

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST  
SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT



*Icon of Raising Lazarus from the Dead*

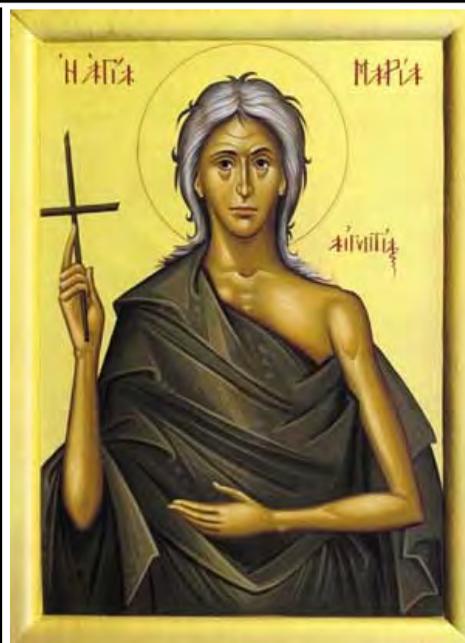
## A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this fifth weekend of the Great Fast, we are called to remember our Mother among the Saints, Mary of Egypt. We also hear readings taken again from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews and St. Mark's Gospel.

In the passage from Hebrews we hear Paul share with us the SACRIFICE of Jesus. He wrote: *But when Christ came as high priest of the good things which have come to be, he entered once for all into the sanctuary, passing through the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made by human hands, that is, not belonging to this creation.* He wrote this to signify that Jesus Himself was the sacrifice offered up to destroy death and to grant all humans eternal redemption which is eternal life. It was this offering of Himself to God in thanksgiving for the gift of human life that is the foundation of our own worship. We are called to offer our lives back to the Father in thanksgiving for the gift of life.

The passage from Mark's Gospel that we hear today, shares a very important message that Jesus gave to His disciples and also to us. Mark quotes Jesus as saying: *Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all. The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve - to give His life in ransom for the many.*

As we grow ever more close to the end of the Great Fast and enter into the mystery of the Great and Holy Week, we are reminded that the way to true spiritual growth is service to others. This approach to life reduces our natural human tendency to selfishness and thinking only about ourselves and our wants and desires. To grow spiritually we must try



develop our ability to think about others first before we think about ourselves. I know that this is counter to our modern culture and society's values which encourages us to think first of ourselves less we be cheated in life. Our society values self-centeredness it seems. It seems to support a ME FIRST value which, of course, truly stymies spiritual growth. Jesus directed His disciples to be of service to others as a means of spiritual growth.

We must ask ourselves: *Which way of living do I embrace? Do I really believe the message of Jesus?*

## THE LENTEN TRIODION



If we are to understand correctly the Triodion and the spirituality that truly underlies it, there are five misconceptions about the Lenten fast against which we should guard. In the first place, the Lenten fast is not intended only for monks and nuns, but is *enjoined on the whole Christian people*. Nowhere do the Canons of the Ecumenical or Local Councils suggest that fasting is only for the religious and not for the laity. By virtue of Baptism, all Christians are Cross-bearers, following the same spiritual path. The exterior conditions in which they live out their Christianity display a wide variety, but in its inward essence the life is one. Just as the monk by his voluntary self-denial is seeking to

affirm the intrinsic goodness and beauty of God's creation, so also is each married Christian required to be in some measure an ascetic. The way of negation and the way of affirmation are interdependent, and every Christian is called to follow both ways at once.

In the second place, the Triodion *should not be misconstrued in a Pelagian sense*. If the Lenten texts are continually urging us to greater personal efforts, this should not be taken as implying that our progress depends solely upon the exertion of our own will. On the contrary, whatever we achieve in the Lenten fast is to be regarded as a free gift of grace from God. The Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete leaves no doubt at all on this point: *I have no tears, no repentance, no compunction. But as God do You Yourself, O Savior, bestow them on me.*

In the third place, our fasting *should not be self-willed but obedient*. When we fast, we should not try to invent special rules for ourselves, but we should follow as faithfully as possible the accepted pattern set before us by Holy Tradition. This accepted pattern, expressing as it does the collective conscience of the People of God, possesses a hidden wisdom and balance not to be found in ingenious austerities devised by our own fantasy.

***Think about this!***

## ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS

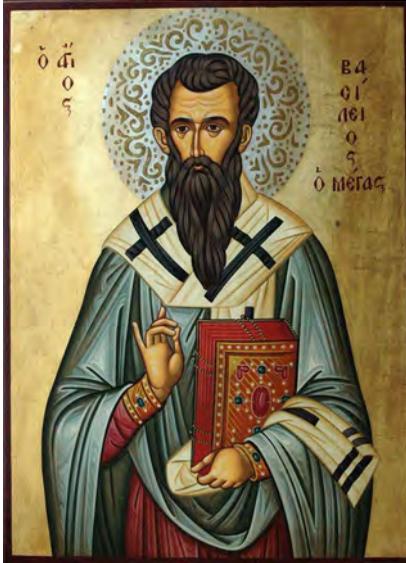
I ended the last issue of this article by sharing St. Basil's thoughts that Genesis describes the original state as chaos, abyss and, moreover, that **darkness was over the face of the deep**. It is just here that we are forcefully made aware that we are reading an ancient text. For if God hadn't begun to create, where did all this water come from? One could suggest that God created the heavens and the earth simply as a mass of water submerging the land in a state of primeval chaos, so that everything was created in a state of *tohu* and *bohu*. But scriptures like Isaiah 45:18 emphatically state that God did *not* create the world in a state of *tohu*, and anyway for the ancients creation and chaos were mutually exclusive.

In fact, the concept of everything before creation being a primeval sea and darkness is common in the mythologies of the ancient world. Once again we must remember that the ancients did not ask the questions we ask (e.g., how and what came into physical being first?). They were concerned with function. If all was sea and darkness, there could be no ordered world and no society. The sea

and the deep therefore are a fit image for chaos, for *tohu*.

We find this, for example, in the opening verses of the Babylonian creation story of Marduk's supremacy, the *Enuma Elish*: *When above the heaven had not yet been named, and below the earth had not yet been called by a name, when Apsu primeval, their begetter, Mummu and Tiamat, she who gave birth to them all, still mingled their waters together... at that time the gods were created within them*. In this long epic, Apsu was the primordial sweet-water ocean, Tiamat the saltwater sea, and Mummu the mist arising from them. Before the world was made, all was sea, the waters of the deep.

We find the same picture in another such creation story. That one begins, *A holy house, a house of the gods in a holy place, had not been made, a reed had not come forth, a tree had not been created, a brick had not been laid...all the lands were sea*. The ancients therefore would not have thought that the words "darkness was over the face of the deep" referred to the *created* waters, but to the abyss *before* creation, the deep that lay in the darkness.



# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## LENTEN SERVICES

### FRIDAY EVENINGS

Liturgy of the  
Presanctified Gifts  
7:00 PM

### SUNDAY MORNINGS

Lenten Matins  
9:30 AM

Basil the Great Liturgy  
10:00 AM

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## FLORAL MEMORIALS

You will find a special envelope in your packet of envelopes for a donation for Easter Flowers. If you would like to contribute to our decorations and also have someone remembered in prayer, please be sure to submit the names.



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## PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

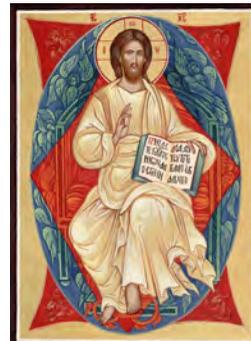


Your prayers are requested for the sick of our parish. A number of our members are currently experiencing health challenges. Remember to pray for the sick of our community,

***Lighten up, just enjoy life, smile more, laugh more, and don't get so worked up about things***

## THE CALL TO HOLINESS

I know that anyone who follows this article in my Bulletin understands that this article is totally free-flowing and, hopefully, thought-provoking in its content. I find that it is almost akin to a



stream-of-consciousness article. The content stems from the things that I'm currently thinking about.

I believe that we are all called to holiness. That is the purpose of this earthly existence. We are called to "change the way that we think and act" so that we can grow in our likeness of Jesus Who is the human image of God.

This is not something that we can accomplish on our own. It can only be accomplished by "cooperating" with God's Spirit Who is within us.

His Spirit calls us to face life as courageously as Jesus. His Spirit calls us to become people who are internally peaceful and without guilt or anxiety. His Spirit calls us gradually develop a true understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. His Spirit call us

*(Continued on page 8)*

# A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

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## SUNDAY, APRIL 7<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father today our Church remembers St. Mary of Egypt, one of the great Eastern women saints. Her story is one of personal change. Her life changed after she was able to worship the Holy Cross. The power of the Cross, Father, worked wonders for her, giving her the grace and strength to overcome evil. Originally not a religious woman, she transformed herself through prayer and fasting and became this truly remarkable model of what it means to be Your Child, a person who models their life after the life of Your Son Jesus. In her was preserved unimpaired that which is according to God's image for she took up her Cross and followed Jesus. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

## MONDAY, APRIL 8<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father I ask Your help to complete this Great Fast in a manner that will prepare me to enter the Great and Holy Week and gain a greater insight into the lessons that Jesus taught as He met the greatest challenges of His life. Help me to understand that You revealed through Your Son Jesus how I am to live this earthly life in order to grow as Your child and in the likeness of Jesus. Help me to make the Great and Holy Week truly a special time. Help me to enter into the spirit of the week and to concentrate completely on what Jesus taught me through His Passion, Death and Resurrection. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

## TUESDAY, APRIL 9<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father help me cry out as St. Andrew of Crete does in the Great Canon: My soul, O my soul, rise up! Why are you sleeping? The end draws near and soon you shall be troubled. Watch, then, that Christ Your God may spare you for He is everywhere present and fills all things. Heavenly Father I ask Your help to make these words my own. Help me to understand that each moment given to me in life should be directed to growing in my likeness of Jesus. You came into the world in the Person of Jesus to give me the true meaning and purpose of my life. Help me to imitate Him. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father I call upon Your Holy Spirit within me to sustain me until the end of this Great Fast. Help me, during these remaining days, to think about the lessons You taught me through Your Son Jesus. Help me to see that how critical interior peace is to grow in my likeness of Jesus. Help me to realize that if I allow stress, anxiety or negative thoughts to invade my life, that I can never grow to be more like Jesus. As I think about the passion and death of Jesus, I realize that despite all the pain He endured, He never lost His interior peace which allowed Him to love and forgive others. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

***Make this last week of the Great Fast truly special by reaching out***

# A PRAYER A DAY DURING THE GREAT FAST

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## **THURSDAY, APRIL 11<sup>th</sup>**

Heavenly Father very few are the days left in the Great Fast for this year. Give me the courage to truly make these final days spiritually rewarding and filled with quiet and peace. Help me to find time to reflect upon the events that transpired. I would join with the Church in offering a hymn in preparation for the Feast of Willow Branches saying: Blessed is He Who comes with glory to Jerusalem in the power of the Godhead, that He may slay death. With reverence let me prepare the branches of the virtues, as emblems of victory. Let me cry Hosanna. Blessed is He Who comes in the name of You, my Heavenly Father. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

## **FRIDAY, APRIL 12<sup>th</sup>**

Heavenly Father in one short week the Church calls me to remember the passion, crucifixion and death of Your Son Jesus. I know these events express Your great love for me. When I think of what Your Son went through to teach me how to live this human life, I am filled with deep thankfulness and humility. Help me to comprehend how much You love me. You revealed through Jesus how I should live to get the greatest benefit out of earthly life. You revealed that life is immortal. I am thankful for this gift. Give me the courage to grow in Jesus' likeness. Help me to be truly thankful for the gift of life. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

## **SATURDAY, APRIL 13<sup>th</sup>**

Heavenly Father today, the Saturday of Lazarus, the Church calls me to understand that You revealed to me that human life is eternal. The raising of Lazarus prefigures the resurrection of Your Son Jesus from the dead and reminds me that life is immortal and that the grave does not consume me into nothingness. How can I ever thank you sufficiently for the gift of immortal life? You are sharing Your Life and Spirit with me at this very moment. For that I am eternally grateful. Help me to express my thankfulness for the gift of eternal life but doing all in my power, during this lifetime, to grow in my real likeness of Jesus. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

## **SUNDAY, APRIL 14<sup>th</sup>**

Heavenly Father today the Church calls me to recall Jesus' entrance into the city of Jerusalem, the city of His passion, crucifixion and death. I believe that, although He knew that His entrance into the city would lead to His death, He voluntarily entered the city to face the greatest challenges of His life. He calmly rode on a simple donkey and did not allow the flattery of the people to lessen His resolve to courageously and humbly face betrayal, pain, suffering and death. I know that He was able to accomplish His noble death because of His total trust in You, Heavenly Father. I ask You to help me eradicate any lack of Trust. I make my prayer to You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

# SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**Sunday, April 7 - Fifth Weekend of the Fast - Tone 4**

**10:00 AM - Health of Bob & Corinne Boyko; John & Janet Dicky**

## WEEK BEFORE THE GREAT & HOLY WEEK

**Monday, April 8 - Herodian & Others, Apostles**

*No service scheduled*

**Tuesday, April 9 - Euphychius, Martyr**

*No service scheduled*

**Wednesday, April 10 - Terence & Others, Martyrs**

*No service scheduled*

**Thursday, April 11 - Antipas, Bishop-Martyr**

*No service scheduled*

**Friday, April 12 - Basil, Bishop**

**7:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**

**Saturday, April 13 - Lazarus Saturday**

*No service scheduled*

**Sunday, April 14 - Palm or Willow Sunday - Festal Tone**

**10:00 AM - Michael & Helen Husak; Husak Family**

*(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)*

to learn how to be a person who lives like Jesus did regardless of how people respond to us or treat us. His Spirit calls us to develop our own standards of living and not allow the actions of others to dictate how we live.

This of course requires that we develop a real idea of how we think we should think and live. It requires faith and, of course, trust in God. It requires that we have the strength and courage to “live like Jesus” and embrace His values.

The call to holiness is a call to courageously live our lives in the midst of a society that has very different values. It requires us to become selfless and not make our lives more important than the lives of others. ***Think about this!***



St. Michael the Archangel  
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Dearborn, MI 48126

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Pastor

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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  
586.755.3129

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

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

# THE PRACTICE OF THE HOLY GREAT FAST

Even in apostolic times some had already begun to abandon the fast on the very day of the Jewish Pasch (Passover), and others on the following Sunday. According to the testimony of the historian Socrates, those who celebrated the Pasch together with the Jews, that is, on the fourteenth day of Nisan, affirmed that this had been handed down to them by the Apostles and the evangelist St. John; those who celebrated the feast of the Pasch on the Sunday following the Jewish Pasch, maintained that they had received this custom from SS Peter and Paul. Socrates remarked that "Neither one can produce any written documents to confirm their positions."

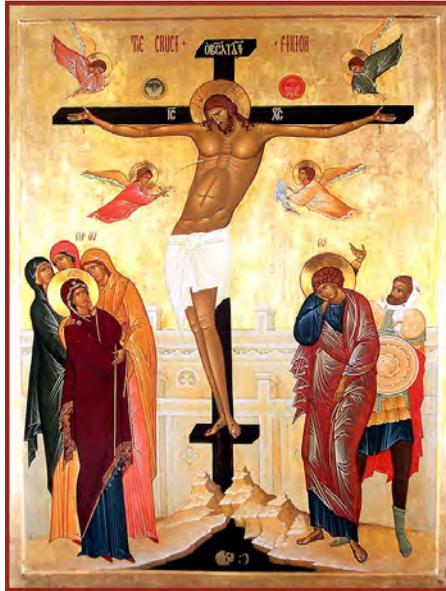
From this disputes arose between those who celebrated the Pasch with the Jews and those who celebrated it the following Sunday. These long disputes were finally resolved by the Council of Nicea (325).

The canonical documents of the third century speak of the time when the paschal fast ended. According to the canons of Hippolytus, the solemn conclusion of the fast took place at the dawn of Resurrection Day; according

to the Didascalia, at the third hour of the night; and according to the Apostolic Constitution, at cock-crow.

In the third century, the pre-paschal fast in some Churches lasted for a whole week, the week that today we call Great and Holy Week or Passion Week. Toward the end of the third century the Great Fast had been extended to forty days. The first testimonies concerning the forty days pre-paschal fast date from the fourth century. The first testimony is presented to us by the Council of Nicea, which states that local synods should convene "once before the Forty Days Fast, so that after removing all disorders, a pure gift may be offered to God, and they should convene one other time in the autumn.

Although in the fourth century the Forty Days Fast became a recognized practice, nevertheless, it is not yet clearly defined, nor is it generally accepted. In certain places a fast still is observed, which falls between the ancient short fast and the Forty Days Fast, namely the twenty-day fast. This fast was observed especially the West, where the Forty Days Fast appeared at a much later date than in the East.



## MORE ABOUT HOLY SCRIPTURES: THE GOSPEL OF MARK

I would continue my commentary on the Gospel of St. Mark. His Gospel is the shortest of all New Testament gospels and is likely the first to have been written. It often tells of Jesus' ministry in more detail than either Matthew or Luke. It recounts what Jesus did in a vivid style, where one incident follows directly upon another. In this almost breathless narrative, Mark stresses Jesus' message about the kingdom of God now breaking into human life as good news and Jesus himself as the gospel of God. Jesus is the Son whom God has sent to help humanity discover the true meaning and purpose of human life.

The very opening verse about good news in Mark (1:1) serves as a title for the entire book. The action begins with the appearance of John the Baptizer, a messenger of God attested by scripture. But John points to a mightier one, Jesus, at whose baptism God speaks from heaven, declaring Jesus His Son. The Spirit descends upon Jesus, who eventually, it is promised, will baptize "with the Holy Spirit." This presentation of who Jesus really is (1:1-13) is rounded out with a brief reference to the temptation of Jesus and how Satan's attack fails. Jesus as

Son of God will be victorious, a point to be remembered as one reads of Jesus' death and the enigmatic ending to Mark's Gospel.

The key verses at 1, 14-15, which are programmatic, summarize what Jesus proclaims as gospel: fulfillment, the nearness of the kingdom, and therefore the need for repentance and for faith. After the call of the first four disciples, all fishermen, we see Jesus engaged in teaching, preaching, healing and exorcising demons. The content of Jesus' teaching is only rarely stated, and then chiefly in parables about the kingdom. His cures, especially on the sabbath;

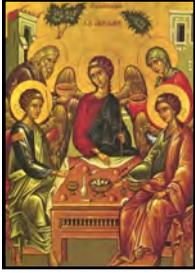
his claim, like God, to forgive sins; his table fellowship with tax collectors and sinners; and the statement that his followers need not now fast but should rejoice while Jesus is present, all stir up opposition that will lead to Jesus' death.

In Mark, Jesus is portrayed as immensely popular with the people in Galilee during his ministry. He appoints twelve disciples to help preach and drive out demons, just as He does. He continues to work many miracles.

***Why not pick up your New Testament and read the first three chapters?***



**The Evangelist Mark**



# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Vol. 65 No 14 Fifth Weekend of the Great Fast April 6-7, 2019

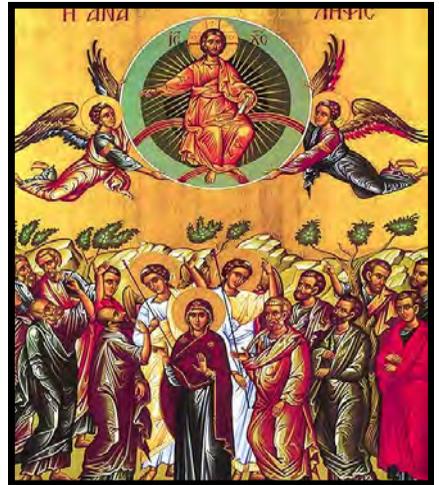
### THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

As I have been sharing, Eastern theology and spirituality focus on the work of the Holy Spirit and state that if it is through the Spirit that the Logos became a human being, it is also only through the Spirit that true life reaches us. As Nicholas Cabasilas summarized, "What is the effect and the result of the sufferings and works and teaching of Christ? Considered in relation to ourselves, it is nothing other than the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church.

Another Eastern theologian reminds us of the fact that the role of the Spirit in salvation is to confirm the personal dignity of the deified human person:

If our individual natures are incorporated into the glorious humanity of Christ and enter the unity of His Body by baptism, conforming themselves to the death and resurrection of Christ, our persons need to be confirmed in their personal dignity by the Holy Spirit, so that each may freely realize his own union with the Divinity. Baptism - the sacrament of unity in Christ - needs to be complemented by chrismation - the sacrament of diversity in the Holy Spirit.

This makes so much sense when you consider how we initiate someone into the Church. We do not just baptize the person, we also chrismate or confirm the person by witnessing the work of God's Spirit. The person, from infancy, then receives the FOOD OF LIFE, Holy Communion in order to strengthen them in this understanding



*Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father*

of their life. When we have the correct idea of who we are in God's creation, life truly takes on a different meaning and purpose. We are here to grow in our awareness of God's Life and Spirit within us and to work towards the goal that God intended when He created us, namely union with Him. This requires that our awareness has to be increased

### ***Conventional Wisdom and the Lord's***

Listen, friend, it's a dog-eat-dog world out there. You've got to do it to them before they do it to you.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Always remember the golden rule: those who have the gold, make the rules.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Remember: Never get mad. Get even.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Take my advice, kid - Don't make waves. You've got to go along to get along. Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Charity is fine, but business is business. Always, always, always buy low and sell high.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

The drug users and the city scum - they deserve what happens to them. We work hard for what we've got - nobody is doing us any favors. Let them do the same. It can be done. Hey, look: You got to take care of your own.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Jesus' admonition is almost a pleading: If you really understand Me and what I am about, if you really want to be My disciple, if you really seek to be worthy of My name, then you must see the world differently and respond to its challenges with a very different set of values. The world may try to justify vengeance rather than forgiveness, to glorify self-preservation over selflessness, to insist on preserving the system and convention for the sake of compassion and justice.

*But it cannot be like that with you.*