that of the foolish virgins, He refused to recognize the unworthy (Matthew 25:6-12). In the mystery of the Son of Man, His asking, as if ignorant, expressed His humanity. He accommodated Himself to the reality of His birth in the flesh in everything to which

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<sup>9</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, IX, 66.



the weakness of our nature is subject, not in such wise that He became weak in His divine nature. But God, born man, assumed the weaknesses of humanity, yet without thereby reducing His unchangeable nature to a weak nature, for the unchangeable nature was that wherein He mysteriously assumed flesh. He, Who was God is man, but, being man, has not ceased to remain God. Conducting Himself then as one born man, and proving Himself such, though remaining God the Word, He often uses the language of man (though God, speaking as God, makes frequent use of human terms). He does not know that which it is not yet time to declare, or which is not deserving of His recognition.”

### **Death Becomes Merely a Sleep:**

As soon as Jesus had finished speaking with Veronica, some people came from the synagogue ruler’s house: “Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher” (Luke 8:49). Chrysostom stated<sup>10</sup> that Jesus anticipated this and both walked more leisurely and spoke with Veronica longer in order to give Jairus’ daughter time to die. Jesus’ response to news of the death of Jairus’ daughter was immediately, “But when Jesus heard *it*, He answered him (Jairus), saying, ‘Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well’” (Luke 8:50).

Cyril of Alexandria noted<sup>11</sup> that Jairus approached Christ asking Him to do something that only God can do, expecting that He was able to accomplish his request.

“Let us ask Jairus to tell us in what light he regards Him to Whom he offers his request. For if you draw near regarding Him as a mere man, and like one of us; as one, that is, who possess no power superior to ourselves, you miss your mark, and have wandered from the right road, in asking of a man that which requires the power of God. The supreme nature alone is able to give life to the dead. It alone has immortality; and from It everything that is called into being borrows its life and motion. Ask, therefore, of men the things that belong to men, and of God the things that belong to God. Moreover, you worship Him as the Almighty God; and do so, as certainly knowing and testifying that He is able to give you the accomplishment of your requests.”

By the time Jesus arrived at the synagogue ruler’s house, He was greeted by the tumult of the weeping and wailing of the mourners (Mark 5:38). Jesus’ response was to tell them all that the child was not dead but sleeping. And they all ridiculed Him (Luke 8:52-53). Jesus said the same thing later on regarding Lazarus (John 11:11). Chrysostom comments<sup>12</sup>:

“He is teaching us not to fear death: for it is no longer death but has now become a sleep. Since He, Himself was to die, He uses the persons of others to prepare His disciples beforehand to be of good courage and to bear the end meekly. Since in truth, when He had come, death was from that time forward a sleep”. This was not so apparent, however, until after Christ’s Resurrection.

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<sup>10</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 195-196.

<sup>12</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 3.

We note that Jesus did not rebuke the mourners or criticize them for ridiculing Him. Chrysostom said<sup>13</sup> that the flute players and the noisy wailers (Matthew 9:23) and the tumult (Mark 5:38) served a useful purpose. All this testified that the child was for sure dead and they even ridiculed Jesus for stating otherwise. Thus, the wailers served as proof that the miracle occurred; but they were declared unworthy to witness the event. This is why He put them all out of the house and brought only Jairus, his wife, plus Peter, James and John into the room when He raised the child (Luke 8:51). Later, Peter did the same thing when he raised Tabitha (Acts 9:39-41).

Cyril of Alexandria stated<sup>14</sup> that sometimes people need to be led to God with what seems to be bit and bridle due to the force of circumstances. This is similar to the Lord's statement to His servants to go into the highways and hedges and compel people to come to His banquet. The circumstances of the illness of Jairus' daughter seemed to compel her father to seek Jesus. If Jesus had not gone to Jairus' house, the Jews at the synagogue would have said that He didn't have the power to do that and that He just pretended unhappiness with Jairus as a pretext. Jesus went anyway so that they all would be without excuse and to implant in them the hope of the resurrection from the dead.

“But the fate of the damsel was not without profit to her father. For just as sometimes the violence of the reins brings the spirited steed that has bounded away from the road back to its proper course, so also trouble often compels the soul of man to yield obedience to those things which are for its good and are commanded. To this effect we find the blessed David also addressing God over all, concerning those men who, not being as yet willing to walk uprightly, were led on, so to speak, by the disorderly impulses of their mind to the pit of destruction. ‘Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule, *which* have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, or else they will not come near you’ (Psalm 32:9). For the force of circumstances brings men even against their wills to the necessity of bowing their neck to God, as we may see indirectly shown in the Gospel parables. For Christ somewhere said, that when the banquet was ready, a servant was sent to call them to the supper, and gather those that were bidden; but they, employing fictitious excuses of various kinds, would not come. Then the Lord, it says, spoke to that servant: ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled’ (Luke 14:23). What then is the meaning of men being invited from the hedges — and that as it were by force — if it be not what is here referred to? For sometimes misfortunes beyond the power of endurance hedge men into extreme misery; and meeting, it may be, with care and assistance from those who fear Christ, they are thus led on unto faith in Him and love. Being weaned from their former error they received by tradition from their fathers, they accept the saving word of the Gospel. And such we may well affirm to be those who are called from the hedges.”

“Jairus then drew near; but we deny that his coming was the fruit of freewill; rather it was the fear of death which made him thus act against his will; for it had already, so to speak, assailed his daughter; and she was his only one.”

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<sup>13</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 3.

See also Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 46, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 201.

<sup>14</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 196-198.

“But there was also a sort of wise management in what was done. For had Christ not yielded to Jairus’ request for grace, both himself and whoever else suffered under the same ignorance, or rather, lack of common sense, would have said that He was not able to raise the damsel, nor drive death away from her, even if He had gone to the house. They would have said 1) that He was without power, and unequal to the accomplishment of the divine miracle; and 2) that He made His displeasure at Jairus a pretext for keeping away. To put a stop therefore to the impure and unbridled false accusations of the Jews and restrain the tongues of the numerous persons ever ready for faultfinding, Jesus consents immediately, and promises to raise up her who was in danger. And the promises were followed by the fulfillment, in order that disbelief on their part might be without excuse, and that this miracle, like the rest, might be for their condemnation. For Christ also said of them, ‘If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father’ (John 15:24). The Savior then went to raise the damsel, and to implant in the dwellers upon earth the sure hope of the resurrection of the dead.”

Cyril of Alexandria also pointed out<sup>15</sup> that Jairus had a conflict of interest: faith in Christ versus his responsibilities to the Mosaic Law as synagogue ruler. Since Faith came first to Abraham, all nations are blessed in him by imitation of his Faith. The Law came 430 years later by the ministry of angels to confirm the Faith that we have in Christ. Faith is the cause of life and slays sin, which is the mother and nurse of death. Jesus told Jairus, “Only believe, and she will be made well”, and Jairus did so.

“These are the fruits of faith, for the sake of which the Law also was given to those of old time by the hand of Moses. Paul witnesses to this, where he writes: ‘Without faith, *it is* impossible to please *Him*’ (Heb. 11:16). It is necessary, therefore, for us to explain in what sense we say that the Law was given because of faith. Abraham was justified by obedience and faith. For it is written: ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God’ (James 2:23). And God promised him both that he should be the father of many nations, and that all nations should be blessed in him; that is to say, by the imitation of his faith. One can see, therefore, that the grace that is by faith is prior to the ceremonial enjoined by the Law, in that Abraham attained to it while still uncircumcised. And afterwards, in process of time, the Law entered by the hand of Moses. Did it then thrust away the justification that is by faith — that I mean which God promised to those who follow the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had while still uncircumcised? How can this be true? Paul, therefore, writes: ‘This I say, *that* the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect’ (Gal. 3:17). And again: ‘*Is* the Law then against the promises of God? Certainly not!’ (Gal. 3:21). And the same Paul further teaches us the reasons for which the Law at length entered by the ministration of angels, and the manner in which it confirms the faith in Christ, by having been brought in before the time of the incarnation of the Only-begotten, saying at one time, that ‘the Law entered that the offense might abound. But where

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<sup>15</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 46, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 201-202.

sin abounded, grace abounded much more' (Rom. 5:20); and at another again, 'that the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe' (Gal. 3:22): and again, 'The Law was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made'" (Gal. 3:19).

"Faith, then, in every way, is the cause of life, as that which slays sin, the mother and nurse of death. Excellently, therefore, said Christ to the ruler of the synagogue of the Jews, when his daughter was dead; 'Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well' (Luke 8:50). For Christ makes those alive who approach Him by faith, in that He is life; for in Him we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28). And He will raise the dead 'suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:52), as it is written. And having this hope in Him, we shall both attain to the city that is above, and reign as kings with Him."

Irenaeus of Lyons pointed out<sup>16</sup> that the people that Christ raised from the dead rose in the same bodies in which they had died, and each of these people eventually died again. This contrasts the resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ, where we will never die again.

"Let our opponents — that is, they who speak against their own salvation — inform us as to this point: The deceased daughter of the synagogue ruler (Mark 5:22-42); the widow's dead son, who was being carried out to burial near the gate of the city (Luke 7:12); and Lazarus, who had lain four days in the tomb (John 11:38-44), — in what bodies did they rise again? In those same, no doubt, in which they had also died. For if it were not in the very same, then certainly those same individuals who had died did not rise again. For the Scripture says, 'The Lord touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. Jesus said to him, "Young man, I say unto you, arise". So, he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother' (Luke 7:14-15). Again, He called Lazarus 'with a loud voice, saying, Lazarus, come forth; and he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth' (John 11:43-44). This was symbolical of that man who had been bound in sins. Therefore, the Lord said, 'Loose him, and let him go' (John 11:44). Those who were healed were made whole in those members which had in times past been afflicted. The dead rose in the identical bodies, their limbs and bodies receiving health, and that life which was granted by the Lord, who prefigures eternal things by temporal. He shows that it is He who is Himself able to extend both healing and life to His handiwork, that His words concerning its future resurrection may also be believed. So also, at the end, when the Lord utters His voice 'by the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:52), the dead shall be raised, as He Himself declares: 'The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation'" (John 5:28).

### **Why Do People Mourn at the Death of a Friend?**

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<sup>16</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, V, xiii, 1.

Chrysostom went on to apply<sup>17</sup> the Gospel lesson to life in his day. Why, he asked, do people mourn and weep at the funeral of a Christian? Doing so testifies that the resurrection is a fable, and that the deceased is gone and has no hope. By doing so, “How will you be able to persuade the Greek that you believe otherwise?”

“Let no man therefore beat himself any more, nor wail, neither disparage Christ’s achievement. For He overcame death! Why then do you wail for nothing? Death has become a sleep. Why lament and weep? If Gentiles did this, they would be laughed to scorn; but when the believer behaves himself unfittingly in these things, what plea does he have? What excuse will there be for those that are guilty of such folly, and this, after so long a time, and so clear proof of the resurrection? But you, as though laboring to add to the charge against you, also bring in heathen women singing dirges, to kindle your feelings, and to stir up the furnace thoroughly. You don’t listen to Paul, saying, ‘What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?’” (2 Corinthians 6:15)

“The children of the heathen, who know nothing of resurrection, find words of consolation, saying, ‘Bear it manfully, for it is not possible to undo what has taken place, nor to amend it by lamentations’. Are not you, who hear sayings wiser and better than these, ashamed to behave more unfittingly than they? For we do not say, ‘Bear it manfully, because it is not possible to undo what has taken place’, but, ‘Bear it manfully, because he will surely rise again’. The child sleeps and is not dead; he is at rest and has not perished. For resurrection will be his final lot, and eternal life, immortality and an angel’s portion. Listen to the Psalm, ‘Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you?’ (Psalm 116:7). God calls it ‘bountiful dealing’, and do you make lamentation?”

“What more could we have done, if you were a foe and an enemy of the dead? If there must be mourning, it is the devil that ought to mourn. He may beat himself, he may wail, at our journeying to greater blessings. This lamentation is appropriate to his wickedness, not to us, who are going to be crowned and to rest. For death is a fair haven. Consider, at any rate, with how many evils our present life is filled; reflect how often we have cursed our present life. For indeed things go from bad to worse, and from the very beginning we were involved in no small condemnation. For, saith He, ‘In pain you shall bring forth children’; and, ‘In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread’ (Genesis 3:16, 19); and, ‘In the world you will have tribulation’” (John 16:33).

“But of our state there, no such word at all is spoken, but all the contrary; ‘the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away’ (Isaiah 35:10). And that ‘many will come from east and west and shall recline (in the bosoms) of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 8:11). And that the region there is a spiritual bride-chamber, and bright lamps, and a translation to Heaven.”

“Why then disgrace the departed? Why encourage the rest to fear and tremble at death? Why cause many to accuse God, as though He had done very dreadful things? Or rather, why after this invite poor persons, and ask priests to pray for the departed? ‘In order that the dead may depart into rest; that he may find

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<sup>17</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 4-6.

the Judge propitious'. For these things then are we mourning and wailing? We are therefore fighting and warring with ourselves: exciting a storm against ourselves on account of the departed having entered into harbor.”

“If indeed he departed a sinner, his wickedness has stopped; for certainly, had God known that he was being converted, He would not have snatched him away before his repentance. But if he ended his life righteous, he now possesses all good in safety. From this, it is clear that your tears are not of kindly affection, but of unreasoning passion. For if you loved the departed, you should rejoice and be glad that he is delivered from the present waves”.

### **Jairus' Relationship with Pontius Pilate**

Something else occurred at the raising of Jairus' daughter that would come to have significance over a year later. The wife of Pontius Pilate and her 12-year old son were also present at the house of Jairus at that time. And Jesus healed Pilate's son of some form of lameness in addition to raising the daughter of Jairus.

Later according to tradition<sup>18</sup>, during Jesus' trial before Pilate, when word was brought to Pilate regarding his wife's dreams (Matthew 27:19), he said to the Jewish leaders, “You know that my wife is a worshipper of God and prefers to adhere to the Jewish religion along with you”. They said to him, “Yes; we know”. Pilate then mentioned what his wife said. The Jews answered Pilate, “Did we not tell you that He was a sorcerer? Behold, he has sent a dream to your wife”.

Also according to tradition<sup>19</sup>, Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, was a granddaughter of Augustus Caesar, and she was also a good friend of Fulvia, the wife of Jairus, the Synagogue Ruler. Pontius Pilate used to love to engage in intellectual and philosophical arguments with Jairus. Claudia Procula was present at Jairus' house when Jesus raised Jairus' 12-year old daughter from the dead (Mark 5:41-43), and her own 12-year old son was healed of lameness at the same time. She had tried to influence her husband in favor of Christ, but to no avail. Pilate had been concentrating on his political career, desiring a higher position in Egypt. Hindering Pilate was none other than Herod, where the two supposedly became friends over Jesus' trial (Luke 23:6-13). Herod wanted to install a cousin in place of Pontius Pilate, and this had created a rivalry between them.

After Herod saw Jesus and became friendly with Pilate, Herod pressed Pilate to get Jesus' trial over with quickly so that the two of them could embark on a fishing trip. Herod later double-crossed Pilate and spoke secretly against him to Caesar. Pilate's young son, on hearing that his father had allowed the execution of Jesus, the One who had healed him, could not bear it and suddenly dropped dead.

Pilate never got the promotion he was looking for. A few years after Pentecost, he was called to appear before the Emperor in Rome regarding why he released Barabbas, an

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<sup>18</sup> Roberts and Donaldson, “Part I, The Acts of Pilate”, Chapter 2, First Greek Form, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

<sup>19</sup> Catherine van Dyke, tr., “The Letters of Pontius Pilate and Claudia Procula”, Relics of Repentance, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Issana Press, Lincoln, NE 68503, 1990.

insurrectionist and a murderer. By the time Pilate got to Rome, Claudius was dead and Caligula was on the throne. Pilate was not able to defend himself and was exiled to Gaul. Claudia went with him to help, but Pilate committed suicide there. Claudia returned to Jerusalem and spent the rest of her life in prayer and fasting with the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

# *Taking up our Cross*

October 29, 2023  
21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
Revision G

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### **Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20**

Today’s Epistle lesson is also used in the Orthodox Church in September for the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross. In the West, this Epistle lesson is sometimes used for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. For a Study of other aspects of the Cross in our lives, see *The Exaltation of the Cross* (September 14<sup>th</sup>), the Sundays before and after the Exaltation, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent.

### **The Gospel versus the Law in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century**

The context of today’s Epistle lesson is the conduct of the Apostle Peter in Antioch (Galatians 2:11-12) where he usually ate with the Antioch Gentiles, but withdrew and ate separately with Jews who came from Jerusalem. Paul referred to Peter, Barnabas and others of the Jews as hypocrites and as not being straightforward about the truth of the Gospel regarding Jewish dietary laws (Leviticus 11).

Paul’s argument was that Peter, himself, had had a vision in c. 40 AD (Acts 10:10-16) which Peter rested heavily upon in his argument with the Jews at the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD that the Gentiles are equal partakers of the Kingdom:

“So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them (the Gentiles) by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke (i.e. the Mosaic Law) on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they” (Acts 15:8-11).

The decree of the Council of Jerusalem was that the Gentile believers did not need to keep the Mosaic Law in all its rituals (Acts 15:19-29). The Epistle lesson is Paul’s commentary on what Peter and the others did in Antioch a few years after the Council of Jerusalem. On this occasion, Peter had been hypocritical. When he was there by himself, he socialized and ate with the brethren there. But when a delegation of Jews came to visit from Bishop James in Jerusalem, he withdrew and separated himself according to the Jewish customs of avoiding defilement from contact with Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-13, John 18:28).

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Paul's reply to Peter is the subject of the Epistle lesson: Paul said, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?" (Galatians 2:14) This was not being straightforward about the truth of the Gospel, where a man is justified not by the works of the Law but by the faith of Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:14, 16 twice).

### **The Issues in Jerusalem, 48 AD**

What were the real issues in Jerusalem that led to the confrontation between Paul and those who wanted to keep the Mosaic Law? In Jerusalem at that time was a small, but very vocal, group of zealots bent on expelling Roman rule. One of the Twelve Apostles, Simon the Zealot, was part of this group at one time, and Judas Iscariot may have been involved also. According to Josephus, the political party of the Zealots was ultimately responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem<sup>20</sup> as a result of their scheming and conspiring to achieve their goals. To them, circumcision represented Jewish national identity. They didn't necessarily keep all the requirements of the Law, but they were very vocal about those aspects of the Law that spoke to their political agenda<sup>21</sup>.

This ideology spilled over to the Christians. The conflict among the Christians<sup>22</sup> was between a small minority of Jewish Christian Zealots, who were zealous about keeping the Law (Acts 21:20) and a large majority of Jewish Christians with a weak faith, who also kept the Law, but were not involved with the political agenda of the Zealots. They knew Christ after the flesh, as the Jewish Messiah, and were very sincere about that. If Paul (and James) handled this situation wrong and offended either group, many people might revert back to Judaism and be lost in the destruction coming to Jerusalem in a few years.

Tertullian stated<sup>23</sup> that circumcision was the only issue involved when Paul wrote to the Galatians. To the Jews, "circumcision" had their national identity associated with it, since this was part of the Covenant God made with Abraham, and the Law required anyone who rejected circumcision to be cut off from Israel (Genesis 17:9-14). Paul's opponents still believed in God, but they perverted the Gospel by retaining an emphasis on the Law. If the Zealots had not brought in the spies to see what Paul was doing regarding Christian liberty, Paul may not have made it such an issue. For Paul, the major issue was the basis for his teaching; for his opponents, the major issue was Jewish national identity.

"When Paul said, that 'neither was Titus compelled to be circumcised' (Galatians 2:3), he for the first time shows us that circumcision was the only question connected with the maintenance of the Law, which had been agitated by those whom he called 'false brethren secretly brought in' (Galatians 2:4). While these persons went no further than to insist on a continuance of the Law, they retained unquestionably a sincere belief in God. They perverted the gospel in their teaching, not by tampering with the Scripture to eliminate Christ, but by retaining

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<sup>20</sup> See Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, IV, vi, 3.

<sup>21</sup> In a way, this is similar to the US today, where there are Christian zealots who have a very strong political agenda involving US national identity. Those aspects of Christianity that speak to their political agenda are very important to them. Yet out of kindness and mercy, we don't want to offend them and cause them to abandon the Faith.

<sup>22</sup> See Roberts and Donaldson, ed., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 3, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1995, Footnote 22, p. 433.

<sup>23</sup> Tertullian, *The Five Books Against Marcion*, II, ii, 5, 3.

the emphasis on the Law. Therefore, he said, ‘Because of false brethren secretly brought in, who came in secretly to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ, that they might bring us into bondage, to whom we submitted not even for an hour’ (Galatians 2:4-5). Let us only attend to the clear sense and to the reason for their actions, and the perversion of the Scripture will be apparent”.

“Paul first said that the Apostles did not compel Titus, a Greek, to be circumcised and added that false brethren were secretly brought in. He gives us an insight into his reason for acting in a clean contrary way, showing us why he did what he would neither have done nor shown to us, if the Zealots had not induced him to act as he did. But then would they have yielded to the subjection that the Zealots demanded, if these false brethren had not crept in to spy out their liberty? I apprehend not. They therefore gave way (in a partial concession), because there were persons whose weak faith required consideration. For their rudimentary belief, which was still in suspense about the observance of the Law, deserved this concessive treatment, when even the Apostle himself had some suspicion that he might have run, and be still running, in vain (Galatians 2:2). Accordingly, the false brethren, who were the spies of their Christian liberty, must be thwarted in their efforts to bring it under the yoke of their own Judaism. Paul needed (1) to discover whether his labor had been in vain; (2) those who preceded him in the Apostolate to have the opportunity to give him the right hand of fellowship; and (3) to have an understanding before he entered on the office of preaching to the Gentiles, according to the Apostles’ arrangement with him (Galatians 2:9-10). He therefore made some concession, as was necessary, for a time; and this was the reason why he had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3), and the Nazirites introduced into the temple (Acts 21:23-26). Their truth may be inferred from their agreement with the apostle’s own profession, how ‘he became all things to all men, that he might gain all’”.

John Cassian stated<sup>24</sup> that Paul identified with those he wished to reach. “To the Jews, I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews; to those who were under the Law as being under the Law, though not myself under the Law, that I might gain those who were under the Law; to those who were without law, I became as without law, though I was not without the Law of God but under the Law of Christ, that I might gain those who were without law; to the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I became all things to all men, that I might save all” (1 Corinthians 9:19-22). The Apostles in Jerusalem recognized that there would be a change in the Law as a result of the Coming of Christ (Hebrews 7:12), and they worked with the Apostle Paul in this regard.

“The Apostle James, and all the chief princes of the primitive Church urged the Apostle Paul, in consequence of the weakness of feeble persons, to condescend to a fictitious arrangement and insisted on his purifying himself according to the requirements of the Law. By shaving his head and paying his vows (Acts 21:20-25), they thought that the present harm, which would come from this hypocrisy, was of no account, but had regard rather to the gain, which would result from his continued preaching. For the gain to the Apostle Paul from his strictness would not

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<sup>24</sup> John Cassian, The Second Conference of Abbot Joseph, II, xvii, 20.

have counterbalanced the loss to all nations from his speedy death. And the whole Church would certainly have then incurred this unless this good and salutary hypocrisy had preserved him for the preaching of the Gospel”.

“Someone may ask how we can prove that Paul suited himself to all men in all things. When did he to the Jews become as a Jew? He had said, ‘Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing’ (Galatians 5:2). Yet by circumcising Timothy (Acts 16:3), he adopted a shadow as it were of Jewish superstition. And again, where did he become to those under the Law, as under the Law? James and all the Elders of the Church, fearing lest he might be attacked by the multitude of Jewish Christians, who had received the faith of Christ in such a way as still to be bound by the rites of legal ceremonies, came to his rescue in his difficulty with this counsel and advice” (Acts 21:20-24).

“And so for the good of those who were under the Law, he trod under foot for a while the strict view which he had expressed. ‘I, through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I may live to God’ (Galatians 2:19). Contrary to this, he was driven to shave his head, and be purified according to the Law and pay his vows after the Mosaic rites in the Temple” (Acts 21:20-24).

“For the good of those who were utterly ignorant of the Law of God, Paul himself became as if without law? In Athens, where heathen wickedness was flourishing, he stated, ‘as I passed by, I saw your idols and an altar on which was written: To the unknown God’ (Acts 17:23). When he began speaking to them, as if he himself also had been without law, he introduced the faith of Christ, saying, ‘The One whom you worship ignorantly, Him I proclaim to you’ (Acts 17:23). And after a little, as if he had known nothing whatever of the Divine Law, he chose to bring forward a verse of a heathen poet rather than a saying of Moses or Christ, saying, ‘As some of your own poets have said; for we are also His offspring’ (Acts 17:28). And when he had thus approached them with their own authorities, which they could not reject, thus confirming the truth by things false, he added, ‘Since then we are the offspring of God we ought not to think that the Godhead is like gold or silver or stone sculptured by the art and device of man’” (Acts 17:29).

“In this way he fulfilled what he had commanded the Corinthians to do when he said, ‘be without offense to Jews and Greeks and the Church of Christ, as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but that of the many, that they may be saved’ (1 Corinthians 10:32-33, Romans 14:3-13, 2 Corinthians 11:29). For it had certainly been profitable at other times not to circumcise Timothy, not to shave his head, not to undergo Jewish purification, not to practice going barefoot, not to pay legal vows. But he did all these things because he did not seek his own profit but that of the many”.

### **The Result of Paul’s Actions**

At the Council of Jerusalem in 48 AD, Paul sought (1) clarification of his interpretation of the Gospel and (2) agreement with the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem. This he received very clearly, and Paul was of one mind with the Apostles and elders. Later Church Councils were patterned after Paul’s agreement with the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and this agreement came to be referred to as “The mind of the Church”. While the Jewish Christian Zealots had to agree with the Council, because their disagreement would be an obvious gesture of

countermanding God, they later opposed the decision of the Council. Paul ended up opposing them for the rest of his life. A similar pattern emerged following most of the later Councils of the Church, where the heretics often accepted the decisions of the Council initially, but later opposed these decisions. In both cases, this showed the basic dishonesty of the heretics, and where their allegiance was really based.

John Chrysostom pointed out<sup>25</sup> that a change in the Law was foreseen in the Mosaic Law as it referred to Christ:

“The Law itself has taught me no longer to obey itself; and therefore, if I do so, I shall be transgressing even its teaching. How, and in what way has it so taught? Moses says, speaking of Christ, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your midst of your brethren, like me; to Him shall you listen’ (Deuteronomy 18:15). Therefore, those who do not obey Him transgress the Law”.

Chrysostom continued<sup>26</sup> to say that the impact of Peter’s conduct in Antioch was to marginalize the death of Christ. That is, one is not justified by circumcision or by Jewish rituals, but by faith. Because of the circumstances, Paul had to do something!

“Christ’s death is a plain proof of the inability of the Law to justify us; and if the Law does justify, then His death is superfluous. Yet how could it be reasonable to say Christ’s death has been done heedlessly and in vain, when it is so awesome, so surpassing human reason, a mystery so ineffable, with which Patriarchs travailed, which Prophets foretold, which angels gazed on with consternation, which all men confess as the summit of Divine tenderness? How utterly out of place it would be if they should say that so great and high a deed had been done superfluously, for this is what their conduct (i.e. the conduct of Peter and the Jews in Antioch) came to”.

At this point, some clarification is needed regarding “the Law”. The Lord referred to the Greatest Commandment, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39, Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18). On this, He said, hangs all the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40); and this Greatest Commandment was part of a Creed<sup>27</sup> used in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century Synagogue worship. In addition, the Lord had said, “Assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one yod (smallest Hebrew letter) or one piece of a Hebrew letter will by no means pass from the Law till all<sup>28</sup> is fulfilled” (Matthew 5:18). He also said that those who worship the Father must worship Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

All this is not contradictory. All the details of the Mosaic Law regarding sacrifices, uncleanness, Feast Days, avoiding certain foods, etc., had a purpose in leading the Lord’s people toward holiness. Once Israel ceased to exist as a nation, these tenets of the Law changed. We no longer offer animal sacrifices, but we are urged to present our bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans

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<sup>25</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Chapter 2, v 19.

<sup>26</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Chapter 2, v 21.

<sup>27</sup> Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life, p. 245, 101-104.

<sup>28</sup> For more details, see the Gospel lesson for the 15th Sunday after Pentecost.

12:1). We no longer follow the various washings prescribed by the Mosaic Law, but we are advised to avoid the defilement<sup>29</sup> from unclean spirits, which can be really foul.

The usefulness of the Law is as a tutor to get us started in the right direction (Galatians 3:24, 25). As we grow in the Faith and can distinguish the Holy Spirit speaking to us, we don't need the Law anymore, because it is written on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 10:16-17). John Chrysostom stated<sup>30</sup> that the Law and the Gospel work together:

“The Law is not the adversary but the fellow worker of Grace. But if when Grace is come, the Law continues to hold us down, it becomes an adversary. For if it confines those who ought to go forward to Grace, then it is the destruction of our salvation. If a candle which gave light by night kept us, when it became day, from the sun, it would not only cease to benefit us, but would injure us. And so does the Law if it stands between the greater benefits of Grace and us. Just so a tutor or *pedagogue* makes a youth ridiculous, by retaining him with himself, when time calls for his departure”.

### **Dead to the World**

Paul stated, “For I through the Law died to the Law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:19-20). The point he is making is that if our hope is really in the Kingdom of God, the things of this world have very little meaning.

John Chrysostom stated<sup>31</sup> that it is our love for God that deadens us to the things of this world, such as glory and honor, as if we were the only person on earth and there was no glory to receive from others. By focusing on the invisible things of God, we begin to not notice the visible things of this world.

“If anyone is caught with the fire of Christ's love, he becomes like a man would who dwelt alone upon the earth, so utterly does he not care for either glory or disgrace. As for trials, he so despises them, both scourges and imprisonments, as though the body in which he suffers were another's and not his own, or as though he had a body made of adamant<sup>32</sup>. As for the sweet things of this life, he so laughs them to scorn, is so insensitive to them, as we are insensitive of dead bodies, being ourselves dead. He is as far from being taken captive by any passion, as the gold refined in the fire is free from alloy. For even as flies would not dart into the midst of a flame, but fly from it, so the passions dare not even to come near this man. Observe Paul, how he felt towards the whole world. ‘The world is crucified to me, and I to the world’ (Galatians 6:14). I am dead to the world, and the world is dead to me. And again: ‘it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). To show you that it was like he was in solitude, and so looked upon the things

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<sup>29</sup> For more details regarding sacrifice, see the Epistle lesson for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; for more details on uncleanness, see the Epistle lesson for the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

<sup>30</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Galatians, Chapter 3, vv 25-26.

<sup>31</sup> John Chrysostom, Commentary on Acts, LII, Recapitulation.

<sup>32</sup> Adamant was a very hard legendary material, possible associated with diamond.

present, hear him saying, ‘We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen’ (2 Corinthians 4:18). What he is saying is that he sees the invisible things, and the visible he doesn’t see. Such are the eyes, which are given by Christ; for these bodily eyes see the things that are seen, but things unseen they don’t see. Similarly, those heavenly eyes do the contrary. No one that beholds the invisible things, beholds the visible; no one beholding the things seen, beholds the invisible. When we turn our mind inwards, we think of the unseen things, and our views become raised above the things on earth. Let us despise glory; let us be willing to be laughed at rather than to be praised. For he who is laughed at is not hurt; but he who is praised is hurt much”.

John Cassian gave<sup>33</sup> some specifics regarding how we can continually carry our Cross. If we were crucified, we would not be free to go where we want, and participate freely in the things of this world; we would be nailed in place. If our love for the Lord and the things of God are real, we will consider this effect in our life.

“Renunciation is nothing but the evidence of the cross and of dying to yourself. And so you must know that today you are dead to this world and its deeds and desires, and that, as the Apostle says, you are crucified to this world and this world to you. Consider therefore the demands of the cross under the sign of which you ought to live in this life. We must therefore pass our time in this life in that fashion and form in which He was crucified for us on the cross. So that as David says, ‘piercing our flesh with the fear of the Lord’ (Psalm 119:120), we may have all our wishes and desires not subservient to our own lusts but fastened to His death. Thus shall we fulfill the command of the Lord, which says, ‘He who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me’” (Matthew 10:38).

“But perhaps you will say, ‘How can a man carry his cross continually? Or how can anyone who is alive be crucified? Hear briefly how this is. The fear of the Lord is our cross. One who is crucified no longer has the power of moving or turning his limbs in any direction he pleases. So, we also ought to affix our wishes and desires, not in accordance with what is pleasant and delightful to us now, but in accordance with the Law of the Lord, where it constrains us. One who is fastened to the wood of the cross (1) no longer considers things present, (2) no longer thinks about his likings, (3) no longer is perplexed by anxiety and care for tomorrow, (4) no longer is disturbed by any desire of possession, nor inflamed by any pride, strife or rivalry, (5) does not grieve at present injuries, nor remember past ones, and (6) while he is still breathing in the body considers that he is dead to all earthly things, sending the thoughts of his heart on before to that place where he is shortly to come. So we also, when crucified by the fear of the Lord ought to be dead to all these things. That is, not only to carnal vices but also to all earthly things, having the eye of our minds fixed there where we hope that we are soon to pass. For in this way, we can deaden all our desires and carnal affections”.

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<sup>33</sup> John Cassian, Twelve Books on the Institutes of the Coenobia, IV, 34-35.

Cassian continued<sup>34</sup> to say that taking up our Cross is easy if we take the right attitude. If we are actually strong when we appear to be weak, and if the things of this world don't bother us, life is easy.

“We can prove that our Lord's saying is true, if we approach the way of perfection properly and in accordance with Christ's will, deadening all our desires, and cutting off things we like that injure us. If we abandon this world's goods, our adversary won't find opportunities for destroying us. If we actually recognize that we are not our own masters, we can truly make our own the Apostle's words, 'it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me' (Galatians 2:20). For what can be burdensome to one who (1) has embraced with his whole heart the yoke of Christ, (2) is established in true humility and (3) always fixes his eye on the Lord's sufferings and rejoices in all the wrongs that are offered to him. 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong!' (2 Corinthians 12:10) By what loss of any common thing, I ask, will he be injured, who voluntarily rejects for Christ's sake all the pomp of this world, and considers all of its desires as dung, so that he may gain Christ, and by continual meditation on this command of the Gospel, scorns getting upset at every loss? 'For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?' (Matthew 16:26) For the loss of what will he be bothered, who recognizes that everything that can be taken away from others is not their own, and proclaims with unconquered valor, 'We brought nothing into this world; it is certain that we can carry nothing out?'" (1 Timothy 6:7)

John Chrysostom stated<sup>35</sup> that there is a balance in providing for the needs of our flesh. The point is to make our flesh healthy in a godly sense.

What does the Lord intimate in saying, 'Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts?' (Romans 13:14). He does not forbid drinking, but drinking to excess, not marrying, but seeking luxurious self-enjoyment. He does not forbid making provision for the flesh either, but He does forbid doing so with a view 'to fulfill the lusts of the flesh', as for instance, by going beyond necessities. For that he does ask us to make provision for it, hear from what he says to Timothy, 'Use a little wine for your stomach's sake, and your frequent infirmities' (1 Timothy 5:23). So here too he is for taking care of it, but for health, and not luxurious self-enjoyment. This would cease to be making provision for it, when you were lighting up the flame, when you were making the furnace powerful. But that you may form a clearer notion what 'making provision' for it 'to fulfill its lusts' is, and may shun such a provision, just call to mind the drunken, the gluttonous, those that pride themselves in dress, those that are effeminate, those that live a soft and relaxed life, and you will see what is meant. For they do everything not that they may be healthy, but that they may seek pleasure and kindle desire. But you, who have put on Christ, prune away all those things, and seek for one thing only, to have your flesh healthy.

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<sup>34</sup> John Cassian, Conference of Abbot Abraham, XXIV, 23.

<sup>35</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans, XXIV, v 14.

## Examples of the Gospel and the Cross

Paul stated, “Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:24-25). Since the passions and desires of the flesh are the things that hinder us from a close walk with God, denying these is an integral part of our crosses. And our crosses will generally lead us to a point where we are better able to do this.

But we need to actually do something about it. “If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). This is a faith-works issue. From James 2:17-20, the English words to believe and to have faith are translations of the same Greek word (meaning to believe, to have faith, to trust). Similarly, “works” means labor or deeds. Demons believe and have faith (James 2:19), but they tremble and they have no deeds to show for their belief or faith. Similarly, for us: if we live in the Spirit, but don’t walk in the Spirit, our belief (or faith) is barren or dead. Unless we have both faith and works, we really have neither.

As an example, consider the Crosses of the Apostle Paul. All his difficulty did not cause him any permanent harm. Instead all this caused Paul to be one of the most admired of the Apostles.

“From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep (i.e. after shipwreck). In journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness — besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches” (2 Corinthians 11:24-27).

Similarly, with the Patriarch Job’s Crosses. In his day, Job was unsurpassed in righteousness (Job 1:8). Yet the Lord allowed Satan to take away all his wealth, his ten children, plus his health, leaving him sitting among the ashes scraping the pus and the worms off the boils on his skin with a piece of broken pottery (Job 1:13-22, 2:7-8). To add insult to injury, Job’s friends then began to inquire of him as to which of his secret sins had brought this calamity on him (Job 4:7-21, 8:1-6, 11:1-20). Reflecting on Job’s situation, John Chrysostom stated<sup>36</sup> that

“The reproaches of his friends appeared more grievous than the worms and the sores. There is nothing more intolerable to those in affliction than a word capable of stinging the soul!”

Job grew spiritually because of all the evil that he had to bear and he was rewarded both in this life and in the age to come (Job 42:10-17, James 5:11). Obviously Job’s Crosses did him no permanent harm either.

John Chrysostom summarized<sup>37</sup> the effect of the Cross on the life of the Apostle Paul. Because his entire life, after his conversion, focused on the things of Christ, to the exclusion of the

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<sup>36</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on 2 Corinthians, XII, 3.

<sup>37</sup> John Chrysostom, Homilies on Philippians, III.



things of this world, he did not live the common life. He was above it; and for anyone to kill him, they simply ushered him into a better life.

“Since I have often escaped dangers, and have this to boast of to the unbelievers, do not think I am put to shame, if now I should face danger. ‘I am not ashamed of the Gospel!’ (Romans 1:16) This he did not say in ignorance, for he knew that he was not to die then, but sometime after; yet even now he prepares their soul”.

“For even in dying, he means, I shall not have died, for I have my life in myself; then would they truly have slain me, if they had power to cast faith out of my soul through fear. But as long as Christ is with me, even though death overtakes me, still I live, and in this present life, Christ is my life. Because of this, ‘that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith’; so in that state also, ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me’ (Galatians 2:20). Such ought a Christian to be! I live not the common life, he says. How do you live then, Paul? Do you not see the sun; do you not breathe the common air? Are you not nourished with the same food as others? Do you not tread the earth as we? What do you mean by, ‘I live not?’”

“If facts witness to events, there is no boasting here. Let us learn how he lives not! ‘I have been crucified to the world, and the world to me’ (Galatians 6:14). He says, ‘I no longer live’, and, ‘to me to live is Christ’. The word ‘life’ is very significant, as also the word ‘death’. There is this life of the body and there is the life of sin (Romans 6:2). It is then possible to live the life of sin. There is the life everlasting and immortal; ‘for our citizenship is in heaven’ (Philippians 3:20). There is the life of the body, which he speaks of, ‘through Him we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 17:28). He does not deny that he lives the natural life; but he does deny that he lives the life of sin, which all men live”.

“He who desires not the present life, he who is hastening to another, he who despises death, he who desires nothing, how does he live this life? For as one made of adamant<sup>38</sup>, though he were struck a thousand blows, would never be bothered by it; neither would Paul. And ‘I live, but no longer I’; that is, no longer the old man, as elsewhere, ‘Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death!’ (Romans 7:24). How does he live who does so not for the sake of food, clothing, nor for any of these present things? Such a one does not live the natural life: he who takes thought for none of the things which sustain life, doesn’t live. We live this life, when our every action regards it. But he didn’t live; he busied himself about nothing of the things here. Elsewhere he shows that he does not reject the natural life. ‘The life which I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20). That is, a certain new life I live, an altered one”.

“Think not, he says, that I shall be deprived of anything in this life; for while alive I lived this life as Christ willed. For tell me, He who despises money, luxury, hunger, thirst, dangers, health, safety, does he live this life? He who has nothing here, and is often willing to cast life away, if need be, and does not cling to it, does he live this life?”

“This I must make clear to you by a kind of example. Let us imagine someone in great wealth, with many servants, and much gold, and who makes no

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<sup>38</sup> Adamant was a very hard legendary material, possible associated with diamond.

use of all these things; is such a one rich for all his wealth? By no means! Let him watch his children dissipating his property, strolling idly about; let him feel no concern for them. When beaten, let him not even notice pain. Shall we call him a man of wealth? By no means, although his wealth is his own! ‘For me’, he says, ‘to live is Christ’; if you will inquire of my life, it is He. ‘And to die is gain’. Why? Because then I shall more clearly be present with Him; so that my death is rather a coming to life. They who kill me will work on me no dreadful thing; they will only send me onward to my proper life, and free me from that which is not mine”.

Athanasius of Alexandria stated<sup>39</sup> that we keep the Commandments when we offer ourselves to the Lord in thankfulness. This exhibits Christ living in us, even though we offer to Him only what He gave us. Wicked men, heretics and schismatics, on the other hand, cannot bring anything that God will accept, and thus cannot properly observe the Paschal Feast.

“Nature is not able, with material things, to return a recompense for His benefits; yet let us render Him thanks while we persevere in piety. And how can we more abide in piety than when we acknowledge God, Who in His love to mankind has bestowed on us such benefits? For thus we shall obediently keep the Law and observe its Commandments! Further, we shall not, as unthankful persons, be accounted transgressors of the Law, or do those things, which ought to be hated, for the Lord loves the thankful. We do this when we offer ourselves to the Lord, like the saints, when we subscribe ourselves entirely as living not to ourselves, but to the Lord, as also the blessed Paul did, when he said, ‘I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me’” (Galatians 2:20).

“Our life, my brethren, truly consists in our denying all bodily things, and continuing steadfast in those only of our Savior. Therefore, the present Paschal season requires of us, that we should not only utter such words, but should also imitate the deeds of the saints. We imitate them, when we acknowledge Him who died, and no longer live to ourselves. Also, when we render recompense to the Lord, though, by grace, we give nothing of our own. He bears witness to this when He says that My offerings are My own gifts (Numbers 28:2 LXX). That is, those things which you give Me are yours, as having received them from Me, but they are the gifts of God. And let us offer to the Lord every virtue, and that true holiness which is in Him, and in piety let us keep the feast to Him with those things which He has hallowed for us. Let us thus engage in the holy fasts, as having been prescribed by Him, and by means of which we find the way to God”.

“Although wicked men<sup>40</sup> press forward to keep the feast, and as at a feast praise God, and intrude into the Church of the saints, yet God says to the sinner, ‘why do you talk of My ordinances?’ And the gentle Spirit rebukes them, saying, ‘Praise is not becoming in the mouth of a sinner, for it was not sent to him by the Lord’ (Ecclesiasticus 15:9 LXX, Psalm 50:16). Neither has sin any place in common with the praise of God; for the sinner has a mouth speaking perverse things, as the Proverb says, ‘The mouth of the ungodly answers evil things’ (Proverbs 15:28 LXX). For what communion has righteousness with iniquity? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14) Thus it

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<sup>39</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, V, 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria, Festal Letters, VII, 4.

is: sinners, and all those who are aliens from the Catholic Church, heretics, and schismatics, since they are excluded from glorifying God with the saints, cannot properly even continue observers of the feast. But the righteous man, although he appears dying to the world, uses boldness of speech, saying, ‘I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord’” (Psalm 118:17).

### **Taking Up Our Cross: Humility and Love**

From the Gospel lesson from the Sunday before the Exaltation of the Cross, “For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son” (John 3:16). The Cross, then, is the ultimate act of the love of God for man. “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13). The Lord applies these same principles that He used to us: “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12).

At the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke to the multitudes: “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?” (Matthew 5:44-48). This is how the Lord treated His enemies; He took even their sins with Him to the Cross<sup>41</sup>.

Contrasting life in the world around them, Jesus had said, “You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your deacon, and slave of all” (Mark 10:42-44). The Apostle Peter elaborated on this and compared the humility of Christ with how husbands and wives should treat one another with love, humility and obedience (1 Peter 2:21-3:9). Diadochos of Photiki commented<sup>42</sup> on this:

“Obedience is the chief among the initiatory virtues; for first it displaces presumption and then it engenders humility within us. Thus, it becomes for those who are willing to embrace it, a door leading to the love of God”.

The Lord’s brother, James, wrote, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up” (James 4:10). Diadochos also commented<sup>43</sup> on this as follows:

“When the intellect fully and consciously senses the illumination of God’s Grace, the soul possesses a humility which is, as it were, natural. Wholly filled with divine blessedness, it can no longer be puffed up with its own glory; for even if it carries out God’s commandments ceaselessly, it still considers itself humbler than all other souls because it shares His forbearance”.

John of Karpathos added<sup>44</sup>, “If you always behave with humility before the Lord, you will never show arrogance toward anyone”.

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<sup>41</sup> We will consider this in more detail in the Gospel lesson for the 2nd Sunday of Luke.

<sup>42</sup> Diadochos of Photiki, On Spiritual Knowledge, Text 41.

<sup>43</sup> Diadochos of Photiki, On Spiritual Knowledge, Text 95.

<sup>44</sup> John of Karpathos, Texts for the Monks of India, Text 12.

Gregory of Nyssa stated<sup>45</sup> that humility does not come easily, since the removal of pride is involved.

“But let no one imagine that humility can be achieved easily and without labor. The Lord removes pride, the root of evil, from our character by counseling us to imitate Him who became poor of His own will, Who is the truly Blessed One. For as it is said, ‘Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself taking the form of a servant’ (Philippians 2:5-7). The perfectly Pure accepts the filth of human nature”.

Just as our Lord was exalted and glorified because He humbled Himself to the point of death on His Cross (Philippians 2:5-10), so also, we will be exalted if we humble ourselves in taking up our crosses. Our crosses are not our enemies; our crosses are for our benefit. Referring to the reply of the Twelve to Jesus, “Behold we have left all we had and followed You; what therefore shall we have?” (Matthew 19:27, Mark 10:28, Luke 18:28). Gregory of Nyssa said<sup>46</sup>,

“Would you like to know who it is that is poor in spirit? It is he who is given the riches of the soul in exchange for material wealth, who is poor for the sake of the spirit. He has shaken off earthly riches like a burden so that he might be lightly lifted into the air and be borne upwards”.

Paul spoke of Jesus enduring His Cross and despising the shame because of the joy that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). That joy for Him was us, as we faithfully endure our crosses. And like Him, any humiliation we suffer in the eyes of the world causes us no permanent harm and does not even compare to the rewards the Lord brings at His Second Coming.

Thus, the Cross, an instrument of death, actually brings life. As the Lord said: “He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it (Matthew 10:38-39).

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<sup>45</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, The Beatitudes, Sermon 1.

<sup>46</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, The Beatitudes, Sermon 1.