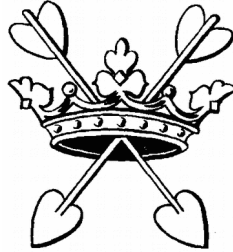


# The Parish of St. Edmund, King and Martyr

(Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, and Guelph, Ontario)



**The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada**

## **UPDATE**

July 9, 2003 - St. John Fisher and St. Thomas More

### **August Schedule**

August 3	Sunday after Trinity	-	The Seventh Sunday
August 6	Wednesday	-	The Transfiguration or Our Lord
August 10	Sunday after Trinity	-	The Eighth Sunday
August 15	Friday	-	The Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary
August 17	Sunday after Trinity	-	The Ninth Sunday
August 24	Sunday	-	St. Bartholomew the Apostle
August 29	Friday	-	The Beheading of St. John the Baptist
August 31	Sunday after Trinity	-	The Eleventh Sunday

### **Service Times and Location**

(1) All Services are held in the Chapel at Luther Village on the Park - 139

Father David Bauer Drive in Waterloo.

(2) On Sundays, **Matins** is sung at **10:00 a.m.** (The **Litany** on the first Sunday of the month), and the **Holy Eucharist** is celebrated (sung) at **10:30 a.m.**

(3) On weekdays - **Holy Days** and **Days of Obligation** (Diocesan Ordo) - the **Holy Eucharist** is *usually* celebrated at **7:00 p.m.** when the Chapel is available - please phone to confirm.

## **The Bishop's Bit**

### ***Jhad in the Land of Cush - II***

"The name of the second river is Gihon: the same it is that compasseth the whole land of Cush" (Genesis 2,13).

Glenn and I were hospitably accommodated by three Kenyans employed by *Goal*, an Irish aid organization specializing in medial work. These three Kenyans run several clinics and teach public health. In addition to bilharzia and malaria, the three other prevalent diseases are kalazar, carried by sand fleas, kidney worm carried by river flies, and river blindness, also brought by flies. We suspected that one of our party was already displaying symptoms of the blinding illness. Rivers are hazardous to health. On two occasions members of our party went down with heat stroke. There are no roads. There is no public transport. There are no shops, postal services, banks, telephones. Just miles and miles of bush, hot as the hobs of hell in the dry season, a quagmire or even swamp in the rainy season. The Nuba Mountains are said to be beautiful but we were nowhere near.

The compound of our Kenyan hosts had been bombed, as were the school, the main clinic, and the simple market on market day. Of course there were deaths and injuries. We saw anti personnel shrapnel everywhere. We were glad of the trenches near our huts.

Our Kenyan hosts were delighted with the peaceful and democratic election back home, and wished this Zimbabwean similar good fortune for his own native land.

The Anglican church has some two dozen dioceses in all Sudan but most of the bishops are in exile, making sporadic forays into their diocese from Kenya or Uganda. Bishop Michael Lugor of Rajif diocese has preached and celebrated for Sudanese refugees in my Ottawa church. Most Roman Catholic bishops are also in

exile. The Presbyterian Moderator works from Nairobi.

It was an honour to meet persecuted Christians. There was Pastor John, a Presbyterian minister who had been stripped, beaten by soldiers and left for dead. He now suffers from chronic asthma, which makes walking from congregation to congregation difficult. He hasn't the strength needed to walk to his next General Assembly. There was Pastor Andrew who in Khartoum had helped translate the Bible into Mabaan and written Mabaan hymns. He had his finger nails pulled out and then escaped by walking South via Ethiopia. There was Pastor Jacob, a former Animist sorcerer who had flirted with Islam for a short while. It was a presumption to "teach" the Bible to men who know the Scriptures better than I and who love the Scriptures more deeply than I. I remember two venerable patriarchs and several young men who had had conversion experiences while fighting in the Sudanese Liberation Army. Our studies were conducted in a mixture of Arabic, English, Mabaan and Uduk. We had three sessions a day, each of two hours. The Buldits among whom Pastor John works, with moral support from Peter Jardine, have as yet no written language and therefore no Bible.

It was humbling to learn about missionaries of the 1920's, whom the British authorities had invited to develop the South. Different denominations had been assigned to different areas so that the churches would not fight among themselves, but such is the dislocation of tribes and the separation of families that there are no longer denominational areas. We saw the graves of missionaries bombed by Mussolini's airforce during his conquest of Ethiopia. We learned about Miss Betty and Miss Mary, two young Americans who in 1940 had their ship torpedoed in the Mediterranean, been rescued by the Royal Navy, travelled down the Nile and settled among the Uduk. When they arrived they found only a few Christians. When they with all other missionaries were expelled from the South in 1964, after a coup by a new military and Islamic regime, the whole

Uduk tribe was Christian. The two ladies translated the *New Testament*, the *Psalms*, *Genesis* and *Amos* into Uduk.

It was pleasing to be reminded of CR brethren who at the turn of last century had been pioneer missionaries also. One evening in our compound we showed a video film, thanks to whizz kid Dennis Bennett, a life of our Lord in Arabic. I remembered Captain Herbert Bennett of the Church Army, not yet a member of CR but already working with the Community from Sherwell Street Mission in Johannesburg. In 1903 or thereabouts he was showing magic lantern slides in shanty towns around the city. I thought also of translators like Harry Buck CR and Bertram Barnes CR, working with the Shona language in Penhalonga. I thought of bush priests like Denys Shropshire CR and Wilfrid Shelley CR, who are also likely to have found pit latrines a great step forward in the march of mankind. CR had trek priests in the bush as recently as Jacob Wardle and Noel Williams. I thought too of Humphrey Whistler CR and Mark Tweedy CR and their much praying for the persecuted church.

Altogether it was a great privilege to fellowship with the poor in whom "the sufferings of Christ abound" (*II Corinthians* 1,5), who "bear about in the body the dying of Jesus" (*II Corinthians* 4,10). We do indeed live in an age of Christian martyrs.

+Robert Mercer, CR

Reprinted from the **CR Quarterly Review** for March 2003 - *the second of two parts*.

By **The Bishop Ordinary - The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada**

### **From here and there**

a) Man is said to be made in God's image, insofar as the image implies an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement. **St. Thomas Aquinas**

b) When governments fear the people there is liberty. When people fear the government there is tyranny. **Thomas Jefferson**

c) Few people think more than two or three times a year. I've made an international reputation for myself by thinking once or twice a week. **George Bernard Shaw**

d) There are only two kinds of men: the righteous who believe themselves sinners; the sinners who believe themselves righteous. **Blaise Pascal**

e) Authority without wisdom is like a heavy axe without an edge: fitter to bruise than to polish. **Anne Bradstreet**

f) Jenkins went ice fishing. As he prepared to cut a hole in the ice, he heard a loud voice overhead saying, "There are no fish there!"

Jenkins looked up, puzzled. "Is that you, Lord?" He asked.

"No, its the rink manager," came the reply.

g) A lot of trouble in this world is caused by combining a narrow mind and wide mouth.

h) **Being in communion.** The great trouble with all the thinking regarding communion is the confusion of utilitarianism. "Will it do more good if I remain in communion than if I break?" Such thinking has taken the Anglican Church down a path of steady decline. Rather, the proper question is Biblical. Did Jesus command us to sever communion with unbelievers or not? If so, then what's the problem?

The salvation of unbelievers is in the hands of the Lord, not in the schemes of believers. To break bread with unbelief is to share in unbelief. Communion is not a form of evangelism. Love the unbelievers, lay down your life for them, but to offer them communion or to share in it, is a sharing in death.

## **Absent Allies - IV**

### ***On Conservative Avoidance***

NONE VERY GOOD

None of the excuses otherwise orthodox Christians give for avoiding the painful position of opposing popular innovations excuse them. They give themselves away by admitting, at least in private, that they know better. They are, not to put too fine a point on it, deserters from God's army, who want to choose the battles of his they will fight for him.

It would be infinitely better for them if they reconciled themselves to the inevitable: If you are a Christian, you will generally be an eccentric. You will be someone who upsets the consensus by pointing out the places at which it differs from the faith. You will be out of step, and some people will not like you. Some of the people who do not like you may well have power over you. You will suffer for offending them.

Six or seven decades ago you would have had to point out that the new approval of contraception was in truth promoting unchastity. (This must still be said, of course.) Three or four decades ago you would have had to point out that many churches' racial policies were racist, and that the churches' implicit nationalism was idolatrous. Today you will have to point out that the ordination of women and (in some churches) the approval of sodomy is a rebellion against the sexual order God created.

I suspect that the obvious inadequacy of our friends' excuses, and the contradiction between their adamant defense of the Christian teaching on issues not yet officially lost (especially homosexuality) and their avoidance of that teaching on issues now lost in their churches, show that they are acting and believing out of character. They know better, but they are, as a friend puts it,

"happily inconsistent."

Avoiding conflict can easily become a habit, and one that will lead you farther and farther down. Once you have learned to be happily inconsistent on one issue, you can easily be happily inconsistent on others you now feel strongly about, should strong temptation to compromise ever come your way. You will find yourself agreeing to things that you would have fled from in horror just a few years ago - if you can recognize your corruption at all. As Alexander Pope wrote of vice:

Vice is a monster of so frightful a mien,  
As to be hated needs but to be seen;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

By **David Mills** - This article first appeared in the April, 2002 issue of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*. Their website is: [www.touchstonemag.com](http://www.touchstonemag.com). Mr. Mills is a senior editor - *the fourth of four parts*.

## **Principles of Doctrine - II**

Well, what about the tradition of Bishop, Priest and Deacon? Wasn't this invented in the second century? It is true that by the second century there was a clear tradition of a three-fold order of Bishop, Priest and Deacon which was simply taken for granted and handed on from generation to generation. How do we know? Because they took it for granted. It was solid as a rock. No one argued about it. We find that the early church argued about many things, but not church order. In fact they are so unanimous about church order that they never even bothered to explain it. And because they didn't bother to explain church order, our evidence about it is a bit sketchy.

But the point is that agreement about it was so unanimous that it must have come from Apostolic times even though the New Testament doesn't give us a clear explanation of it.

They took it for granted. This is my theme. Get at people's assumptions and then you might just have a chance of understanding them. Find out what was taken for granted by the early church and then you might just have a chance of understanding the history. So, let us ask, were there other things that they just took for granted, other things that are difficult to argue for from the bible, but things which were so taken for granted that they were obviously part of church life, part of what we might call the unwritten tradition? Yes, there are. Besides apostolic succession or what we call church order, there was infant baptism and the eucharistic sacrifice and the fact that you don't get baptized twice. It's difficult to prove any of these from scripture. But they are clearly there in early church life. And no one ever bothered to argue for them. They just assumed them. And not only did they assume them, they used them as the basis for argument. They don't argue **for** them. They argue **from** them.

If we want to defend traditional Christian practice, we cannot just deny that we are homophobes, misogynists, and nostalgia freaks. We have to go into the attack. And the way we do this is by being clear as to what assumptions we are defending, what the Church has always taken for granted.

There are bishops who question dogma in order to ridicule it. This is frankly despicable. It is despicable because it is misleading. The Resurrection, for instance. They don't seem to see that the real question is 'Why was it taken for granted?' And the Virgin Birth. And the Incarnation. S. Paul, standing before Agrippa says 'Why do you think it incredible if God should raise the dead?' He doesn't explain himself. He doesn't argue for the resurrection. **He takes it for granted and he argues from it.** Do we, therefore, think he is a freak? No, we get the message which is 'Look here Agrippa, you are an expert in Judaism but you are in danger of missing the point. The new real resurrection life is what it's all about. The passion and death are the

indispensable prelude. You have to take this seriously. Christ is risen from the dead, therefore let us keep the feast. Christ is risen from the dead, therefore put away the leaven of malice and wickedness'. Argument from the Resurrection is the rule. Sure, some people think we are mad. Festus thought S. Paul was mad. He is making it up, they say. Paul turns this around. In effect, he says, 'This is no fiction. I am not making it up. It is making me up'.

To press my point about things taken for granted, let us look at the epistle for Maundy Thursday: I Corinthians 11, verse 23. There was a huge argument between S. Paul and the Corinthians. Rich people were bringing Caviar and Samian wine to the Pot Luck, and refusing to share. S. Paul goes ballistic. 'If you want to be selfish at least have the good manners to be selfish at home and don't disgrace the Christian fellowship. You know very well what you are to do when you come together'. Then he proceeds to give us our only account of the Eucharist in the New Testament outside the Gospels. This raises an interesting question. If Paul and the Corinthians had not had that snit between them, we would have had no New Testament record of the Eucharist being celebrated at that time.

Would we then have said: 'Jesus told us to do the Eucharist but Paul didn't bother'? Indeed no. For there is plenty of evidence of the Eucharist in the second century. It was a common feature of life. Common sense will tell you that the Apostles took it for granted and had no reason to write about it. And that's why we have little written evidence from the first century.

By **The Reverend Michael Shier, SSC** - part of *A Lenten Course in Bible Study* at the Church of St. Patrick, Pitt Meadows, B.C., in 2003 - *the second of four parts.*

**Worth pondering**

***Pickup in the rain***

One night, at about 11:30, an older African-American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rainstorm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride. Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960s.

The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance and put her into a taxicab. She seemed to be in a big hurry! She wrote down his address, thanked him and drove away.

Seven days went by and a knock came to the man's door. To his surprise, a giant combination console color TV and stereo record player were delivered to his home. A note was attached which read: Dear Mr. James, Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's bedside just before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others. Sincerely, Mrs. Nat King Cole

### **The Need for Moral Clarity**

(Dear Friends: The following is sent to you with the permission of the author whose name appears at the end of the article. Though the content is about a situation in the USA involving the homosexual agenda, the principles shared by the author will be helpful to anyone confronting this agenda no matter where they live. The very real pinchers of political correctness are every day coming closer and closer together and we all do well to be aware of the situation around us. The Reverend Roy Hamel)

The so-called "gay community" and their acolytes among the journalistic and political elite are once again expressing outrage because a well-known public figure has reminded them of a most uncomfortable truth.

The offending party this time around is Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania

who, in an interview with Associated Press, equated homosexual behavior with bigamy, polygamy, adultery, and incest. Such a correlation, say the Senator's detractors, is "insensitive" and "offensive."

From the perspective of an objective moral standard, homosexual behavior is a deviation from the normal sexual relationship between a man and a woman within the sacred bond of marriage. So, to equate it with bigamy, polygamy, adultery, and incest is hardly unusual and certainly not in any way "insensitive" or "offensive." Those who make such a claim are attempting to manipulate societal norms so as to put their deviant behavior in a more favorable light.

Yet, Senator Santorum's defenders seem unwilling to state the obvious - namely, that there is absolutely nothing wrong with what the senator said, period. Instead, they resort to the tried and true "taken out of context" argument. Moral clarity, even among those who ostensibly believe in it, appears to be sadly lacking at precisely the moment when it is desperately needed.

Concerning the issue of homosexual behavior, the only thing that is "offensive" is the behavior itself. This uncomfortable fact has been obscured in the ongoing debate because the "gay community" has so craftily co-opted the language of victimology and those parties which should champion traditional morality have equivocated from an objective standard and sought to appease the deviants by appeals for "mutual tolerance."

Nowhere is this more tragically obvious than in the contemporary response of Protestant and Catholic Christianity. The Church has essentially acquiesced to the conventional wisdom that "homosexuality" is an orientation rather than a learned or chosen behavior. Thus, both Protestants and Catholics tend to look upon "homosexual persons" as pitiable souls deserving of compassion and "tolerance" while failing to confront homosexual behavior as a destructive evil

which wreaks havoc upon the persons who engage in it.

Many in the Church - including a good number of evangelicals - would rather devote more time working to ensure that "homosexual persons" are not mistreated and marginalized by society than helping persons overcome their enslavement to homosexual behavior through the transforming power of a loving, gracious, merciful, and forgiving God. The motive for this misplacement of priorities is hardly admirable. It has more to do with political correctness than with concern for the well-being of others.

Political correctness is also the motive behind the Church's abandonment of an objective standard of morality in favor of a plea for "mutual tolerance." But "tolerance" is impossible absent an objective standard. The very idea that some behavior should be "tolerated" implies that it is a behavior which deviates from the accepted norm.

Tolerance is always, and necessarily, conditional. Those who adhere to the norm will permit certain deviations as long as those deviations do not begin to threaten the overall moral fabric of a society. Thus, tolerance is not the supreme virtue it is often made out to be in both secular and religious circles. The fact that there remain those deviations from the norm which must be "tolerated" is witness to the reality that we still live in the midst of a fallen creation in need of redemption.

But what the "gay community" is actually demanding is not "tolerance," but acceptance of their deviant behavior. Their arguments, based entirely on emotion, are easily refuted by simple logic and common sense.

When they claim to be "offended" by someone's "insensitive" remarks, what they really mean is that their feelings have been hurt because they have been reminded once again of the inescapable (and undeniably objective) truth that the behavior which they claim is the essence

of their identity is simply not acceptable within the bounds of a decent, moral, civilized society. It is only tolerated because of that same society's desire to show compassion in the hope that those who live on its margins will eventually find redemption.

There is a way for those enslaved by homosexual desires to find that redemption. They must see "homosexuality" not as an orientation to be rationalized or a lifestyle to be celebrated, but as a sin to be confronted, repented of, and overcome.

This is the message the Church ought to proclaim - with all compassion, yet unequivocally and unapologetically - to the "gay community" and to society at large. Moral clarity will bear far more fruit than will equivocation; and speaking the truth in love (which, unlike tolerance, is unconditional) will shine a far brighter light upon the darkness than will bowing at the altar of political correctness.

By **James A. Gibson** - an ordained elder currently serving as pastor of the Marshallville [Georgia] United Methodist Church.

### **Another one worth pondering**

#### ***A little boy***

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

"How much is an ice cream sundae?"

"Fifty cents," replied the waitress.

The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied a number of coins in it.

"How much is a dish of plain ice cream?" he inquired.

Some people were now waiting for a table



and the waitress was a bit impatient.

"Thirty-five cents," she said brusquely. The little boy again counted his coins.

"I'll have the plain ice cream," he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and departed.

When the waitress came back, she began wiping down the table and then swallowed hard at what she saw. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies – her tip.

### **A Tragic disruption of fellowship**

From a "Statement from the Archbishop of Sydney and the Regional Bishops of the Diocese of Sydney on developments in the Anglican Communion":

"We, the Archbishop and Bishops of the Diocese of Sydney are Evangelical Anglican Christians who testify that through the preaching of the gospel, Jesus Christ has saved us from sin and its consequences. We rejoice at the authority of the Bible which not only rules how we are called to live individually, but also provides a clear expression of the bonds and responsibilities of how we are called to live together.

. . . Three recent developments in the Anglican Communion have created a tragic disruption of fellowship and led to a watershed in relationships within the Communion. The first is the distortion of Christian marriage in the officially sanctioned blessing of same sex unions in the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada. The second is the appointment of a leading advocate for gay rights as a Bishop in the Diocese of Oxford despite decades of sexual behaviour outside Biblical limits. The third is the election as a Bishop in New Hampshire of a clergyman who left his wife and family for

a homosexual relationship.

. . . For our part, we cannot welcome into our Diocese those who have abandoned the teaching of Scripture in such a flagrant manner.

. . . It is perfectly clear from the circumstances surrounding these recent events that they are the culmination of over thirty years of compromise with western culture and plain disobedience to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

. . the [Anglican] Communion is now lessened, becoming more like a federation or network of churches related by history and ties of affection . . ."

The Statement was signed by: The Most Rev. Dr. Peter Jensen, Archbishop; The Rt. Rev. Reg Piper, Bishop of Wollongong; The Rt. Rev. Robert Forsyth, Bishop of South Sydney; The Rt. Rev. Dr. Glenn Davies, Bishop of North Sydney; The Rt. Rev. Peter Tasker, Bishop of Liverpool; The Rt. Rev. Ivan Lee, Bishop of Western Sydney.

Released and web posted Monday, 23 June 2003

### **Visiting Day**

He was looking forward to this moment all day long, after six days of labor and it finally arrived – Visiting Day! The man with the keys arrived to swing open the large, heavy doors. The cold gray hall springs to life in the warm glow of light. He could hardly control his emotions. The families began to arrive. He peers from the corner of the room, longing for the first glimpse of his loved ones.

He lives for the weekends. He lives for these visits. As the cars arrive, he watches intently. Then, finally, she arrives – his bride, for whom he would do anything.

They embrace, eat a light lunch and reminisce how things used to be. At one point, they break into singing, with interruptions of laughter and applause.

But all too soon it is over. A tear comes to his eyes as his bride departs.

Then the man with the keys closes the heavy doors. He hears the key turn in the lock marking the end of a special day. There he stands, alone again. He knows that most of his visitors will not contact him again until next week. As the last car pulls away from the parking lot, Jesus retreats into loneliness as He waits until next Sunday - Visiting Day.

Is the time that we spend with Jesus an everyday thing, or do we just visit him on Sunday?

Thanks to **Fr. Reid Croft** - author unknown

## **Immaculate Conception**

### ***The Orthodox View***

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God was first promulgated as a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church in the year 1854, by Pope Pius IX. The official statement of it is as follows:

*"The doctrine which declares that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, was the Saviour of the human race, was preserved exempt from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore must be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful of the Roman Catholic Church."*

The declaration of this doctrine to be a dogma of the Roman Catholic Church marked the end of a period of often bitter controversy between its adherents and those who denied it, a controversy that involved some of the most well-known Roman theologians.

Throughout the Eastern part of the Roman Empire from as far back as the fifth century a feast day was observed on

December 9<sup>th</sup> entitled, "The Conception of St. Ann." This feast day celebrated the events surrounding the conception of the Mother of God by St. Ann in her and her husband Joachim's old age, as set forth in the apocryphal *Protoevangelion of James*. There was no attempt on the part of hymn writers to suggest that there was any other miracle than conception in the face of prolonged sterility. This feast day soon became popular with Western Christians by the 8<sup>th</sup> century and was celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Soon, some Western churchmen began teaching that Mary, from the moment of her conception, was "miraculously innocent" of the guilt of original sin. This teaching was bitterly opposed by such churchmen as Bernard of Clairvaux and even the great Thomas Aquinas and the Dominican order. Eventually, however, in 1854 those who accepted it gained the attention of the Pope, who effectively ended all the controversy about it.

In order to understand the position of the Orthodox Church on this teaching we must begin with understanding the Orthodox concept of original sin as opposed to that prevalent in the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Church's teaching of original sin, based in part on the writings of St. Augustine, states that each human being at the moment of conception is guilty of the sin of Adam's disobedience. This was based on St. Augustine's slightly flawed Latin translation of Roman's 5:12 (he did not read Greek with proficiency), "so death spread to all men in whom (Adam) all men sinned," rather than "because all men sinned."

It is this teaching that caused the Roman Catholic Church to create a place called "Limbo" (from the Latin word *limbus* meaning "border" or "hem") on the border of heaven where the souls of unbaptized infants could find refuge since, though not all guilty of any personal sin, they still had the guilt of original sin on their souls and could not enter heaven proper.

In the medieval Roman Catholic Church, original sin was believed to be transmitted

in a physical sense through conception; it thus became important to many that Mary be preserved from this "taint." Hence, the creation in the ninth century of the doctrine of the "immaculate conception."

The Orthodox Church has kept alive the original understanding of the early Church as regards "original sin." The early Church did not understand "original sin" as having anything to do with "transmitted guilt" but with "transmitted mortality." Because Adam sinned all humanity shares not in his guilt but in his punishment. We are tempted by sin and we become guilty of it through our own personal sins committed; we therefore suffer and we die. This is the Orthodox understanding of "original sin." It is not something that we are guilty of personally but an action whose consequences have affected our lives by leading us to sin and our own guilt by way of our own personal sin.

In the light of this, the Roman doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is unnecessary. In the Orthodox eyes there is simply no original "guilt" for Mary to be made innocent of (which is why we have no "Limbo" for unbaptized infants who die, either). This was also at one time the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.

Often, those advocating the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception have sought to discover it in Orthodox writers of the Middle Ages or in Orthodox hymns. It must be remembered, though, that these writers who often refer to Mary as having been "prepared," and "sanctified," and who hail her as the "immaculate one," are thinking in the context of the Orthodox view of original sin and not the Western. None of these writers put forth a claim that Mary was immortal - which is a necessary claim if they accepted the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the context of the Orthodox view of original sin. Many of these theologians held to a view that by special grace the Mother of God did not commit any personal sins; others asserted that Mary was sanctified through her response to Archangel Gabriel at the Annunciation,

"Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

Taken at face value, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is seen by Orthodox as separating the Mother of God from the rest of the human race. This would have made it impossible for Christ to become "truly man" if Mary were not subject to the same conditions of humanity as those who Christ has become incarnate to save. Mary is human, and through her, God became fully human as well.

During this Advent season, the Orthodox Church frequently remembers the Virgin Mary as a gift of humanity to God, through whom God gave Himself back to humanity: "What shall we offer You, O Christ," says one of our Christmas hymns, "who for our sake has appeared on the earth as a man? Every creature which You have made offers You thanks . . . we offer You a Virgin Mother. O preeternal God, have mercy on us."

By **The Very Reverend Daniel Rohan**, pastor of St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church, Youngstown, OH.

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**Enclosures:**

The Diocesan Circular  
The Annunciator

The Augustinian

The Traditional Anglican