

# The Voice



*“Their voice has gone out into all the world;*

*and their proclamation to the ends of the universe.”*

**Great and Holy Passion Week 2005**

**Volume II Issue One**

## **The Passion of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ *Glory to Thy Holy Passion, O Lord – Glory to Thy Long-Suffering, O Lord***

### **Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:**

Our Lord has blessed us once again to behold the joy of the great feast of Palm Sunday – the Entrance of our Lord into Jerusalem – and to wave blessed palms and pussy willows to welcome Him into the inner Jerusalem of our hearts. And He has blessed us to behold His glorious *Bridal Chamber* for the strengthening of our faith. Also, this Holy and Great Week, we are called to remember and contemplate the Passion of our Lord – betrayal, mocking, scourging and death on the Cross.

Having fasted and prayed for the 40-day Great Fast, having been cleansed through the confession and repentance of our sins and having worked to overcome our sinful habits, we come now in a renewed spiritual state to behold the ineffable depths of God’s love for us, to commemorate His long sufferings and to venerate His life-creating Cross.

“*What thing is this?*” writes St. Epiphanius of Cyprus. *Today there is great silence upon the earth, great silence and stillness, verily great silence, for the King sleeps. The earth was frightened and became still, for God fell asleep in the flesh and raised up those who from ages past were sleeping. God died in the flesh and Hades shuddered. God slumbered briefly, and those in Hades He awoke.*”

During this Week the entire universe changed. The pre-eternal omnipotent God suffers in the flesh for our salvation – *the Just for the unjust (1Peter 3:18)*. God descends into Hell to release the ancient prisoners and to destroy the bonds of death, so that we may never suffer eternal separation from God – *so that He might bring us to God (1Peter 3:18)*. Everything is changed.

Let us, dear brothers and sisters open our hearts to the Lord and ask Him to sanctify our lives – through His wounds may He heal the wounds caused by our sins, through His Passion may He quench our sinful passions, anger and resentment and through His Cross may He nail in us a strengthened and fortified faith in His Holy and Glorious Resurrection – so that we may exclaim: Christ is Risen! **Fr. John Vass, Rector**

### **Palm Sunday / Entrance into Jerusalem**

#### **Troparion – Tone 1**

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion, Thou didst confirm the universal Resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, We cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of death; Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!

#### **Troparion – Tone 4**

When we were buried with Thee in Baptism, O Christ God, We were made worthy of eternal life by Thy Resurrection! Now we praise Thee and sing: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!

#### **Kontakion – rnac 6**

Sitting on Thy throne in heaven, Carried on a foal on earth, O Christ God! Accept the praise of angels and the songs of children who sing: Blessed is He that comes to recall Adam!

### **Great and Holy Thursday**

#### **Troparion - Tone 6**

Of Thy Mystical Supper, O Son of God, Accept me today as a communicant. For I will not speak of Thy mysteries to Thine enemies, Neither like Judas will I give Thee a kiss, But like the thief will I confess Thee. Remember me, O Lord, in Thy Kingdom!

#### **Troparion - Tone 4**

By Thy precious Blood, Thou have redeemed us from the curse of the law. By being nailed to the Cross and pierced by a spear, Thou have poured forth immortality for man. O our Savior, glory to Thee!

### Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday

These two brief days stand out clearly as days of observable triumph. These days are known in the Church today as Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday. Together they form a unified liturgical cycle which serves as the passage from the forty days of Great Lent to Holy Week. They are the unique and paradoxical days before the Lord's Passion. They are days of visible, earthly triumph, of resurrectional and messianic joy in which Christ Himself is a deliberate and active participant. At the same time they are days which point beyond themselves to an ultimate victory and final kingship which Christ will attain not by raising one dead man or entering a particular city, but by His own imminent suffering, death and resurrection.

*By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the palms of victory, we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that comes in the name of*

*the Lord!* (Troparion of the Feast, sung on both Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday)

#### Lazarus Saturday

In a carefully detailed narrative the Gospel relates how Christ, six days before His own death, and with particular mindfulness of the people "standing by, that they may believe that thou didst send me" (John 11:42), went to His dead friend Lazarus at Bethany outside of Jerusalem. He was aware of the approaching death of Lazarus but deliberately delayed His coming, saying to His disciples at the news of His friend's death: "For your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe" (John 11:14).

When Jesus arrived at Bethany, Lazarus was already dead four days. This fact is repeatedly emphasized by the Gospel narrative and the liturgical hymns of the feast. The four-day burial underscores the horrible reality of death. Man, created by God in His own image and likeness, is

a spiritual-material being, a unity of soul and body. Death is destruction; it is the separation of soul and body. The soul without the body is a ghost, as one Orthodox theologian puts it, and the body without the soul is a decaying corpse. "I weep and I wail, when I think upon death, and behold our beauty, fashioned after the image of God, lying in the tomb dishonored, disfigured, bereft of form." This is a hymn of St. John of Damascus sung at the Church's burial services. This "mystery" of death is the inevitable fate of man fallen from God and blinded by his own prideful pursuits.

With epic simplicity the Gospel records that, on coming to the scene of the horrible end of His

friend, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35). At this moment Lazarus, the friend of Christ, stands for all men, and Bethany is the mystical center of the world. Jesus wept as He saw the "very good" creation and its king, man, "made through Him" (John 1:3) to be filled with joy, life and light, now a burial ground in which man is sealed up in a tomb out-

side the city, removed from the fullness of life for which he was created, and decomposing in darkness, despair and death. Again as the Gospel says, the people were hesitant to open the tomb, for "by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days" (Jn 11:39).

When the stone was removed from the tomb, Jesus prayed to His Father and then cried with a loud voice: "Lazarus, come out." The icon of the feast shows the particular moment when Lazarus appears at the entrance to the tomb. He is still wrapped in his grave clothes and his friends, who are holding their noses because of the stench of his decaying body, must unwrap him. In everything stress is laid on the audible, the visible and the tangible. Christ presents the world with this observable fact: on the eve of His own suffering and death He raises a man dead four days! The people were astonished. Many immediately believed on Jesus and a great crowd

*Let us all, with love, hurry to Bethany to see Christ there, weeping for his friend. For wishing all things to be ordained by law, He controls all things in His dual nature. He suffers as son of David; as Son of God, He redeems the whole world from all the evil of the serpent, and on the fourth day, He raised up Lazarus, taking pity on the tears of Mary and Martha.*

**St. Romanos the Melodist (6th C.)**

began to assemble around Him as the news of the raising of Lazarus spread. The regal entry into Jerusalem followed.

### **Palm Sunday**

Palm Sunday is the celebration of the triumphant entrance of Christ into the royal city of Jerusalem. He rode on a colt for which He Himself had sent, and He permitted the people to hail Him publicly as a king. A large crowd met Him in a manner befitting royalty, waving palm branches and placing their garments in His path. They greeted Him with these words: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel! (Jn 12:13).

This day together with the raising of Lazarus are signs pointing beyond themselves to the mighty deeds and events which consummate Christ's earthly ministry. The time of fulfillment was at hand. Christ's raising of Lazarus points to the destruction of death and the joy of resurrection which will be accessible to all through His own death and resurrection. His entrance into Jerusalem is a fulfillment of the messianic prophecies about the king who will enter his holy city to establish a final kingdom. "Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zech 9:9).

Finally, the events of these triumphant two days are but the passage to Holy Week: the "hour" of suffering and death for which Christ came. Thus the triumph in an earthly sense is extremely short-lived. Jesus enters openly into the midst of His enemies, publicly saying and doing those things which mostly enrage them. The people themselves will soon reject Him. They misread His brief earthly triumph as a sign of something else: His emergence as a political messiah who will lead them to the glories of an earthly kingdom.

The liturgy of the Church is more than meditation or praise concerning past events. It communicates to us the eternal presence and power of the events being celebrated and makes us participants in those events. Thus the services of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday bring us to our own moment of life and death and entrance into the Kingdom of God: a Kingdom not of this world, a Kingdom accessible in the Church through repentance and baptism.

On Palm Sunday palm and willow branches are blessed in the Church. We take them in order to raise them up and greet the King and Ruler of our life: Jesus Christ. We take them in order to reaffirm our baptismal pledges. As the One who raised Lazarus and entered Jerusalem to go to His voluntary Passion stands in our midst, we are faced with the same question addressed to us at baptism: "Do you accept Christ?" We give our answer by daring to take the branch and raise it up: "I accept Him as King and God!"

Thus, on the eve of Christ's Passion, in the celebration of the joyful cycle of the triumphant days of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, we reunite ourselves to Christ, affirm His Lordship over the totality of our life and express our readiness to follow Him to His Kingdom: – *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead* (Philippians 3:10-11). **By V. Rev. Paul Lazor** (Courtesy of [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org))

## **Great and Holy Thursday**

### **The Mystical Supper**

Two events shape the liturgy of Great and Holy Thursday: the Mystical Supper of Christ with His disciples, and the betrayal of Judas. The meaning of both is in love. The Mystical Supper is the ultimate revelation of God's redeeming love for man, of love as the very essence of salvation. And the betrayal of Judas reveals that sin, death and self-destruction are also due to love, but to deviated and distorted love, love directed at that which does not deserve love. Here is the mystery of this unique day, and its liturgy, where light and darkness, joy and sorrow are so strangely mixed, challenges us with the choice on which depends the eternal destiny of each one of us. *"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come... having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end..."* (John 13:1). To understand the meaning of the Mystical Supper we must see it as the very end of the great movement of Divine Love which began with the creation of the world and is now to be consummated in the death and resurrection of Christ.

*"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." (John 3:14). And just as all who were bitten by the serpents and looked upon the suspended brass serpent were healed, likewise every Christian who believes in our Christ and hastens to His life-bearing wounds (by eating His Flesh and drinking His all-holy Blood), is cured from the bites of the spiritual serpent of sin. By this most holy nourishment, he is given life unto renewal in a new creation, that is, a new life in conformity with His life-giving commandments.*

*Oh, how essential it is for us in every way to approach this heavenly banquet, which this supernatural mystery of the Holy Table provides for us! The angels stand by invisibly. With utmost reverence the priests, who at this moment of the mystery are more honored than the angels, sacrifice the blameless Lamb. The angels minister and the faithful approach to eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ: "Partake of the Body of Christ; taste of the fountain of immortality" to live in Christ and not die in sin.*

*Therefore, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup," according to the divine Apostle, because "he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner, eats and drinks judgment to himself. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord." (1Cor. 11:28-32).*

*When someone wants to present himself to the king, he prepares himself for days--that is, with an overall preparation in cleanliness, speech, approach, manners, and so on--to attract the king's sympathy and thus obtain the desired request. Corresponding to the incomparable difference between the two kings, every Christian ought to prepare for Holy Communion in order to obtain mercy and forgiveness.*

*Cunning, flattery, affectation, and lies often adorn someone who approaches an earthly king so that he may obtain what he wants. Whereas holiness, a humble spirit, and simplicity of soul--which is more precious than perishable gold--must adorn the faithful Christian approaching the King of kings, Who looks upon the inner man.*

*Let us also prepare ourselves with purified intellects, and, aspiring to the mortifications of our senses from the passions, let us enter together with the holy Apostles into the Mystical Supper in purity, and let us partake of our sweet Jesus, so that He may abide with us unto the endless ages of ages. Amen; so be it! Counsels from the Holy Mountain From the Letters and Homilies of Elder Ephraim*

*Submitted by Adele (Catherine) Pastor*

God is Love (1 John 4:8). And the first gift of Love was life. The meaning, the content of life was communion. To be alive man was to eat and to drink, to partake of the world. The world was thus Divine love made food, made Body of man. And being alive, i.e. partaking of the world, man was to be in communion with God, to have God as the meaning, the content and the end of his life. Communion with the God-given world was indeed communion with God. Man received his food from God and making it his body and his life, he offered the whole world to God, transformed it into life in God and with God. The love of God gave life to man, the love of man for God transformed this life into communion with God. This was paradise. Life in it was, indeed, Eucharistic. Through man and his love for God

the whole creation was to be sanctified and transformed into one all-embracing sacrament of Divine Presence and man was the priest of this sacrament.

But in sin man lost this eucharistic life. He lost it because he ceased to see the world as a means of Communion with God and his life as eucharist, as adoration and thanksgiving. . . He loved himself and the world for their own sake; he made himself the content and the end of his life. He thought that his hunger and thirst, i.e. his dependence of his life on the world - can be satisfied by the world as such, by food as such. But world and food, once they are deprived of their initial sacramental meaning - as means of communion with God, once they are not received for God's sake and filled with hunger and thirst for

God, once, in other words, God is no longer, their real "content" can give no life, satisfy no hunger, for they have no life in themselves... And thus by putting his love in them, man deviated his love from the only object of all love, of all hunger, of all desires. And he died. For death is the inescapable "decomposition" of life cut from its only source and content. Man thought to find life in the world and in food, but he found death. His life became communion with death, for instead of transforming the world by faith, love, and adoration into communion with God, he submitted himself entirely to the world, he ceased to be its priest and became its slave. And by his sin the whole world was made a cemetery, where people condemned to death partook of death and "sat in the region and shadow of death" (Matt. 4:16).

But if man betrayed, God remained faithful to man. He did not "turn Himself away forever from His creature whom He had made, neither did He forget the works of His hands, but He visited him in diverse manners, through the tender compassion of His mercy" (Liturgy of St. Basil). A new Divine work began, that of redemption and salvation. And it was fulfilled in Christ, the Son of God Who in order to restore man to his pristine beauty and to restore life as communion with God, became Man, took upon Himself our nature, with its thirst and hunger, with its desire for and love of, life. And in Him life was revealed, given, accepted and fulfilled as total and perfect Eucharist, as total and perfect communion with God. He rejected the basic human temptation: to live "by bread alone," He revealed that God and His kingdom are the real food, the real life of man. And this perfect eucharistic Life, filled with God, and, therefore Divine and immortal, He gave to all those who would believe in Him, i.e. find in Him the meaning and the content of their lives. Such is the wonderful meaning of the Mystical Supper. He offered Himself as the true food of man, because the Life revealed in Him is the true Life. And thus the movement of Divine Love which began in paradise with a Divine "take, eat. ..." (for eating is life for man) comes now "unto the end" with the Divine "take, eat, this is My Body..." (for God is life of man). The Mystical Supper is the restora-

tion of the paradise of bliss, of life as Eucharist and Communion.

But this hour of ultimate love is also that of the ultimate betrayal. Judas leaves the light of the Upper Room and goes into darkness. "And it was night" (John 13:30). Why does he leave? Because he loves, answers the Gospel, and his fateful love is stressed again and again in the hymns of Holy Thursday. It does not matter indeed, that he loves the "silver." Money stands here for all the deviated and distorted love which leads man into betraying God. It is, indeed, love stolen from God and Judas, therefore, is the Thief. When he does not love God and in God, man still loves and desires, for he was created to love and love is his nature, but it is then a dark and self-destroying passion and death is at its end. And each year, as we immerse ourselves into the unfathomable light and depth of Holy Thursday, the same decisive question is addressed to each one of us: do I respond to Christ's love and accept it as my life, or do I follow Judas into the darkness of his night?

+ V. Rev. Alexander Schmemmann (Courtesy of [www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org))

## Who Am I ? Why Am I Here?

By Paul Havrilko

The simple answer to these questions might be we are children of our parents and here to carry-on our family name. Yet for some wise reason, our grandparents, Moms and Dads decided to bring us in front of the entire Orthodox Church and baptize us Christians. They didn't have to do this. No law required it and we could have carried on without it. Still, it was done and that changed everything for us. We became new apostles of Jesus through this simple act of baptism. With it came a whole new depth and meaning to the questions of "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" Let's explore our purpose and reason for living.

Wise Mother Teresa wrote, "If we do not radiate the light of Christ around us, the sense of darkness that prevails in the world will increase. We are called to love the world." What is this darkness and how should we live to prevail within it?

### Our Model for Life

A simple three-step model worked for Mary the Mother of God. (1) **Humility** - Attribute

nothing to our merits, everything comes to us as a gift of God's grace and blessing. **(2) Commitment** – Take God's word and keep it close to our heart. Think about God always and listen to what our heart says about God. **(3) Action** - Obey the word of God and carry His message out in our daily actions. *“Blessed, rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.”* (Luke 11:28).

The darkness Mother Teresa refers to in the world shows up everyday in the news, in sports, at work, in school, and even through our friends. Enormous pressures get placed upon us to act in accordance with others, to walk in accordance with the established rules, and to comply with the average. Unfortunately we Christians are not typical or not average in that we are held to higher standards by our Father. So, how can we make it? How can I still have friends and live our faith?

We have to act according to our heart. By filling our heart with humility (God's grace), committing to Him (listen to our heart), and act accordingly, we will know what to do when we need to do it. Many tools are at our disposal for training ourselves in this way: **1.** Attend Sunday School regularly - this reinforces the understandings of our faith and underscores our commitment to the faith. **2.** Participate in liturgical services - don't be an observer. Become a singer. Become a cantor. Become a helper. Light candles. During the Great Lenten period in preparation for wonderful Pascha, we can see how active the prayers are. We make prostrations. **3.** Pray and fast to grow your heart.

Jesus took us through the passion of his last days on earth prior to His resurrection. Our church helps us relive this journey every year which helps us recall that Jesus lived through the darkness of the world just as we are doing everyday. He was spit on, mocked, scourged (pierced with a sword), and crucified. It wasn't easy, just as it isn't easy for us to live in our world and to listen to our hearts. So, what is all this for and for what are we living? Simply to be able to release our souls to the Lord when the time comes. To release our souls into the Lord's hands in perfect peace and trust. “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

Nothing more. Nothing less.

## Old Testament Prophecies of the Resurrection by Martha Elliott

Salvation history does not begin with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. It does not even begin with the birth of Christ. Salvation history begins with God's creation of the universe and his making of mankind in his own image and likeness. More particularly, it begins with God's covenant with Abraham in which Abraham pledge to worship God exclusively and God pledged to bless Abraham and his descendants forever.

During Lent, the readings appointed to be read on the weekdays were taken from three books of the Old Testament – Genesis, Isaiah, and Proverbs. In Genesis we read about the beginning of salvation history – the story of creation, the story of God's covenant with Abraham, and the stories of Abraham's faithful (and not so faithful) descendants. In Proverbs we are given very practical advice as to how we should live our lives in order to be faithful servants of the Lord. We are told what we should do and what we should avoid in various situations. In Isaiah we first read the prophet's account of God's coming judgment on an unrighteous and unfaithful people. We then read the prophecy of the coming Messiah, a “man of sorrows,” who will redeem not only the people of the covenant with Abraham but “all nations.”

On Great and Holy Saturday the fifteen vespereal readings also come from the Old Testament. These readings have several different themes, but they are chosen to be read on this day because they stand together as prophecies of Christ's resurrection. The first of these themes has to do with the triumph of light (and life) over darkness (and death.) Other resurrection themes have to do with the sacrificial Lamb, the entombment and the raising of the dead, and the extension of the new covenant to “the nations” (the whole world.)

The first reading, from the first chapter of Genesis, tells about the first day of creation, when “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep...” And God said “let there be light...” This word of God

established light as the foe of dark and life as the foe of death. In a passage from Exodus we read how the light of God in the form of a pillar of fire guided the Israelites through the desert into the promised land. In the prophecy of Isaiah we are told that “your light has come....” And “nations shall come to your light.” As Christians we know, of course, that this passage prophesies the coming of Christ who was called “the light of the world.”

The first passage from Exodus recounts the story of the first Passover (or Pascha,) the story of the escape of the children of Israel from the bondage of the Egyptian pharaoh. God decrees that each family should sacrifice an unblemished male lamb and should eat its flesh and mark the doorpost with its blood. This sign will ensure that the angel of death will pass over this family with no harm. The passage from Joshua recounts the Israelites keeping of Passover on the plains near Jericho. We also hear the familiar story of the sacrifice of Isaac, in which Abraham is instructed by God to take his beloved son to the top of Mt. Moriah and offer him as a burnt sacrifice. When Abraham has proved faithful to the point of willingness to do even this, God provides a ram to be sacrificed instead of the child. The symbol of the sacrificial lamb ties together the old and the new covenants. In the old covenant there were different animal sacrifices for different occasions. The need for repetitive animal sacrifices was done away with by the coming of Christ, who was himself a sacrificial lamb, a lamb offered once and for all for the salvation of the world.

Several of the readings deal directly with the theme of death, entombment, and resurrection. The prophecy of Jonah depicts the disobedient Jonah as cast overboard from a ship and swallowed up by a great whale. There Jonah “remembered the Lord” and prayed fervently that he might be saved. We are told that God heard Jonah’s prayers and after three days spoke to the whale which deposited Jonah on dry land. A similar theme is found in the reading from Daniel in which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast into a fiery furnace for their refusal to worship the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar. In both stories, the servants of God

were held in dangerous and death-dealing places, but remained safe and came forth unhurt because they were protected by the Lord.

The book of Kings tells the stories of the raising from the dead of the son of the widow of Zarephath and the son of a Shunamite woman by the prophets Elijah and Elisha. These stories point forward to the New Testament story of Christ’s raising of the only son of a widowed mother and his raising of Lazarus, who, like Jonah, was entombed for three days before being resurrected. They also, of course, point directly toward Christ’s own resurrection after three days in the tomb.

The readings from the prophets, Isaiah, Zechariah, and Jeremiah proclaim the message that there is life after death, resurrection after destruction, light after dark. Isaiah proclaims that there will be a “new covenant.” Israel will no longer follow the old law – the law written on tablets of stone, but a new law which shall be “written upon their hearts.” This means that the new covenant is open not just to the Israelites but to all people. Thus the final theme in these readings is that God is no longer to be seen as the God of Israel but rather as the God of “the nations,” that is, of the whole world.

In the New Testament, Christ is called “the light of the world” and his death and resurrection represent the ultimate triumph of light and life over darkness, death and destruction. On Pascha this triumph is loudly proclaimed to the whole world. On Great and Holy Saturday we listen to the readings which foreshadow this triumph.

### **Prefigure of Pascha in the Old Testament--an Overview by Reader Michael Bishop**

Every year Christians all over the world celebrate Easter, or more properly called Pascha, with great joy and solemnity. When asked what are we celebrating, most of us would say “the resurrection.” But the feast is infinitely much more.

First of all, Easter is not something just for children. It is absolutely crucial to our salvation. St. Paul the Apostle said that if Christ is not risen, then our faith is in vain. If He is not

risen, why would millions willingly suffer torture and humiliation?

The resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a foreshadow of our own resurrection on the final day. Christ died and rose again so that we may again become heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

His death and resurrection is also a passover from sin to life. By His death He defeated Death and brought us to eternal life. All that we have to do is to accept it. But to accept it, we have to do our part. Acceptance of our salvation is not a passive thing, but a very active thing.

But did you know that all of this was foreshadowed several times in the Old Testament? The Church holds before us many images of this. On Holy Saturday we hear two incidents from the Old Testaments of prophets raising people from the dead. We also hear about the Israelites leaving Egypt, going from the death of slavery to the freedom of the Promised Land.

But there are also other images. In a recent edition of Bible Review we read about Abraham and his exodus and we can see how he also prefigured Christ. God told him to leave where he was and to go to the land that He will show him, namely Egypt (Gen 12:1-3). He was chased out of Egypt just as the Israelites later are to be chased out of Egypt. "Abraham—though living hundreds of years before the Exodus—went through his own Exodus-like experiences, including an escape from Egypt via plagues, a Passover meal attended by heavenly beings and a paschal sacrifice." ("The Exodus of Abraham" by Jeffrey C. Geoghegan in Bible Review, Spring 2005, pg. 18).

Abraham went to Egypt because of a famine and so did the Israelites. Compare Genesis 12:10 with Genesis 47:4. Both are treated well by Pharaoh because of somebody who found favor with him. Something goes wrong and Pharaoh offends God and God sends a plague (Ibid., p. 20-1).

Then we have the three visitors to Abraham in Genesis 18. They foretold the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham bargains with God on behalf of the people, possible a prefigure

of Christ's bargaining with God on our behalf. This also sets the stage for a second exodus in Abraham's life.

When the angels visited Lot and his family, the people there wanted to harm them and Lot offered his daughters instead, a prefiguring of God's offering His Son for our sake. Then Lot passed over from a city of sin and death to a city of life.

Finally we have God's request to Abraham to sacrifice His only son, a prefigure of the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God. Just as Abraham was willing to sacrifice His only Son, so our heavenly Father was willing to sacrifice His only Son so that we might have everlasting life.

**If we approach the Chalice frequently, then we must prepare worthily. And when we prepare, we include Confession as that integral part of our preparation.**

*Let us remind ourselves that pious preparation to receive the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord and God Jesus Christ includes:*

❖ *Attending evening Divine Services on the eve of our communion;*

❖ *Frequent Confession*

❖ *Fasting from all drink and food (and smoking!) from midnight of the previous night;*

❖ *Reading the Canon of Preparation to receive the Divine Mysteries the night before and then the Preparatory Prayers Before Communion in the morning before coming to church. This canon and the prayers are found in your prayer book. Read these prayers in the morning before Divine Services, not the newspaper or your emails.*

❖ *Reading the Prayers of Thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion. These are also found in your prayer book.*

**We offer sincere thanks to the contributors and authors of this edition: Rdr. Michael Bishop, Martha Elliott, Paul Havrilko and Adele (Catherine) Pastor. Thank you.**

*The Voice* is a parish newsletter-journal of Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church (1723 East Fairmount Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21231). *The Voice* is prepared and distributed by the pastor and parishioners of Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church. Please forward any questions to 410-276-6171.