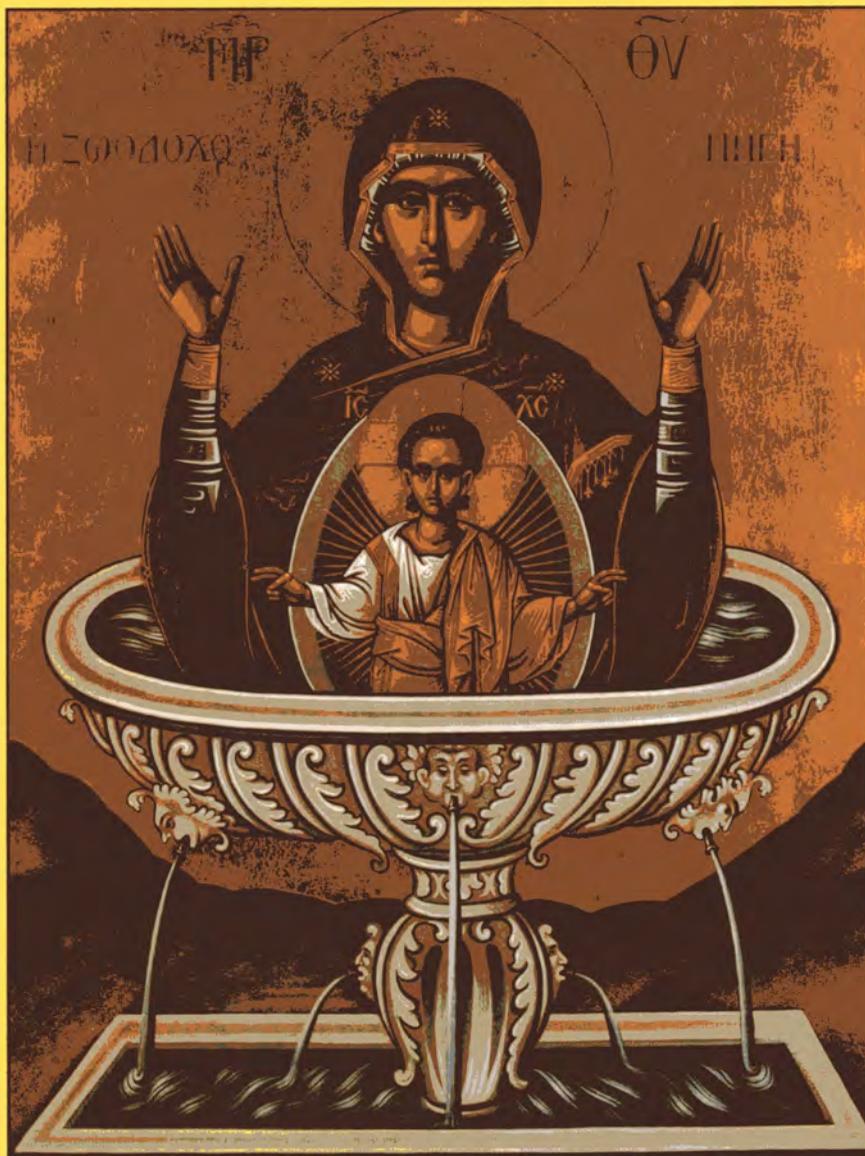


TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
TENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of the Fountain of the Mother of God

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

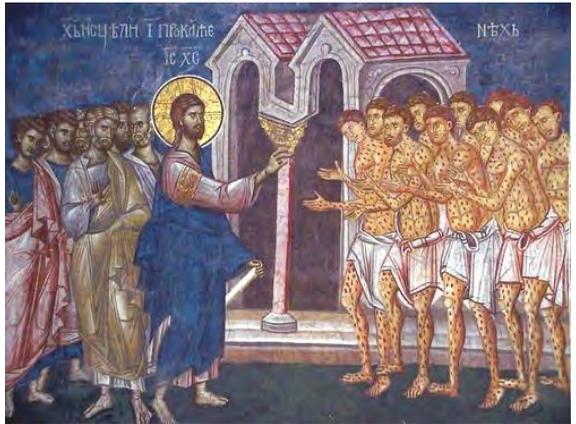
On this 27th weekend after Pentecost our readings exhort us to *put on the armor of God* and to express *gratitude* to God for all that He has given us. The first exhortation comes from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and the second from Luke's telling of the story of Jesus curing ten lepers.

The armor of God, according to St. Paul, is *truth, justice, zeal for the Gospel of peace* and *faith*. It was his belief that if we integrate these dispositions into our lives, we will have the courage and strength to successfully meet all the challenges of this life. These four dispositions are absolutely essential if we are to truly transform ourselves and spiritually grow.

The Gospel story, I believe, adds one more essential disposition: namely gratitude or thankfulness. This is absolutely true and I believe that is why our particular worship of God is seen as Eucharist - Thanksgiving.

We believe that Jesus offered His human life back to the Father in *thanksgiving* for His life. He also joined His thanksgiving to the Father with a way that He would always be present to His followers. Why? So that they might remember to offer their thanksgiving to God for the gift of life.

I believe it is essential that when we come to offer our worship and praise to God during the Divine Liturgy that we remember to truly thank God for the Gift of Life - for sharing Himself



so completely with us. Of course this is only possible when we are thankful for the life we have AND are thankful for the people who are a part of our life, even if that is only in passing.

The ten lepers were only passing persons in Jesus' life. Only one, however, was thankful for what Jesus had done for him. The other nine were only happy they were cured.

We are called to be like this one person and not the other nine. So many people fail to thank God for human life and don't see this life as a loving gift. True salvation comes when we are able to think about and profess our thanks to God for this earthly life which is given to us to help us become the *best version* of ourselves - the version that God has dreamed from all eternity.

Ask yourself: *Am I truly thankful for my life? Do I see my life as a gift from God?* How do you show your gratitude? Perhaps the best way is attempting to live like Jesus.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

As I indicated in the last issue of this article, a new and decisive suppression of the union in the Russian Empire was carried out by Czar Nicholas I using for this purpose three bishops, Siemashko, Luzhynsky, and Zubko, who formally transferred to the Russian Orthodox Church (1839). Under the rule of the czar there remained in union with Rome only the eparchy of Kholm, which was located in the territory of the autonomous Polish Kingdom; even this was suppressed in 1875 after the Polish revolt of 1863-64.

In Galicia, which in the partition of Poland became a part of Austria (1772), the Ukrainian Catholic Church, whose membership comprised almost the total Ukrainian population, was highly developed. The metropolitan See of Halych-Lviv, reestablished by the bull of Pope Pius VII (February 24, 1807), inspired a new life in this part of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Outstanding metropolitans headed the reorganization and evolution of Catholic life, e.g., Cardinal Michael Levytsky (1816-58), Cardinal Sylvester Sembratovych (1882-99), Andrew Sheptytsky (1901-44) and Joseph Slipy, Archbishop Major (1944-84). The Austrian Government gave to the Ukrainian Catholics a special name, *Greek Catholics*, which is a misnomer. There were three eparchies (Lviv, Peremyshl and Stanislaviv) and in 1934 the eparchy of Peremyshl was



split in two parts by the erection of the Apostolic Administration of Lemkivschchyna. Each eparchy had its own major seminary and in Lviv, Metropolitan A Sheptysky founded the Theological Academy (1928), directed by Joseph Slipyj. Even the chapters of canons were erected in each diocesan see in Austria. The Basilian Order (1882), renewed under Jesuit guidance, cooperated in the development of Catholic life in that province (both religious men and women). Missions, editorial work and schools were administered by them. Studites (founded by Metropolitan Sheptytsky) as well as a Ukrainian branch of the Redemptorists were active. Several congregations of Sisters were founded: Studites (1921); Servants of Mary Immaculate (1892); of the Holy Family (1912); of St. Josaphat (1911); OF St. Joseph (1894); and Myrophores (1910).

In the canonical field some inter-ritual problems were settled by the agreement made between the Ukrainian and Latin (Polish) hierarchy of Galicia in the *Concordia* of 1859. approved by Rome in 1863.

As is evident, our Church has survived many, many struggles.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

As I stated in the last issue of this article, the Eucharist in the first century was a simple rite with a profound meaning which could be grasped only by those who had been initiated into it. St. Paul attached deep significance to the breaking and sharing of the one loaf: if the Eucharist is a means of communion with the living Christ, it is also an expression of the unity of his Body the Church. Paul may have been the first, but was by no means the last, to see symbolic meaning in the actions of the Eucharist beyond the primary meaning of the rite as the commemoration of the passion and resurrection of Christ. We should notice too the importance Paul gave to what was to be called the kiss of peace, which at the end of several of his letters he exhorts the congregation to exchange. Destined to become a normal part of Christian worship, and to be included in the fully-developed eucharistic liturgy, it was an expression of that spiritual love, or agape, which ought to bind Christians to one another within the love of God. *(I am fully aware that I have not, of more recent times, included the kiss of peace. Why? Because of health reasons such as the flu. Hopefully in the near future I will reintroduce it).*

The New Testament interprets the death of Jesus in terms of Old Testament sacrifices. The Last Supper was held in the shadow of the paschal sacrifice of the unblemished lamb.



Christians came quite naturally to speak of Jesus as the Lamb of God. Indeed, the passion and resurrection constituted a new and great Passover, by which mankind was freed from slavery to sin and admitted into the Promised Land of the glorious liberty of the children of God. The sacrificial atmosphere of the Last Supper was naturally and inevitably inherited by its ordained imitation, the Eucharist, which celebrated the accomplished sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. It was of course true that in fulfilling the sacrifices of the old Law, Jesus had totally transformed the meaning of the sacrifice: for what gave the offering of his body and blood on the cross its value and power was not the material offering, but the obedience inspired by love which it embodied. The Christians' response to this sacrifice offered on their behalf was itself described in the New Testament as a sacrifice. 'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice', says Paul (Romans 12:1). 'Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God (Hebrews 13:15).



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

SCHEDULE FOR FEAST DAYS

Sunday, December 17th

Decorate the Church after Liturgy

Sunday, December 24th

Christmas Eve Liturgies

Holy Ascension's Liturgy - 5 PM

St. Michael's Liturgy - 10 PM

Monday, December 25th

Christmas Day Liturgy

St. Michael's Liturgy - 10 AM

Tuesday, December 26th

Synaxis of Mary

St. Michael's Liturgy - 8 AM

Wednesday, December 27th

Protomartyr Stephen

St. Michael's - 8 AM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30th

Holy Ascension Divine Liturgy @ 5:30 PM

Sunday, December 31st

St. Michael's Divine Liturgy @ 10 AM

Monday, January 1st

St. Michael's Divine Liturgy @ 10 AM

Hopefully this combined schedule will allow all an opportunity to celebrate these feasts.

Success is not final; failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts.

CALLED TO HOLINESS

In the last issue I began sharing with my readers some of the things that seem to usually happen when we truly become engaged in changing - we truly desire to become the



best version of ourselves. It seems that the old human "dance" kicks in which is "one step forward and two steps back." I truly believe that this happens because life wants us to be determined to change. We have to desire change in our life and see change as good.

Quite a few people "fear" change because that don't know what life is going to be like if they change. Others just don't see the necessity of change.

The one question we all must ask ourselves is this: *Am I currently the best version of myself - the version that God envisioned when He first conceived the thought of me?* It is my experience that none of us are, at this present moment, the best version of ourselves. There is always room for improvement, if I am honest with myself. Can we ever be too loving? Can we ever be too forgiving? Can we ever be too kind?

Most people know that there are certain areas

(Continued on page 8)

A Prayer-A-Day for St. Phillip's Fast

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10th

Today I remember our Father Among the Saints, Daniel the Stylite. He was a true follower of Christ. I would ask, Heavenly Father, that You grant me the help of Your Spirit to become like Daniel and give myself to becoming the best possible version of myself, giving You praise and honor. I know that You have, from all eternity, called me to play a part in completing Your Creation, calling me to witness Your kindness and love. Help me, like Daniel, to fulfill my role, becoming a person who brings You into my world by unconditionally loving and forgiving others. Give me the courage to live as Your Child. I make this pray to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever. AMEN.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11th

Heavenly Father, as we approach ever closer to the wondrous feast of Your incarnation in the Person of Your Son Jesus, we are reminded of all those who so long awaited a Messiah to free them from the bondage of slavery. They awaited some conquering hero to help them achieve independence and freedom from subjugation. They, however, did not recognize their real bondage, namely their slavery to their own passions and misdeeds. You, O Father, had decided from all eternity to come in the Person of Jesus to reveal to us how to live in order to achieve true freedom. Help me to prepare myself to truly celebrate these feasts that remember Your manifestation. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12th

Heavenly Father, as I prepare myself to celebrate the Winter Feasts, I realize that I join myself with thousands who have gone before me in recalling the mystery of Your Incarnation as a human. I recall today our Father among the Saints, Spyridon, He was a champion of the First Council and a wonderworker. By means of his simple words he stopped the mouths of the Arians who were wise in their own conceit. He championed the belief that Jesus is both God and Man, a mystery resulting from Your Incarnation. Help me to strongly believe this great truth and embrace Jesus as the model for my life. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. AMEN.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13th

Heavenly Father, as the Church prepares for the celebration of Your manifestations to the world in the Person of Jesus, she also recalls the many martyrs that in her history who died rather than give up the belief in Your presence in the world. Although I will probably never be called to die for my faith, I beg You to grant me the strength and courage to truly live a Christian life, making every attempt to become more like Jesus every day. Help me to truly believe that I am a temple of Your Spirit and that You are with me to help me attain this goal. I make my prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. AMEN

Today, try to reach out and make someone happy by a kind word or smile.

What have you done to prepare yourself for the great feasts that we will be celebrating?

A Prayer-A-Day for St. Phillip's Fast

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14th

Heavenly Father, I would offer this prayer to you which the Church prays today: "Your Martyrs, O Lord, in their courageous efforts" to stand-up for their belief in You, "received the prize of crowns of incorruption and life from You, our immortal God". Help me, O Father, to imitate their steadfast faith and to desire only to praise and honor You by the way that I voluntarily choose to live. Help me to be strong in my willingness to unconditionally love and forgive others and to always treat them the way that I want to be treated. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. AMEN.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15th

Almighty God, help me to prepare myself to celebrate the coming feasts winter feasts with faith. I believe they reveal how I must live if I want to share in everlasting life. Because Your Son was fully human, He showed me that, as a human being, I have the power to live as He did and that it is my choice. Help me to respond to the challenges of life and others as He did, with unconditional love. You revealed through Him that it is possible for me, as a human being, to live as He did. Grant me, I pray, the courage to live as He did. This I ask of You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16th

I join with the Church in celebrating the memory of Your Prophet Aggaeus, O Lord, and through him I beseech You to save my soul. He truly preferred heavenly things to earthly things and longed to do what You foreordained Him to do. I ask You to help me to discern Your will for me and to truly pursue those things in life that will lead me to a deeper union with You. Make this the primary goal in my life. Help me to come to a real understanding of the meaning and purpose of my life for, in doing this, I know that I will be doing Your will. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17th

Today I pray with the Church, "Through faith, O God, You justified the Forefathers. Through them You made a commitment to a church with gentiles. These saints are glorified because from them descends the Virgin who gave You birth. Through their prayers have mercy on me." As I recall how so many humans awaited the coming of the Messiah, I thank You, O Father, for coming before my time so that I might know how to live as Your child. I thank You for the gift of life and the presence of Your Spirit within me. Help me to live in such a way that You are aware of my gratitude. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

One of the very traditional ways to prepare ourselves fore the celebration great feasts is by "fasting". Have you tried that yet?

As you continue your preparation for these winter feasts, ask yourself what God's manifestations of Himself in human history means to you.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday December 10 - 27th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 2

Celebration of the Maternity of Holy Anna & Joachim

**10:00 AM + Stephen, Mary & Stephen Michael Mihalko;
Kotlinski Family**

WEEK OF THE FOREFATHERS - TONE 3

**Monday December 11 - Daniel the Stylite,
8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Tuesday, December 12 - Spiridon, Bishop
No Service Scheduled

**Wednesday December 13 - Eustratius & Others, Martyrs
8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Thursday December 14 - Thrysus & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

**Friday December 15 - Eleutherius, Bishop-Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Saturday December 16 - Haggai, Prophet
No Service Scheduled

**Sunday December 17 - Weekend of the Forefathers - Tone 3
10:00 AM + Anastasia Mykytenko; Lesia Florchuk**

(Continued from page 5 - Call to Holiness)

of their lives that they would desperately like to transform. Be honest with yourself for a moment. What is the one thing about yourself that would most radically improve your life if you changed it? Have you tried? Of course you have. Are you still trying, or have you given up? I'm sure that if you have tried and have accomplished the change you intended you might ask yourself: *Can people substantially change? Is it possible?*

The answer is an absolute YES. People can change and many times only change when they become desperate because of some very serious challenge. Why wait until you are desperate? Why not change at your own pace and not in panic mode?



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Pastor

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Cell: (313) 580-4412
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LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

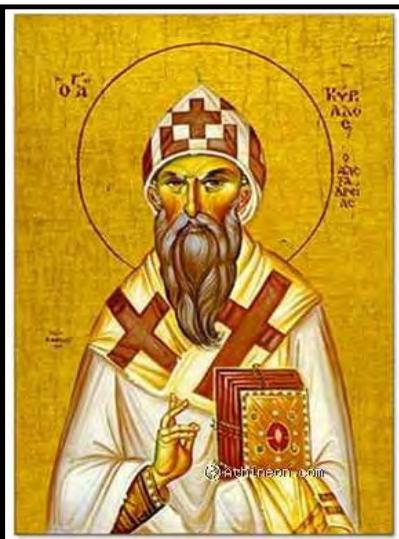
Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

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Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

I have been sharing thoughts about the struggle that ensued between Cyril and Nestorius as the Church struggled to come to the true faith about Jesus and the whole mystery of God's incarnation as a human. Even sympathetic observers of Nestorius would describe him as "over-sure of his own position," "high-handed," possessing a "total lack of tact" and a tendency to "act in haste," unable to "accept advice or meddling from his fellow patriarchs," and truly "determined and impetuous in dispute and liable to make strong statements open to misunderstanding." One senses that even if Nestorius and Cyril had agreed theologically, they would have struggled to get along. Both had very strong personalities, both too closely identified themselves with whatever position they chose to defend as orthodoxy, and both had a hard time listening attentively to others. But what of the theological debate that raged for years between the two? What were they arguing about? Were the issues worth the strife and bitterness that resulted? Were they actually saying the same thing but in a different way? What were they trying to make sense of?



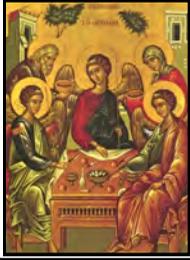
Were they both speaking well of Christ, or were Nestorius' ideas genuinely dangerous to the faith?

What actually occurred in the incarnation of the Son of God? By the time of the Nestorian conflict, the Council of Nicaea had already chosen to use the Greek word *homoousios* to declare that the Father and Son shared the same divine essence. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed Emmanuel, God with us. But how was the church theologically to describe and understand the person of Christ? When the church described the Son as *homoousios* with the Father, what was the church really affirming and denying? What language and models best represented a reality that was genuinely

indescribable? And how was the clear declaration of Christ's divinity related to Christ's humanity? What was the nature of this wondrous union of the divine and human in Christ?

With a little reflection on this issue I think you might agree with me that a clearer understanding is important, not that we can truly describe it. It is important I think that we believe that Jesus was FULLY God and FULLY Man.

Ask yourself why?



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.

Vol. 63 No 50

27th Weekend After Pentecost

December 9-10, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

Perhaps one of the most critical skills we must have if we are to have a genuine relationship with God and others is the ability to be “reflective” with regards to our lives. The ability to honestly reflect on our lives and to know ourselves as we are, is critical. I have found that this is a difficult task. Many people don’t really want to know themselves and who they really are. This means that they don’t really accept themselves as God created them.

I was reminded about this when I saw an add on television from STAR Plastic Surgeons. They were offering two-for-one surgeries - you can get a tummy-tuck as well as a face-lift for the price of one surgery. It seems that modern people have come to believe that the best-version of themselves can only be achieved by “altering” their physical appearance. The problem is that they are still the same people on the inside.

Humankind is easily seduced to

think that if they change the external elements of their personality that they will feel better and don’t realize that external appearances do not change their inner character.

So we must first reflect on Who We Are in God’s Kingdom. Obviously we were created as we are in order to help us achieve the best possible version of who we potentially can be. It all comes down to: *Do I love myself as I am?* This doesn’t mean that there aren’t things about me that I might want to change in order to become a true child of God. I don’t know anyone who couldn’t become more loving and more forgiving.

So I ask this question: *Do you truly believe that God cares about you and created you with the potential to become the very best version of yourself?* When He created you He thought you were good. *Do you have the same regard for who God created?*

Spirituality requires personal reflection!



Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

The Word Made Flesh Makes Us Divine

Our faith is not founded upon empty words; nor are we carried away by mere caprice or beguiled by specious arguments. On the contrary, we put our faith in words spoken by the power of God, spoken by the Word himself at God's command. God wished to win men back from disobedience, not by using force to reduce him to slavery but by addressing to his free will a call to liberty.

The Word spoke first of all through the prophets, but because the message was couched in such obscure language that it could be only dimly apprehended, in the last days the Father sent the Word in person, commanding Him to show Himself openly so that the world could see Him and be saved.

We know that by taking a body from the Virgin He re-fashioned our fallen nature. We know that his manhood was of the same clay as our own; if this were not so, He would hardly

have been a teacher who could expect to be imitated. If He were of a different substance from me, He would surely not have ordered me to do as He did, when by my very nature I am so weak. Such a demand could not be reconciled with His goodness and justice.

No. He wanted us to consider Him as no different from ourselves, and so He worked, He was hungry and thirsty, He slept. Without protest He endured His passion, He submitted to death and revealed His resurrection. In all these ways He offered His own manhood as the first fruits of our race to keep us from losing heart when suffering comes our way, and to make us look forward to receiving the same reward as He did, since we know that we possess the same humanity.

St. Hippolytus of Rome

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