

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 and final weekend of the Great Fast (Great and Holy Week is a separate week), we remember our Mother among the Saints, Mary of Egypt. Our readings are taken from Paul's Letter to the Hebrews and also Mark's Gospel.

In Paul's Letter, he shares the "sacrifice of Jesus", wherein he states that Jesus, through the eternal spirit, offered Himself up unblemished to God. This act of Jesus tells us that our worship of God must involve our offering of self to God in thanksgiving from the gift of life. The way that we offer ourselves to God is by personally changing our lives so that we become more like Jesus. When we become

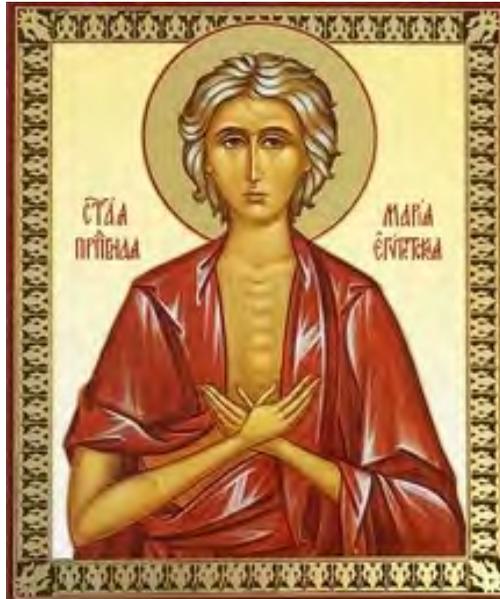
more like Jesus, we begin to live in the way that God intended all humans to live, namely by unconditionally loving all others and basing our response to others in the manner that we want to be treated. This is the key. Treat others not the way that they treat you, but, rather, the way that you would like them to treat you. This means basing your interactions with others on the teachings of your faith and not on how they may treat you. This, of course,

takes courage and true commitment to your faith.

In the passage from Mark's Gospel we hear the third teaching about Jesus' passion and resurrection. Jesus tells them what is going to happen to Him when they get to Jerusalem. We know that He suspected that the Jewish leadership would take action against Him because of His preaching. He was gaining too many followers and they were afraid that they would have to change the way they were living and teaching the people.

Its interesting how we humans seem to become unsure of ourselves when we encounter others who do not think or act like us. Jesus based His

actions on His beliefs and shared them just as the prophets before Him did. This caused anger among the leaders off the "organized" religion. Interesting! Not unlike some of the things that we are experiencing in our modern society. I guess humans just find it hard to learn how God intended them to live! Make this last week before the Great and Holy Week, a special week for yourself. Prepare to enter into the mystery of our redemption.



# THE GREAT FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

During this coming week, Thursday the 25th of March, we will celebrate one of the 12 great feasts of our Church, the Annunciation. We are anticipating it today since next weekend we will begin the Great and Holy Week. The week begins with us remembering Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem.

The Annunciation celebrates Mary's conception of Jesus. The services of this feast stress again and again the joyous news of the salvation of humankind. It is the celebration of our own reception of the glad tidings of salvation and our own glorification of the maiden Mary who becomes the Mother of God in the flesh.

This feast is celebrated nine months before Christmas.

Because the feast normally comes during the season of the Great Fast, the manner of celebration varies from year to year depending upon the particular day on which it falls. If the feast comes on a weekday of the Fast, which is the most common case, the Divine Liturgy of the feast is served in the evening after a full day of total abstinence. The Divine Liturgy of the Annunciation is the only celebration of

the eucharistic liturgy of St. John Chrysostom allowed on a week day of the Fast.

The feast also tells us very clearly the way that we should respond to the events of life. Mary responded to the challenge given her, namely to not be afraid of becoming pregnant outside of marriage, with faith and trust in God. Her consent was freely given even though she knew that many in her community would probably question her sinlessness and judge her as a sinner. Her willingness to accept the role that God had designed for her also helped many others, such as Joseph her espoused and her parents, to

simply love and support her and also place their trust in God. I'm sure that none of the persons involved in this event were truly prepared to accept it as it happened.

This fact truly challenges us to willingly accept the events of life, placing our hope and trust in God. Life has a way of presenting us with the challenges we need to spiritually grow and to become people who are more like Jesus and, of course, like Mary His mother and His family.



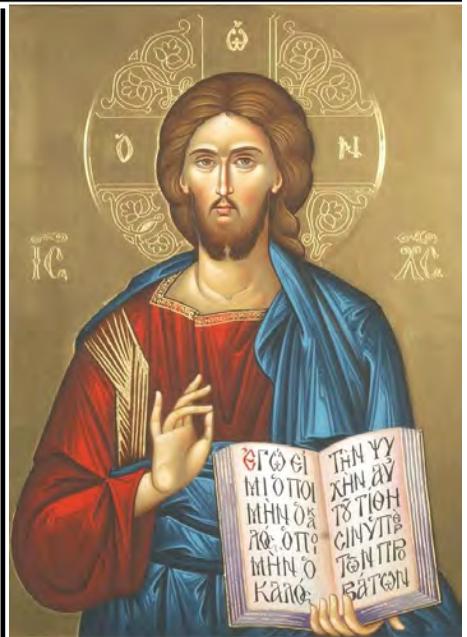
# HUMANS: MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

At the very core of Eastern spirituality is the understanding that humans have been created in the “image” of God and given the potential to grow in His “likeness.” The theme of the “image” has a long history. It was a basic term in Greek philosophy, in Plato, the Stoics and others. At the same time it lid at the heart of the Old Testament’s understanding of humans, especially in the book of Genesis and in the Wisdom literature. Midway between these two traditions Philo also uses the term in a manner central to his work, adding to it his own special meaning.

In the New Testament the term is further enriched with a Christological content, a fact which endows anthropology with new dimensions. For St. Paul the “image of the invisible God” is Christ. And man is the image of the Image. But the Johannine Christological term, “Logos of God,” as is well known, also has a meaning similar if not identical to that of the Pauline term, “image of the invisible God.”

In the subsequent patristic literature, the “image” theme serves as an axis around which not only Eastern Christian cosmology, anthropology and Christology are organized. Faced with this immense patristic wealth of dogmatic teaching, the phrase “in the image” can serve as the foundation for the Eastern Churches understanding of humankind.

St. Gregory of Nyssa, in his explanation of why “the nature of man is not open to contemplation,” writes that since God is truly incomprehensible it can only be that His image within man is also incomprehensible. This is the reason why we cannot find in the Fathers a definitive formulation or a clear definition of the “image”. Yet it is nonetheless revealing that, in their repeated attempts to find a



satisfactory solution to the problem about who humans truly are, the Fathers use as the central tool for their investigation the expression “in the image.”

I am undertaking this particular article because I truly believe that once we are able to understand what it means that we are created in God’s “image”, that life really changes. This phrase “in the image” is loaded with many different meanings. It is my hope that my discussion of this topic will bring my readers not only a deeper appreciation but also an understanding of themselves and others. This will help with spiritual growth.

# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



## VIRTUAL ADULT DISCUSSION SESSIONS

We have completed our Great Fast Discussion Sessions. Many have told me that they have enjoyed the sessions. I would like to survey the participants and see whether they would like to continue these sessions during our 50 day Easter Celebration. If you would, please email me or Deacon Leonard.

wruchgy@gmail.com  
leonardmier@gmail.com  
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## SLIGHT CHANGES IN HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

You will note from the Holy Week Schedule there are a couple of changes. Our Great and Good Friday Service will be held at 7:30 PM instead of 5:00 PM. There will be no VIGIL. Also food will be blessed in the NAVE of the church. A special table at the front of the Church will be provided.

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## PUSSY WILLOWS

If you would like Blessed Pussy Willows but will not be attending the Divine Liturgy, they will be available after the Liturgy in the Church Parking Lot in a basket by the Parking Lot Side Door. If you will be attending the Liturgy, please let us know!

## LIVING THE NEW LIFE

Living the new life means attempting to live as Jesus lived. This means, as I have share with my readers before, that I not only attempt to adopt His attitudes about life and others but also to conform



my behavior more and more like His. This means to (1) always place my hope and trust in the Father; (2) think about others before thinking about myself and my problems; and (3) try to unconditionally love all others, regardless of how they treat me.

This last item, of course, presents the greatest challenge to us humans. Our automatic response to others that hate us is to hate them. Our automatic response to others who say cruel things about us and to us is to reject them. The Jesus response, as we will clearly see during the Great and Holy Week, is to love others regardless of how they treat us.

I have heard so many people tell me that while they forgive people they believe have attempted to hurt them, they will have nothing to do with them again. This is "conditional love" and not the unconditional *(Continued on page 8)*

# A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

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## **MONDAY, MARCH 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Heavenly Father, we have almost come to the end of the Great Fast and will shortly enter the Great and Holy Week when we look at the final days of the life of Your Son Jesus. It is an emotionally compelling week. We relive the greatest challenges of His life. At times I wonder who I am in this story? Am I one of the persons weeping at the side of the road as He carries His cross past me? Am I the good thief on the cross next to Him? Am I, hopefully, His beloved disciple standing at the foot of His Cross with His mother, doing everything I can to console her? Who am I? I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Heavenly Father, as we begin this sixth week of the Fast, help me to begin it with eagerness and sing a hymn in preparation for the Feast of Palms. For I would, like the people of old, greet the Lord Who comes with glory to Jerusalem in the power of the Godhead, that He may slay death. Indeed, that is what His death on the cross accomplished – the destruction of human death. So, with reverence let me prepare the branches of the virtues, as emblems of victory; and let me cry Hosanna to the Creator of all. This is my prayer, Father. Help me to genuinely greet the Lord into my heart just as He entered Jerusalem. I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24<sup>th</sup>**

Heavenly Father, I ask Your help in making these last days of the Great Fast special. Help me to spend more time thinking about what I we are about to celebrate. Help me to think about what Your Son did and why He did it. I know that if I am to benefit from these coming days that I must truly prepare myself. The simple prayer of the Third Sunday keeps going over in my mind: “I bow to Your Cross, O Master, and I praise Your third day resurrection.” Help me, Father to truly bow to Your Cross with my mind, heart, and spirit and to offer thanks to You for Your great love for me. I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 25<sup>th</sup>**

Today, Heavenly Father, our Church celebrates the Feast of the Annunciation, the event commemorating You becoming incarnate as a human in the Person of Your Son. I know that our Church offers this prayer: “Today is the fountainhead of our salvation and the revelation of an eternal mystery: the Son of God becomes a virgin’s Son, and Gabriel announces this grace. Therefore, let us exclaim with him to the Mother of God: “Hail, O Woman Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.” I would offer a prayer of thanks to Mary for her consent to this mystery and ask her to help me be willing to accept the challenges the life presents me as she did. I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

# A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE 2021 GREAT FAST

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## FRIDAY, MARCH 26<sup>th</sup>

Heavenly Father, as I think about the mystery of You becoming incarnate as a human being, I am filled with gratitude for Your love. I believe that You became a human being in the Person of Jesus to reveal in a very concrete way, how I am to live so that I might derive the greatest benefit from this earthly existence. Through Jesus You revealed that this earthly existence is all about being provided the challenges to help me spiritually grow, trusting ever more completely in Your love for me. You have called me, through Jesus, to personal change and transformation. I know that I cannot accomplish this without Your help. I beg You to help me and thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## SATURDAY, MARCH 27<sup>th</sup>

Today, Heavenly Father, our Church celebrates the Saturday of Lazarus. It is the event that ushers in the Great and Holy Week and prefigures the death and resurrection of Your Son. Our Church prays: "O Christ our God, You confirmed the resurrection of all before the time of Your passion by raising Lazarus from the dead. Therefore I, as the children of Israel, carry the symbols of victory and cry out to You, the Conqueror of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord." By this event You revealed to all humankind that there is life after death having conquered Death by Your Son. Help my lack of belief. I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## SUNDAY, MARCH 28<sup>th</sup>

Today, Heavenly Father, we celebrate Your Son's voluntary entrance into the city where He knew He would be put to death. He knew that to establish His teachings, He had to stand up for them, even die. He also knew that to conquer Death He had to undergo Death. He went to His death with great nobility and grace. He thought of others before thinking of Himself, thus showing me a way to lessen the pain of life's major challenges. He died to abolish Death, changing human death into a process of making a transition from this life to the next. By revealed Your Divine Plan that humans, made in Your image, should live for all eternity. I thank You who I truly call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## OUR LAST EFFORTS

We have come to the home stretch of our 2021 Great Fast. Now is not the time to lessen our efforts. Spend a little extra time this week thinking about how you will spend the up-and-coming Great and Holy Week. I find that it is important to "plan" how we are going to spend the week if we want it to truly be beneficial. One of the practices I have found that is beneficial is "turn off the TV" all during the Great Week. In effect this makes the week so very different from all the others that I can actually concentrate on what it is that we will be celebrating. Good Idea?

# Schedule of Services

**Sunday, March 21 - Fifth Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 1**  
**10:00 AM + John Winek; Irene Winek - Live Streamed**

## 6th WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST - Tone 2

Monday, March 22 - Basil of Ancyra, Priest-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Tuesday, March 23 - Nicon & Others, Venerable Martyrs  
*No Service Scheduled*

Wednesday, March 24 - Zachary, Venerable  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Thursday, March 25 - Feast of the Annunciation**  
**7:00 PM - Special Intention - Liturgy of the Feast - Live Streamed**

**Friday, March 26 - Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel**  
**7:00 PM - Presanctified Liturgy - Live Streamed**

Saturday, March 27 - Saturday of Lazarus  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Sunday, March 28 - Weekend of the Palms - Flowery Weekend**  
**10:00 AM - Special Intention - Live Streamed**

St. Michael the Archangel  
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church  
6340 Chase Road  
Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
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 Drobný  
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky  
248.734.7078

Leo & Mary LaDouceur  
313.278.7378

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Greg & Esther Petrovich  
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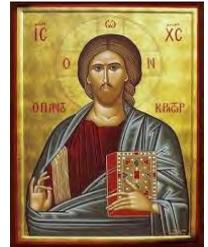
Rafic Vawter  
313.624.9867

*(Continued from page 5 - Living The New Life)*

love that Jesus showed, especially during the last days of His life. He even forgave His false accusers and those who crucified Him.

Unconditional love means that we place no conditions on our love for others, period! We truly accept them as they are and love them, understanding that they, like the people who crucified Jesus, don't really know the message of God through Jesus. Remember what Jesus said as He was dying on the Cross: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do". These have to be the same words in our hearts, minds and souls when dealing with others.

One wonderful thing happens when we attempt to imitate Jesus. We gain "internal peace" and we "come to a deeper understanding of the meaning and purpose of life." So it benefits us greatly to attempt to imitate Jesus. Remember, anger only sours our souls!



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

## AN IMPORTANT QUESTION: WHO IS JESUS?

I have decided that since we are about to enter Holy Week, which focuses on Jesus, that I would address the question: Who is Jesus? Some of this may seem simple. Some of this profound. But let's think about Who Jesus IS.

The following I believe all have heard before. Jesus is the Son of God the Father. God is in three persons: the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. They are "one in essence and undivided." They are God showing himself in three different ways. "For there are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one" (1 John 5:7).

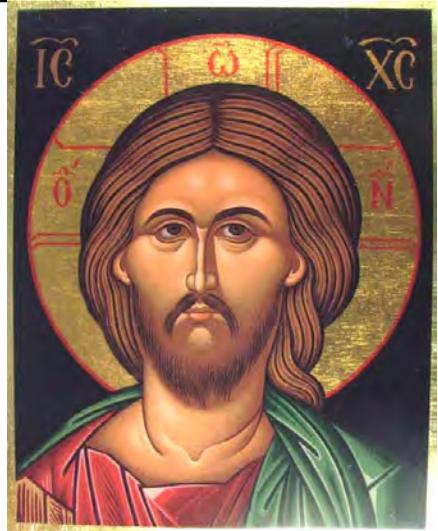
Jesus, the Son of God, is also called God's Word. Just as we might speak and accomplish something by what we say or command, God the Father accomplished the creation of humanity and the universe by His Word. God's Word is a part of God, always with Him, always obedient to Him, and always equally glorious with Him.

Our words, when we speak, usually don't have much substance or real power. But God's Word has all the power and substance of God the Father Himself, because it is His son, perfectly united with Him.

John of Damascus wrote: For inasmuch as our nature is perishable and easily dissolved, our word is also with subsistence. But since God is everlasting and perfect, he will have His Word subsistent in Him, and everlasting and living, and possessed of all the attributes of the Begetter.

God the Father is the "Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible". But it was through Jesus, His Word, that God created and later shaped the matter out of which everything else was formed.

Hippolytus wrote this: "One the first day what God made what He made out of nothing. But on



the other days, He did not make out of nothing, but out of what He had made on the first day, by molding it according to His pleasure.

Theophilus wrote: This, that God created the heavens and the earth, sacred Scripture teaches at the outset, to show that matter, from which God made and fashioned the world, was in some manner created, being produced by God.

As Scripture tells us, God did all this through His Word. Just as we have "words" for various things, so God's ideas became concrete in the Word and, when it was spoken, the Holy Spirit brought these ideas into existence.

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN TODAY?

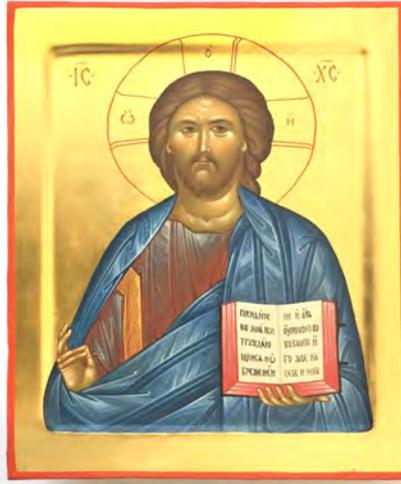
In this article I have been exploring our past understanding of Christianity and the understanding of Christianity which is not emerging. I know that everyone wants to think that there has always been just one way of thinking about Christ and the religion which grew out of His teaching. I would just remind my readers that it took over 300 years for the Church to come to a deeper understanding of WHO JESUS IS.

It is unfortunate that this division exists. These differences about the heart of Christianity are sharp, and they will be with us for some time. The question is: How do we bridge the gap?

## **Christian Diversity.**

One element in a potential bridge is the recognition of Christian diversity. Historically and culturally, there are many ways of being Christian, many ways of interpreting Christianity. Think about it. Our Eastern Catholic Church, while being Catholic, has a very different way of thinking about many of the crucial elements of our faith. We have discovered that don't have to think like Western Catholics in order to be Catholic. Our form of worship truly influences how we think about our faith and our theology is quite different from that of the Western Church. For

example, the Eastern Church does not embrace the idea of "Original Sin" but, rather looks at "Ancestral Sin" (if you don't know what this means just let me know and I can share an article with you that talks about this). Further, we even have a different idea about the Trinity. The Holy Spirit does not proceed from both Father and Son but only from the Father.



The notion that there is one right way of being Christian is made impossible by thinking about the diverse configurations there have been in Christian history.

There are diverse forms and styles of Christian worship. They vary from Pentecostal enthusiasm at one end of the spectrum to Quaker silence at the other. In the middle are sacramental and liturgical forms of worship. To state the obvious, it's not that one of these forms of worship is right and the others wrong. They are simply different.

Why are they different? Because they were formed in various cultures and societies. For example, our worship was formed in the Byzantine culture and reflects much of the "emperor's court procedures". Why? Because God is seen as the true and real "emperor" in our lives.



# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, STL, Ph.D.  
Vol. 68 No 12 5th Weekend Of The Great Fast March 20-21, 2021

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND INNER HEALING

I have been writing about “Seeing Ourselves in Christ’s Life.” This involves using the Scriptures themselves and not merely our memory of the Scriptures. This will bring into our prayer a heightened sense of the life-giving power of the Word of God.

When we have the story before us, we need to find a way to be able to use the wealth of wisdom and love in it. A simple way to accomplish this goal is to divide the story into beginning, middle, and end. As we continue in prayer using this story, then, we use one section at a time, allowing the full impact of it to affect us. When we use sections of the story one at a time instead of the entire story all at once, we are not overwhelmed with all the details, nuances and dialogue among the persons in the story. Using one section at a time gives us something we can more easily grasp, appreciate and

interiorize. As we read each section of the story we become a part of it. We enter the story as a bystander or as an eyewitness watching the story unfold

in our own experience; or we enter it in the place of the person to whom Jesus spoke or ministered, thus allowing ourselves to be the personal recipients of the love, the care, the discipline, the healing that He gave to the person in the actual story; or we enter it in the person of Jesus Himself - remembering Jesus’ words: “You are



in me and I in you” - to experience, for example, a healing of our births in His birth, or a healing of our betrayal in His betrayal, and so forth.

I find that this approach not only gives some structure to prayer but allows it to be more personalized. Again while “formula prayers” are important, they should not be the only type of prayers that we offer to God. They are more impersonal.

### *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.*