

Summary of Orthodox Teaching

Introduction

This book is a summary of a volume that, probably, has not been written yet!!

Yes, the purpose of this book is to offer a summary of the teaching of the pre-church division fathers of the catholic church, of all the Orthodox doctrines as they pertain to the Divine Economy towards our salvation.

Probably, the reader can expand his reading much more in any point that was mentioned in this book, if not in English then in Arabic, in many references. However, I think he will not find this expanded reading mentioned together in one volume.

Therefore, I hope my Lord Jesus Christ will motivate the heart of the Orthodox theologians to convert these few pages into a grand volume, in which we will enjoy, to much greater extent, learning about the work of the Holy Trinity, for us, in us, and by us.

The writer of this book worked diligently to follow the patristic orthodox methodology of doctrine teaching, where the spiritual and liturgical practices are explained based on what happens in the sacraments, the sacraments based on what happened in salvation, the salvation based on what happened in the fall, and the fall based on what happened in the creation.

The sources of the writings of the fathers mentioned in this book are as follows:

- ❖ Books of St Athanasius the Great: On the Incarnation of the Word, Against the Gentiles, and Against the Arians, as they were mainly mentioned in <http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/>
- ❖ Quotations of Saint Cyril the Great and others mentioned in the book “Illuminating Sayings”, published by Saint Makarios monastery, where every text is written in its Greek origin, English, and Arabic. All with the references they were taken from.
- ❖ Sophronius to the Beginners Brethren, as it was translated to Arabic by Dr. George Bebawi in his book “The Eucharist the One body of Christ”, and translated from Arabic into English by self.
- ❖ Other few instances are mentioned then.
- ❖ This book relied mainly on the RSV English translation for biblical quotes.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the creation and the fall sections of this book were written thirty three years ago (and not published), but the martyrdom of Bishop Epiphanius of Saint Makarios Monastery gave the writer decisive motivation to complete this work.

Completed and published in 7/29/2020
The Commemoration of passing of two years
of the martyrdom of Bishop Epiphanius
of Saint Makarios Monastery

The Creation

The Holy Bible Tells Us Four Facts About Man's Creation:

(1) Man Was Created From Dust:

- ❖ “Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground.” (Genesis: 2:7).

This means:

- ❖ His life is not self-induced, but from God the creator.
- ❖ Therefore he would be returning to non-existence if he separated himself from God, the source of his life.
- ❖ He was created like a pure mirror that reflected the light of the Father on the creation.

(2) Man Was Created In The Image Of God And On His Likeness:

- ❖ “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.’” (Genesis 1:26).
- ❖ “So, God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them.” (Genesis 1:27).
- ❖ “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.” (Romans 8:29).
- ❖ “Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4).
- ❖ “He is (Christ) the image of the invisible God.” (Colossians 1:15).

This means:

- ❖ He is created ON the image of God and he is NOT the image of God itself, as the Son is the image of God the Father, who with his presence in front of the mirror prints in it his image.
- ❖ Man is created on the image of the Son specifically; therefore he is a son by adoption.
- ❖ And because he is on the image of the Son who is the image of the father he was capable by contemplating on himself to gain knowledge of the father, and to enter into communion with Him. “He who has seen me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9). *(And this is the testimony of the Son about the father).*
- ❖ By man keeping the image of God in him he saved himself from returning to non-existence.

(3) Man Was Given The Grace Of The Dwelling Of The Holy Spirit In Him:

- ❖ “The LORD God formed man ... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” (Genesis 2:7).
- ❖ “And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Galatians 4:6).

This means:

- ❖ The scripture said: “The LORD God formed ‘man’...” and did not say: ‘the body of man’. This means that God created man, body and soul, then, the scripture said that

He “**breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**” i.e. the Holy Spirit. This is evident by the statement that followed “**man became a living being**”, as man can only live by God. (*And this is the participation in the Divine nature*).

- ❖ The Holy Spirit dwells into us when he sees in us the image of the Son (Galatians 4:6).
- ❖ The Holy Spirit is the one who keeps and gleams in us the image of the Son that keeps man from returning to non-existence. (*And this is the testimony of the Holy Spirit about the Son*).

(4) Man was given a commandment accompanied by warning of death on breaking it:

- ❖ “**And out of the ground the LORD God made to grow... the tree of life... in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**” (Genesis 2:9).
- ❖ “**And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.**” (Genesis 2:16-17).
- ❖ “**The commandment is holy and just and good.**” (Romans 7:12).

This means:

- ❖ The commandment was not only “Holy and Just” but also “Good”. As it was an extra help for him to keep his will from losing the grace in which he was abiding. Therefore the justice of the commandment was justice of love.
- ❖ The warning of death was even further help to his will. Therefore the justice of the warning was justice of love.
- ❖ The disallowance from eating did not include ‘The Tree of Life’ which is the Eucharist, which by eating from man would have gained the real knowledge that springs from participation in the Divine life.
- ❖ Therefore what was forbidden was not gaining the real knowledge that ‘springs from participating in the Divine life’, but gaining false knowledge that is ‘gained in isolation from life’ and therefore leads to non-existence.

The Writings Of The Fathers On The Creation

For God is good, or rather is essentially the source of goodness: nor could one that is good be niggardly of anything: whence, grudging existence to none, He has made all things out of nothing by His own Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. And among these, having taken especial pity, above all things on earth, upon the race of men, and having perceived its inability, by virtue of the condition of its origin, to continue in one stay, He gave them a further gift, and He did not barely create man, as He did all the irrational creatures on the earth, but made them after His own image, giving them a portion even of the power of His own Word; so that having as it were a kind of reflexion of the Word, and being made rational, they might be able to abide ever in blessedness, living the true life which belongs to the saints in paradise.

But knowing once more how the will of man could sway to either side, in anticipation He secured the grace given them by a law and by the spot where He placed them. For He brought them into His own garden, and gave them a law: so that, if they kept the grace and remained good, they might still keep the life in paradise without sorrow or pain or care besides having the promise of incorruption in heaven. (St Athanasius the Great On the Incarnation of the Word 3:3-4).

For man is by nature mortal, in as much as he is made out of what is not; but by reason of his likeness to Him that is (and if he still preserved this likeness by keeping Him in his knowledge) he would stay his natural corruption, and remain incorrupt. (On the Incarnation of the Word 4:6).

For God has not only made us out of nothing; but He gave us freely, by the Grace of the Word, a life in correspondence with God...

Being... by nature corruptible, but destined, by the grace following from partaking of the Word, to have escaped their natural state, had they remained good.

For because of the Word dwelling with them, even their natural corruption did not come near them. (On the Incarnation of the Word 5:1-2).

For God Maker of all and King of all, that has His Being beyond all substance and human discovery, in as much as He is good and exceeding noble, made, through His own Word our Savior Jesus Christ, the human race after His own image, and constituted man able to see and know realities by means of this assimilation to Himself, giving him also a conception and knowledge even of His own eternity, in order that, preserving his nature intact, he might not ever either depart from his idea of God, nor recoil from the communion of the holy ones; but having the grace of Him that gave it, having also God's own power from the Word of the Father, he might rejoice and have fellowship with the Deity, living the life of immortality unharmed and truly blessed.

For having nothing to hinder his knowledge of the Deity, he ever beholds, by his purity, the Image of the Father, God the Word, after Whose image he himself is made.

He is awe-struck as he contemplates that Providence, which through the Word extends to the universe, being raised above the things of sense and every bodily appearance, but cleaving to the divine and thought-perceived things in the heavens by the power of his mind.

For when the mind of men seeing the Word, it sees in Him also the Father of the Word, taking pleasure in contemplating Him, and gaining renewal by its desire toward Him. (St Athanasius the Great Against the Gentiles 2:2-3).

For God has loved mankind, on whose account He made the world, to whom He rendered subject all the things that are in it, to whom He gave reason and understanding, to whom alone He imparted the privilege of looking upwards to Himself, whom He formed after His own image. (The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus 10:2).

God from the beginning planted the tree of life [and the tree of knowledge] in the midst of paradise, revealing through knowledge the way to life, and when those who were first formed did not use this [knowledge] properly, they were, through the fraud of the Serpent, stripped naked.

For neither can life exist without knowledge, nor is knowledge secure without life. Wherefore both were planted close together.

The Apostle, perceiving the force [of this conjunction], and blaming that knowledge which, without true doctrine, is admitted to influence life, declares, "**Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.**" (1 Corinthians 8:1).

For he who thinks he knows anything without true knowledge, and such as is witnessed to by life, knows nothing, but is deceived by the Serpent, as not loving life. But he who combines knowledge with fear, and seeks after life, plants in hope, looking for fruit.

Let your heart be your wisdom; and let your life be true knowledge inwardly received. Bearing this tree and displaying its fruit, you shall always gather in those things, which are desired by God, which the Serpent cannot reach, and to which deception does not approach. (The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus 12:3-8).

The Fall

- ❖ “The serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat of any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.” (Genesis 3:1-7).
- ❖ “And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:17-19).
- ❖ “Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever". Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man; and at the east of the Garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.” (Genesis 3:22-24).
- ❖ “Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men.” (Romans 5:12).

From The Mentioned Above We Understand The Following Four Facts:

(1) Due to his fall man was returning to non-existence, “to dust you shall return”, which means:

- ❖ This is the natural corruption and decay that man undergoes gradually when he is in the state of separation from his creator who is the source of his life.
- ❖ The pure nature of the mirror has gradually tarnished. Therefore, it no longer reflected the light of the father on the creation, “**cursed is the ground because of you**”. In addition, it became not possible to have the image of the Son printed clearly in the mirror.
- ❖ As falling continued so did the decay till man reached the state of idols worshipping.
- ❖ Humanity inherited this natural corruption from Adam.

(2) Due to his fall the image of God in him was distorted, “The eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked”, which means:

- ❖ The image was distorted by the deviation of the mirror away from the origin of the image, as man disregarded Him as the source of his knowledge and chose false knowledge that he gained in isolation from participation in the Divine life.
- ❖ The image that kept man from returning to non-existence did not disappear completely, but was only distorted. Therefore, man did not return immediately to non-existence, but he became ‘going’ towards non-existence as the image became further and further distorted by further and further falling.
- ❖ Man lost the gift of adoption with the distortion of the image of the Son in him.
- ❖ Humanity inherited from Adam this loss of the gift of adoption.

(3) Due to his fall the Holy Spirit left him, “He drove out the man”, which means:

- ❖ Loss of participation in the Divine life, the life of no pain and no death.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit left Adam because He no longer saw the image of the Son in him.
- ❖ The Holy Spirit was the one who kept the image of the Son in us and gleamed it. Therefore, with his departure the image became corruptible.
- ❖ Humanity inherited from Adam this departure of the Holy Spirit.

(4) Due to his fall man fell under the judgment of death as a result of breaking the commandment, which means:

- ❖ Every Human inherited the consequences of Adam’s sin, i.e. the natural corruption, the loss of adoption, and the departure of the Holy Spirit. If we imagined that the Prodigal son had children in the time he was astray from his father, then those children, for sure, would have inherited from their father his loss, his poverty, and his estrangement from his father.
- ❖ That is how most of the eastern fathers interpreted Psalm (50:5) “**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity**” i.e. in nature without grace, “**and in sin did my mother conceive me**” i.e. with heart that did not know God as it did not gain his grace.
- ❖ The above three consequences led to death due to the natural authority of death on man if he separated himself from God.
- ❖ But these consequences would not have prevented God from recreating man from non-existence, giving him His Son’s image, and gracing him with the dwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- ❖ But falling under the judgment of death, as a result of breaking the commandment, gave death a legal authority above its natural one. This meant that not only does man die, but also he remains in death for ever, unless God becomes dishonest, which is impossible in one hand and not good for man to live under a mind-changing God on the other hand.
- ❖ Humanity did not inherit Adam’s sin and therefore it did not inherit the judgment of death and its legal authority either.
- ❖ Every human is under the judgment of death, and its legal authority, due to his own breaking of God’s commandments.

The Writings Of The Fathers On The Fall

Men, having despised and rejected the contemplation of God, and devised and contrived evil for themselves, received the condemnation of death with which they had been threatened; and from thenceforth no longer remained as they were made, but were being corrupted according to their devices; and death had the mastery over them as king.

For transgression of the commandment was turning them back to their natural state, so that just as they have had their being out of nothing, so also, as might be expected, they might look for corruption into nothing in the course of time. (On the Incarnation of the Word 4:4).

For if, out of a former normal state of non-existence, they were called into being by the Presence and loving-kindness of the Word, it followed naturally that when men were bereft of the knowledge of God and were turned back to what was not, they should, since they derive their being from God who IS, be everlastingly bereft even of being; in other words, that they should be disintegrated and abide in death and corruption. (On the Incarnation of the Word 4:5).

But men, having rejected things eternal, and, by counsel of the devil, turned to the things of corruption, became the cause of their own corruption in death. (On the Incarnation of the Word 5:1).

But by envy of the devil death came into the world.” But when this was come to pass, men began to die, while corruption thenceforward prevailed against them, gaining even more than its natural power over the whole race, inasmuch as it had, owing to the transgression of the commandment, the threat of the Deity as a further advantage against them. (On the Incarnation of the Word 5:2).

For even in their misdeeds men had not stopped short at any set limits; but gradually pressing forward, have passed on beyond all measure: having to begin with been inventors of wickedness and called down upon themselves death and corruption; while later on, having turned aside to wrong and exceeding all lawlessness, and stopping at no one evil but devising all manner of new evils in succession, they have become insatiable in sinning. (On the Incarnation of the Word 5:3).

For this cause, then, death having gained upon men, and corruption abiding upon them, the race of man was perishing; the rational man made in God’s image was disappearing, and the handiwork of God was in process of dissolution. (On the Incarnation of the Word 6:1).

For death, as I said above, gained from that time forth a legal hold over us, and it was impossible to evade the law, since it had been laid down by God because of the transgression, and the result was in truth at once monstrous and unseemly. (On the Incarnation of the Word 6:2).

From transgression men have become set towards corruption. (On the Incarnation of the Word 7:2).

When transgression had once gained a start, men became involved in that corruption which was their nature, and were deprived of the grace, which they had, being in the image of God. (On the Incarnation of the Word 7:4).

Men, making light of better things, and holding back from apprehending them, began to seek in preference things nearer to themselves. But nearer to themselves were the body and its senses; so that while removing their mind from the things perceived by thought, they began to regard themselves; and so doing, and holding to the body and the other things of sense, and deceived as it were in their own surroundings, they fell into lust of themselves, preferring what was their own to the contemplation of what belonged to God. Having then made themselves at home in these things, and not being willing to leave what was so near to them, they entangled their soul with bodily pleasures, vexed and turbid with all kind of lusts, while they wholly forgot the power they originally had from God. (St Athanasius the Great Against the Gentiles 3:1-2).

But when, by counsel of the serpent, he departed from the consideration of God, and began to regard himself, then they not only fell to bodily lust, but knew that they were naked, and knowing, were ashamed. But they knew that they were naked, not so much of clothing as that they were become stripped of the contemplation of divine things, and had transferred their understanding to the contraries. For having departed from the consideration of the one and the true, namely, God, and from desire of Him, they had thenceforward embarked in divers lusts and in those of the several bodily senses. (Against the Gentiles 3:3).

Next, as is apt to happen, having formed a desire for each and sundry, they began to be habituated to these desires, so that they were even afraid to leave them: whence the soul became subject to cowardice and alarms, and pleasures and thoughts of mortality. For not being willing to leave her lusts, she fears death and her separation from the body. But again, from lusting, and not meeting with gratification, she learned to commit murder and wrong. (Against the Gentiles 3:4).

Having departed from the contemplation of the things of thought, and using to the full the several activities of the body, and being pleased with the contemplation of the body, and seeing that pleasure is good for her, she was misled and abused the name of good, and thought that pleasure was the very essence of good: just as though a man out of his mind and asking for a sword to use against all he met, were to think that soundness of mind. (Against the Gentiles 4:1).

Evil has not from the beginning been with God or in God, nor has any substantive existence; but that men, in default of the vision of good, began to devise and imagine for themselves what was not, after their own pleasure. (Against the Gentiles 7:3).

For as if a man, when the sun is shining, and the whole earth illumined by his light, were to shut fast his eyes and imagine darkness where no darkness exists, and then walk wandering as if in darkness, often falling and going down steep places, thinking it was dark and not light,—for, imagining that he sees, he does not see at all;—so, too, the soul of man, shutting fast her eyes, by which she is able to see God, has imagined evil for herself, and moving therein, knows not that, thinking she is doing something, she is doing nothing. For she is imagining what is not, nor is she abiding in her original nature; but what she is, is evidently the product of her own disorder. (Against the Gentiles 7:4).

The soul of mankind...having in view... nothing but things present and opinions about them, ceased to think that anything existed beyond what is seen, or that anything was good save things temporal and bodily; so turning away and forgetting that she was in the image of the good God, she no longer, by the power which is in her, sees God the Word after whose likeness she is made; but having departed from herself, imagines and feigns what is not. (Against the Gentiles 8:1).

For hiding, by the complications of bodily lusts, the mirror which, as it were, is in her, by which alone she had the power of seeing the Image of the Father, she no longer sees what a soul ought to behold, but is carried about by everything, and only sees the things which come under the senses. Hence, weighted with all fleshly desire, and distracted among the impressions of these things, she imagines that the God Whom her understanding has forgotten is to be found in bodily and sensible things, giving to things seen the name of God, and glorifying only those things which she desires and which are pleasant to her eyes. (Against the Gentiles 8:2).

For men, having learned to contrive evil, which is no reality in itself, in like manner feigned for themselves as gods beings that had no real existence. Just, then, as though a man had plunged into the deep, and no longer saw the light, nor what appears by light, because his eyes are turned downwards, and the water is all above him; and, perceiving only the things in the deep, thinks that nothing exists beside them, but that the things he sees are the only true realities; so the men of former time, having lost their reason, and plunged into the lusts and imaginations of carnal things, and forgotten the knowledge and glory of God, their reasoning being dull, or rather following unreason, made gods for themselves of things seen, glorifying the creature rather than the Creator. (Against the Gentiles 8:3).

The Salvation

The First Fact – Man Was Created From Non-Existence And By The Fall He Has Been Returning To Non-Existence

Jesus Christ whose human nature, like the first Adam, was returnable to non-existence if it separated itself from God, did not and will not ever return to non-existence, because the union between the divine and the human in Christ is eternal.

Full Divine, Full Human, and Eternal Union.

The Writings Of The Fathers

It was in the power of none other to turn the corruptible to incorruption, except the Savior Himself, that had at the beginning also made all things out of naught. (On the Incarnation of the Word 20:1).

But if death was within the body, woven into its very substance and dominating it as though completely one with it, the need was for Life to be woven into it instead, so that the body by thus enduing itself with life might cast corruption off. (On the Incarnation of the Word 44:5).

To this end He takes to Himself a body capable of death, that it, by partaking of the Word Who is above all, might be worthy to die in the stead of all. (On the Incarnation of the Word 9:1).

The Second Fact – Man Was Created In The Image Of God And By The Fall This Image Was Distorted Within Him

The Son, who is the Image of the Father, renewed his Image, the one that first Adam lost, in his own humanity, and kept it perfect forever due to the eternity of the union, the Divinity of the Son, and the reality of his humanity.

The Writings Of The Fathers

It was unfitting that they should perish which had once been partakers of God's image. (On the Incarnation of the Word 13:6).

It was in the power of none other to create anew the likeness of God's image for men, save the Image of the Father. (On the Incarnation of the Word 20:1).

What then was God to do? Or what was to be done save the renewing of that which was in God's image, so that by it men might once more be able to know Him? But how could this have come to pass save by the presence of the very Image of God, our Lord Jesus Christ? (On the Incarnation of the Word 13:7).

The most holy Son of the Father, being the Image of the Father, came to our region to renew man once made in His likeness. (On the Incarnation of the Word 14:2).

Whence the Word of God came in His own person, that, as He was the Image of the Father, He might be able to create afresh the man after the image. (On the Incarnation of the Word 13:7).

The Third Fact – Man Was Given The Holy Spirit, But He Lost Him By The Fall

Humanity needed:

- (a) The dwelling of the Holy Spirit and,
- (b) The continuation of this dwelling forever.

Christ's humanity managed to gain:

- (a) This dwelling, in the baptism from John the Baptist, due to the satisfaction this humanity gained from the Heavenly Father because of the union of this humanity with the Son.
- (b) “**Abode on Him**” means that the dwelling is forever, because the union between full Divine and real human is eternal.

The Writings Of The Fathers

“**God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness**” (Psalm 45:7)...The Savior...is... said to be anointed, that, ...as man to be anointed with the Spirit, He might provide for us men, ...the indwelling and intimacy of the Spirit.

The Lord Himself hath said by His own mouth in the Gospel according to John, “**... for their sakes do I sanctify Myself, that they may be sanctified in the truth.**” (John 17:19).

How then does this take place? What does He mean but this? ‘I, being the Father’s Word, I give to Myself, when becoming man, the Spirit; and Myself, become man, do I sanctify in Him, that henceforth in Me, ... all may be sanctified.’ (Against the Arians 1:46).

It is not the Word, considered as the Word and Wisdom, who is anointed with the Spirit ... but the flesh assumed by Him which is anointed ... that the sanctification coming to the Lord as man, may come to all men from Him. (Against the Arians 1:47).

And notwithstanding, He who, as the Word and Radiance of the Father ... now is said to be sanctified, because now He has become man, and the Body that is sanctified is His. (Against the Arians 1:47).

If then for our sake He sanctifies Himself, and does this when He is become man, it is very plain that the Spirit’s descent on Him in Jordan was a descent upon us, because of His bearing our body. And it did not take place for promotion to the Word, but again for our sanctification, that we might share His anointing. (Against the Arians 1:47).

For when the Lord, as man, was washed in Jordan, it was we who were washed in Him. (Against the Arians 1:47).

And when He received the Spirit, we it was who by Him were made recipients of It. (Against the Arians 1:47).

**The Fourth Fact – Man Was Given A Commandment
Accompanied By Warning Of Death If He Broke It, And That Death
Had Been Having A Legal Authority Because Of Man’s Disobedience**

**First - Christ Gave Us The Ability
To Fulfill The Commandments
And To Reject The Sins Offered To Us**

The Lord Jesus Christ was offered all the sins that were offered to Adam and to the people of God in Sinai, but he resisted all their temptations and succeeded in what they failed.

And every time He won against a sin He won once and forever because of the union between the non-eternal and the eternal.

This ability to fulfill the commandments and to reject the sins is transplanted into us from Christ by The Holy Spirit in the sacraments.

“The Child continued to grow and become strong, **increasing** in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40). *New American Standard Version (1995)*”.

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

The Writings Of The Fathers

He is said ... to have increased in wisdom because God the Word gradually manifested His wisdom proportionally to the age, which the body had attained. The body then advances in stature, and the soul in wisdom. (Saint Cyril the great fifth sermon on the Gospel of Luke).

For as He was humbled for us, so for us He increased (in wisdom), that we who have fallen through sin might increase (in wisdom) in Him. For whatever concerns us, Christ Himself has truly undertaken for us, that He might restore us to a better state. (Another commentary of Saint Cyril the great on the same text, collected by Thomas the Aquinas in “Catena Aurea”).

It is for this reason that he was born, that you may be purged by fellowship with him. For this reason he grew little by little, that you may grow familiar with him and so become one of his household. O the depth of God’s righteousness and his philanthropy! (Homily on Christmas by St Basil the Great).

“For God ... sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.” (Romans 8:3).

“If you want to know how Christ condemned sin look at his works:

How He condemned pride with his humbleness.

How He condemned hate with his love.

How He condemned anger with his long-suffering.

How He condemned lying, hypocrisy, and evasiveness with his truthfulness, frankness, and courage.

How He condemned lust for money and luxury with his poverty and neediness ...

Then look How He condemned cruelty, inequity, betrayal, and fabrication with his endurance, forbearance, and forgiveness!!”

(Translated by self from Arabic from page 37 of Father Matthew the Poor book “With Christ In His Passion Till The Cross”).

The Writings Of The Fathers

We must inquire what sense it may be seemly to conceive that God the Father **“condemned sin in the flesh by sending His own Son in likeness of sinful flesh”** ...the Father caused Him voluntarily to descend into the flesh that is subject to sin, with intent that making very flesh His own, He might bring it over unto His own natural property, to wit, sinlessness.

For, I conceive, we shall not be right in believing that it was with intent to effect this for the Temple of His own Body alone that the Only-begotten has been made man; for where were the glory and profit of His advent unto us to be seen, if He accomplished the salvation of His own Body alone?

But we believe rather that it was to secure the benefits for all nature through Himself and in Himself first as in the first fruits of the humanity, that the Only begotten become like us. (St Cyril the Great on John 14:20; LFC 2, 316-317).

Is it not plainly manifest to everyone that the Only-begotten became like us, i.e. a complete man, to rescue our earthly body from the corruption which had been introduced into it, and to implant in it His proper life by the dispensation of His union, and to appropriate the human soul so that it might appear superior to sin, and that the stability and immutability of His own nature might color it, as ink in cotton? ... Christ was the first and only man on earth **“who did not know sin, nor was guile found in his mouth”** (1Pe 2:22). He was established as the root and first fruits of those being re-formed to newness of life in the Spirit. And He transmits by participation and by grace to the whole human race the incorruption of His body, and the firmness of His divinity. Knowing this the divine Paul said: **“As we bore the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly”** (1Co 15:49). The image of the earthly has a propensity toward sin and inclines us toward death. The image of the heavenly, i.e. Christ, is set on sanctification and the return and the renewal from death and corruption to incorruption and life.

(St Cyril the Great on De recta fide ad Theodosium).

Second - Christ Gave Us The Ability To Endure The Law Of Nature With Thanksgiving

Adam in the Garden was given all what he needed to live in prosperity with ease, but he rebelled! On the contrary, our Lord Jesus Christ endured the harshest troubles with thanks giving. He was borne in a manger, traveled in the desert to Egypt, constantly moved around for three years, returned to Israel through the same desert, lived poor and worked as a carpenter, ***hungered and thirst and got weary***, had nowhere to lay his head. In all these situations, and others, He offered thanksgiving to the Father and spent all night in prayer. He did all that in order to give our rebellion nature the ability to return to state of thanks giving and joy in Him and by Him through our union with Him.

The Writings Of The Fathers

Had not the properties of the flesh been ascribed to the Word, man had not been thoroughly delivered from them. (Against the Arians 3:33).

When then He is said to hunger ... and weary ... which are our human affections, He receives them from us and offers to the Father, interceding for us, that in Him they may be annulled. (Against the Arians 4:6).

He ... sends up what is ours that it may be abolished, so the gifts which come from God instead of our infirmities, doth He too Himself receive. (Against the Arians 4:7).

But henceforward our origin and all infirmity of flesh being transferred to the Word, we rise from the earth, ... because of Him who is in us, ... And with reason; for as we are all from earth and die in Adam, so being regenerated from above of water and Spirit, in the Christ we are all quickened; the flesh being no longer earthly, but being henceforth made Word, by reason of God's Word who for our sake "became flesh". (Against the Arians 3:33).

Therefore is He called the last Adam because He communicates to our nature all the blessings of happiness and glory ... Is it not evident to everyone that He did not choose the condition of a slave to gain any advantage for Himself, but to give Himself to us, to enrich us by His poverty, to raise us up, because of our resemblance to Him, to His own ineffable perfection? (St Cyril the Great on John 1:14).

Christ appeared superior to, and stronger than, every ... worldly hindrance; and since He has conquered, He will also bestow the power to conquer upon such as are tempted for His sake ... The power of His acts will surely extend even unto us, since He who conquered was one of us, insomuch as He was Incarnate Man ... Christ ... being the purveyor to us of the blessing as His own kindred; so also we ought to be of good cheer, because we shall overcome the world.

For Christ as Man overcame it for our sakes, being herein the Beginning and the Gate and the Way for the race of man. For we who once were fallen and vanquished have now overcome and are conquerors, through Him Who conquered as one of ourselves, and for our sakes. For if He conquered as God, then it profits us nothing; but if as Man, ***we are in Him conquerors***. (St Cyril the Great on John 16:33; LFC 2, 476-477).

Third - Christ Gave Us The Ability To Be Liberated From Emotional Ties And Weaknesses

For unless He had felt dread, human nature could not become free from dread;
Unless He had experienced grief, there could never have been any deliverance from grief;
Unless He had been troubled and alarmed, no escape from these feelings could have been found.

And with regard to every one of the affections to which human nature is liable, you will find exactly the corresponding thing in Christ.

The affections of His Flesh were aroused, not that they might have the upper hand as they do indeed in us, but in order that when aroused they might be thoroughly subdued by the power of the Word dwelling in the flesh, the nature of man thus undergoing a change for the better. ... For the Word of God made one with Himself human nature in its entirety, that so He might save the entire man. *For that which has not been taken (by Him), has not been saved.* (St Cyril the Great on John 12:27; LFC 2, 154, 152).

When the weak aspects of his emptiness seem to you to be difficult to understand, wonder rather at the great love of the Son for us. For what you say to be improper, this He made voluntarily for your sake:

He wept as man that He might stay your tear;

He feared, economically committing to His flesh to suffer what belonged it, that He might make us of fairest courage; ...

He is said to be weak in His humanity that He might end your weakness.

He prolonged prayers and supplications in order that He might render the Father's ear open to your prayers. (St Cyril the Great Apolog. XII cap. Contra Theodoret).

Fourth - Christ Suffered Physically And Psychologically To Give Us The Ability To Endure These Pains On Earth And The Life Of No-Death In Heaven

“For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.” (Hebrews 2:10).

“And being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.” (Hebrews 5:9).

“For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18).

For the Son, being God, and Lord of glory, was in the Body which was ingloriously nailed and dishonored; but the Body, while it suffered, being pierced on the tree, and water and blood flowed from its side, yet because it was a temple of the Word was filled full of the Godhead. (St Athanasius the Great Letter to Epictetus, 10 NPNF, 2nd Ser., Vol. IV, p. 574).

Being by nature intangible, the Word yet said: “I gave My back to the stripes, and My cheeks to blows, and hid not My face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah 50:6). For what the human Body of the Word suffered, this the Word, dwelling in the body, ascribed to Himself, in order that we might be enabled to be partakers of the Godhead of the Word ...

And while He, the incorporeal, was in the passible Body, the Body had in it the impassible Word, which was destroying the infirmities inherent in the Body. But this He did ... in order that Himself taking what was ours and offering it as a sacrifice, He might do away with it, and conversely might invest us with what was His. (St Athanasius the Great Letter to Epictetus 6; NPNF, 2nd Ser., Vol. IV, p. 572).

Fifth - Christ Learned Obedience Through What He Suffered To Give Us The Ability To Obey The Heavenly Father

“Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8).

The first Adam in the Garden was given all the physical and spiritual blessings, yet he rebelled! On the contrary the second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, was given all the physical and psychological pains, yet He obeyed all the way and thanked all the time.

Father Matthew The Poor says in pages 383-385 of his commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (translated from Arabic by self):

“ For Him to be fitting and suitable to be high priest, He had to learn obedience at the human level. This obedience, human cannot learn except through pains!!

As He in his capacity as high priest has perfected the ways of obedience to God by enduring the passions all the way to death even death on a cross, He acquired the power, the capability, and the efficiency to give us the power, the capability, and the efficiency of this obedience itself, if we hold fast unto Him till the end (because we have now) high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

He has gained this capability by perfecting obedience under passions for our sake, in order to work by it within us to make us capable, like Him, to obey under same passions, to reach by it His perfection which He has gained for us”.

**Sixth – Christ Carried Our Sins
By Intention In Gethsemane
And By Action On The Cross
And Killed Them By His Death
To Purify Us From Them Through The Sacraments**

“The Lord has put upon him the sins of us all”

(Isaiah 53:6)

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree”

(1 Peter 2:24)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, who perfected in His humanity the victory over all sins and inequities, the satisfaction of all commandments, the endurance of the law of nature with thanksgiving, the liberation from all emotional ties and weaknesses, the acceptance with thanksgiving of all the psychological pains caused by the stubborn people of Israel, accepted death by intention in the Last Supper with joy. Then He accepted by intention in Gethsemane, while He is fully holy, to carry the sins of the whole world, but with very sorrowful soul **“even to death”** and with sweat that **“was like drops of blood”** and with struggle and prayer **“more earnestly”**. And on the cross He became a curse for our sake when our inequities were placed on him and when carried our sins in His body. Then He killed them all by His death.

Father Mathew The Poor says in pages 10 and 11 of his book “With Christ In His Passion Till The Cross” (translated from Arabic by self):

“As God took our nature and united himself with it without decreasing or changing His Divinity, so He accepted in Gethsemane for His body to carry our dirt without getting dirty ...

And He did not accept sin by thought or symbol or imagination but as the Book says: **“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree”** ...

And as the sacrificial lamb carried man’s sin and died with it for the sinner without saying that the lamb had become sinful, although he was carrier of sin, so has the Son of God “Lamb of God”, who lifted the sin of the whole world, became sin for our sake! And remained completely non-sinful”.

“My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?”

(Mathew 27:46)

What does He mean then by saying **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

We say that when Adam our first father trampled the commandment given him and ignored the divine laws, human nature, in a way, was forsaken by God; rather for that reason it was cursed deserving death.

When the Word the Only-begotten Son of God dwelt in the afflicted body so as to renew it and took hold of Abraham’s offspring to resemble to His brethren (Heb 2: 16-17), He had to set a limit to this forsaking that had befallen human nature and bring to an end the old curse and the evil within us.

For that reason as one of the forsaken having participated with us resembling us in flesh and blood He said: *“Why have You forsaken Me?”* These are the words of someone who actually annuls the forsaking that befell us, inclining the Father to Himself, asking Him to accept us, as if asking Him to first accept Himself.

For Christ became for us a beginning and source for all blessings. Whenever it is said that He receives, in his capacity as human, something from the Father, it is to convey it to our own nature. As for Himself, He is perfect and does not need anything whatsoever, as He is God. (St Cyril the Great *De recta fide ad reginas*).

**“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us,
that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”**

(2 Corinthians 5:21)

The following two texts were translated from Arabic (by self) from st-takla.org from father Tadros Yacoub commentary:

“Those who have knowledge of Old Testament book realize what I say. Because this is not an expression that was used once, but was consistently repeated. The sacrifices for sins were called “sins”. As an example a goat was offered for sin, and a lamb, and what was offered for sin was called sin ... The Law says in some place: “The priests lay their hands on the sins.” (Leviticus 4:29) ... Sin was offered and done away with. The blood of the Savior was shed and the debt record has been done away with. This was the blood that was shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28)”. (Saint Augustine).

“This who knew no sin became a sin sacrifice offered for our sake. The Hebrew word written here was translated in Septuagint in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers “sin sacrifice”. As Christ accepted to be sin sacrifice all humanity put their hands on Him so that He might carry all the heaviness of sins. As our Christ took our place He was considered the greatest sinner, and gave us his place so that we might be considered righteous in the eyes of the Father, as we carry the righteousness of Christ ... Meaning, this who is righteous became sin, that is to say suffered as a condemned sinner that was cursed to die”. (Saint John Chrysostom).

**“We know that our old man was crucified with him
so that the body of sin might be done away with,
and we might no longer be enslaved to sin”**

(Romans 6:6)

We must closely examine what is *“our old man”*, what is the *“body of sin”* that is *“done away with”*, and how it was *“crucified with Christ”* ... The Apostle means by *“the body of sin”* and *“our old man”* the body of dust that has the inevitability of decaying according to its obsolescence in Adam. For we were condemned as such at the beginning through Adam. The ill was aggravated by our carnal appetites, for this was an inbred condition of the flesh according to nature.

How was it crucified with Christ? The Only Son became man and acquired the body made of dust, that was condemned to death, as I have already mentioned, in accordance

with its obsolescence in Adam, and became as if in labor, due to its ingrained appetites having an overwhelming tendency to sin.

But the **law of sin** was incompatible with Christ's totally holy body. We do not say at all that anything due to the human passions stirred within Him except that for which there is no blame, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, and every thing the **law of nature** creates in us without fault.

Although the law of sin did not stir whatsoever in Christ due to His superiority through the power and strength of the Logos in Him; yet we find body's nature in itself, even when we consider it in Christ, no different to ours.

We were crucified with Him when His body, with all our nature in Him, was crucified, ... **“that the body of sin might be done away with”**. I do not mean the body unrestrictedly, but the ingrained carnal appetites within it, that always disturbed the mind with shameful matters, casting it in the mud and mire of the delights of dust ... Do you see then how the flesh of sin was done away with? The ... sin ... first died in Christ, then through Him and by Him this grace was also transferred to us (through the sacraments). (St Cyril the Great on Romans 6:6).

**“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law,
having become a curse for us”**

(Galatians 3:13)

In His own Person, He bore the sentence righteously pronounced against sinners by the Law. For He became **“a curse for us”**, according to the Scripture: **“For cursed is every one, it is said, that hangs on a tree”** (Galatians 3:13). And accursed are we all, for we are not able to fulfill the Law of God: **“For in many things we all stumble”** (James 3:2); and very prone to sin is the nature of man. And since, too, the Law of God says: **“cursed is he which continueth not in all things that are written in the book of this Law, to do them”** (Galatians 3:10), the curse, then belongs unto us, and not to others....

Therefore, He That knew no sin was accursed for the sakes that He might deliver us from the old curse. For all sufficient was God Who is above all, so dying for all; and by death of His own Body, purchasing the redemption of all mankind. (St. Cyril the Great on John 19:17-18; LFC 2, 623-624).

“And they came to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of a skull...” (Matthew 27:33). He did not suffer in any other place, neither was he crucified except in the place of a skull. This is identified by Hebrew mentors as the place of Adam's grave. They affirm that he was buried there after the curse. If it is so, I am amazed at the significance of that spot! For the Lord, wishing to renew the first Adam, had to suffer on it so as to tear down Adam's sin and remove it from his whole race. And inasmuch as Adam had previously heard the words, **“You are dust and to dust you shall return”**, for this reason the Lord was thrown into that place; in order to visit Adam and tear down his curse. Instead of **“You are dust and to dust you shall return”**, he says to him, **“Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light”** (Ephesians 5:14); and also, **“Arise”**, come and **“follow me”** that you may no longer remain cast down on the ground but ascend with me to heaven. For it was imperative that when the Savior should arise,

Adam and all who came forth from Adam should be resurrected with him. (St Athanasius the Great Homily on the Passion and Crucifixion of the Lord”

Seventh –Accomplishing The Law Of Death In One Hand And Abolishing Death Forever On The Other Hand

Because “**The last enemy to be destroyed is death**” (1 Corinthians 15:26) Christ “**gave up his spirit**” (John 19:30).

Here Christ accomplished two marvels at once. First the death of all was accomplished in His body, and this accomplishment is transferred into us when we mysteriously die with Him in Baptism. Second, with the first death, which is the separation of His human spirit from His body, the second death, which is for the body to see corruption and for the spirit to dwell in Hades, has been defeated. This is because His divinity did not separate from His body or His human spirit. This victory over the second death is eternal because the union between His divinity and His humanity is eternal.

Thus, *with death He trampled death*. And from Him this victory is extended into us mysteriously in Baptism. Therefore, we die no more.

The Writings Of The Fathers

For it were monstrous, firstly, that God, having spoken, should prove false—that, when once He had ordained that man, if he transgressed the commandment, should die the death, after the transgression man should not die, but God’s word should be broken. For God would not be true, if, when He had said we should die, man died not. (St Athanasius the Great On the Incarnation of the Word 6:3).

God should appear true to the law He had laid down concerning death. For it were monstrous for God, the Father of truth, to appear a liar for our profit and preservation. (On the Incarnation of the Word 7:1).

Again, it were unseemly that creatures once made rational, and having partaken of the Word, should go to ruin, and turn again toward non-existence by the way of corruption. (On the Incarnation of the Word 6:4).

For His it was ... both to bring the corruptible to incorruption, and to maintain intact the just claim of the Father upon all. (On the Incarnation of the Word 7:5).

Therefore He put on a body, that He might find death in the body, and blot it out. (On the Incarnation of the Word 44:6).

Whence, by offering unto death the body He Himself had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from any stain, straightway He put away death from all His peers. (On the Incarnation of the Word 9:1).

And thus taking from our bodies one of like nature, because all were under penalty of the corruption of death He gave it over to death in the stead of all, and offered it to the Father—doing this, moreover, of His loving-kindness, to the end that, firstly, all being held to have died in Him, the law involving the ruin of men might be undone (inasmuch as its power was fully spent in the Lord’s body, and had no longer holding-ground against

men, his peers), and that, secondly, whereas men had turned toward corruption, He might turn them again toward incorruption. (On the Incarnation of the Word 8:4).

It was not from any natural weakness of the Word that dwelt in it that the body had died, but in order that in it death might be done away by the power of the Savior. (On the Incarnation of the Word 26:6).

So it was that two marvels came to pass at once, that the death of all was accomplished in the Lord's body, and that death and corruption were wholly done away by reason of the Word that was united with it. For there was need of death, and death must ... be suffered on behalf of all, that the debt owing from all might be paid. (On the Incarnation of the Word 20:5).

For by the sacrifice of His own body, He ... put an end to the law, which was against us. (On the Incarnation of the Word 10:5).

He ... tread him (death) down with His own body, and bring him to nought ... death slain by Him. (On the Incarnation of the Word 30:2).

Eighth – Victory Over The First Death And Gaining The Eternal Life

And after He conquered the second death with His first death, He conquered the first death by resurrecting with humanity that will never die or experience pain. This humanity enjoyed the Divine life forever.

And in the Sacraments we do not only return, in Him and by Him, to Adam's state before the fall when he could potentially die, but above this we are given the eternal life which we would have gained had Adam eaten from the Tree of Life instead of the Tree of Knowing Good and Evil.

And Christ breathed anew into His disciples faces the breath of the Holy Spirit, which the first Adam and his children had lost.

And with the ascension of Christ and His sitting on the right hand of the Father, His humanity has been completely glorified with all the Divine glory as He requested from God the Father: **“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”** (John 17:5).

And this is the glorification, which we are invited to progressively acquire in eternity.

The Writings Of The Fathers

None other could render the mortal immortal, save our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Very Life. (St Athanasius the Great On the Incarnation of the Word 20:1).

For this cause the Savior reasonably put on Him a body, in order that the body, becoming wound closely to the Life, should no longer, as mortal, abide in death, but, as having put on immortality, should thenceforth rise again and remain immortal. (On the Incarnation of the Word 44:6).

He suffered not the temple of His body to remain long, but having merely shown it to be dead, by the contact of death with it, He straightway raised it up on the third day, bearing away, as the mark of victory and the triumph over death, the incorruptibility and impassibility which resulted to His body. (On the Incarnation of the Word 26:1).

“He breathed on them and said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). God the Father, at the beginning, by His own Word, took of the dust of the ground, as is written, and fashioned the animal, that is man, and endowed him with a soul, according to His Will, and illuminated him with a share of His own Spirit; for He **“breathed into his nostrils the breath of life”**, as is written. And when it came to pass that through disobedience man fell under the power of death, and lost his ancient honour, God the Father built him up and restored him to newness of life, through the Son, as at the beginning. And how did the Son restore him? By the death of His own Flesh He slew death, and brought the race of man back again into incorruption; for Christ rose again for us. In order, then, that we might learn that He it was Who at the beginning created our nature, and sealed us with the Holy Spirit, our Savior again grants the Spirit, through the outward sign of His Breath, to the holy disciples, as being the first fruits of renewed nature. (St. Cyril the Great on John 20:22-23; LFC 2, 675).

He has suffered death economically in His own flesh, in order that treading it and risen in that He is Life and Life-giving, He might trans-element unto incorruption that which is tyrannized over by death, i.e. the body: and so unto us too spreads the might of the achievement, extending unto the whole race... For He lived anew from the dead, having all in Himself. (St. Cyril the Great Against Nestorius, V,1; LFC 47, 156, 157, 159, 161.).

It is the mystical Pascha, celebrated in figures under the Law but fulfilled in very truth by Christ; the marvelous Pascha, the wonder of divine virtue, the work of power, truly a feast, an everlasting memorial:

Impassibility born of suffering,

Immortality born of death,

Life born in the tomb,

Healing born from wounds,

Resurrection born from the fall,

Ascent (to Heaven) born from descent (to Hell).

(Message of the Fathers of the Church 4, 29.) (This Paschal homily is kept among the works of St. John Chrysostom, but is probably from the second century).

“He highly exalted Him” (Philippians 2:9), not that He Himself should be exalted, for He is the highest, but that ... we may be exalted in Him, and that we may enter the gates of heaven, which He has also opened for us... whom the door of paradise was shut. (Against the Arians, Disc. I, 41; NPNF, 2nd Ser., Vol. IV, p. 330).

The Lord came to cast down the devil, and ... prepare the way for us up into heaven, as said the Apostle: **“Through the veil, that is to say, His flesh”** (Hebrews 10:20) ... For thus being lifted up He ... made a new opening of the way up into heaven as He says once more: **“Lift up your gates, you princes, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors.”** (Psalm 24:7). For it was not the Word Himself that needed an opening of the gates, being Lord of all; nor were any of His works closed to their Maker; but we it was that needed it **whom He carried up by His own body**. For as He offered it to death on behalf of all, so by it He once more made ready the way up into the heavens.

(On the Incarnation of the Word, 25:5-6. NPNF, 2nd Ser., Vol. IV, p. 50).

In what sense does **“He now appear in the presence of God on our behalf”**? Did he not always appear in God’s presence before His incarnation?

It is self-evident that such had been the case, for He is the creative Wisdom of God the Father through Whom all things passed out of nothing into existence, ...

But now He appears in the Father’s presence not as the unincarnated Logos as He had been from the beginning, but in our own form and our own nature.

For this reason we say that He appears now **“on our behalf”** in the presence of God the Father to present our own nature to Him, that nature ...

It is we, therefore, whom He brings before the Father’s eyes in His own Person as our beginning Who has become man to bring us closer to the Father.

(St. Cyril the Great Exposition of Hebrews 9:24).

The Sacraments

All the victories of Christ's humanity are transplanted into us by the Holy Spirit in the Baptism and Charismaton, and renewed in us in the Eucharist.

“He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:14).
“The Holy Spirit... will... bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14:26).

Thus man receives forgiveness.

The Meanings of Forgiveness:

- (1) Abolishing death and its legal authority.
- (2) Renewing the image of the Son in us i.e. the adoption or the new creation, and receiving or activating the dwelling of the Holy Spirit.
- (3) Acquiring or activating the ability to reject the sins offered to us, as well as purifying us from the sins we committed and curing us from their internal damages.
- (4) Enjoying the eternal life that Adam and Eve would have enjoyed if they ate from the Tree of Life instead of the Tree of Knowing Good and evil. That is to say we do not only return to Adam's status in the Garden of Eden before the fall, but furthermore we gain the eternal life.

All forgiveness is coming from:

- + The union of the Divine and the human in Christ.
- + The union of Christ with us individually in Baptism and collectively in the Eucharist.

Please note that, except when stated otherwise, all the writings of the fathers in this chapter are taken “From Sophronius to the Beginners Brethren”.

Every quotation will end with the letter S and the paragraph number.

“From Sophronius to the beginners brethren:

Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the lover of mankind who accepted to be our inheritance and to redeem us in the body of his own humanity. So He created in himself one new human by which he made peace with the Father (Eph 2:15). And He resurrected us in His body and made us members of His household (inhabitants of His home) (Eph 2:19) becoming “The Head, from whom the whole body... grows” (Col 2:19) stabilized with the power and the building up of the Holy Spirit. **(S 1)**.

“ The superior gift that encompasses all mysteries is marring the church by the Lord, as from this marriage mysteries are produced: mystery of Baptismal bathing, and of Holy Communion” **(S 11)**.

Baptism and Charismatism

“And as those who immerse in the water of Baptism, every one of them, gain the power of Christ’s death and resurrection according to his mysterious work in man,.. and thus unite with the Lord the second Adam, and get borne a new birth that makes us holy vessels and sheep in the flock of the Lamb Son of God.

And with the change of the human nature in us from old Adam to new Adam, the life of Sonship is planted in us and we no longer become slaves to corruption that plants division in us and to death that makes every brother unable to see his brother. *(Please note the strong relation between doctrine and spiritual practice, which is a standard orthodox characteristic)*. And with Baptism we move to the new life that raises us above the corruption of old nature and converts us into live temple of God.

And as the Baptism is one the Alter is also one. The Baptism is one because it exists in the one church... through the union of the Divine with the human in our Lord Jesus Christ. And in the sacrament of his mysterious marriage to the church He gave her the ability to take, in any time and in any place, from His Divine human life in order to baptize those who are coming to her and to give them the gift of adoption and the grant of life of no death. For that exact reason the Lord, who gives the mystery of adoption in Baptism, He Himself marry us through the mystery of His cross, which is the abolition of the old man by forming the new man into all who Baptize in His name for the Father and in the Holy Spirit. And so also at the church alter He offers Himself alive and resurrected from the dead which is the gift of the Divine to us in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. **(S8)**

The Eucharist

It is the believe of orthodox people that our Lord Jesus Christ has ascended with his body and sat at the right hand of the Father in His glory. And in His glory He is the One Christ and also in the glorious mystery He is the One Christ that is not divided into divine and human.

Because of this above-comprehension union He exists on the alter of the catholic (gathering) church with His body and blood in every liturgy. We understand this mystery in as much as we realize, with good and sound belief, the union between the divine and the human.

In this glorious union, which passes all understanding, the human has become one with the divinity and the person of the Word without separation. This union has made all what proceeds from the human or the divine, one divine human act of the One Christ.

So he is ... the One (Christ) who cured the bleeding woman when she touched his garment. He is the One (Christ) who made the born blind see, when He anointed his eyes with clay. So if the One Christ does neither divide nor His nature separate after the union, but He has one act, then how can a separation happen in the glorious sacrament!

He himself is present with His humanity and His divinity at the alter of the catholic church and **transfers into us His superior life**. Because He initially filled the universe with His divine glory, but now **He fills the church, His body, with special grace and superior gift, which is the gift of salvation and the part-taking of His divine nature.**

Christ is one, has one act, gives nothing with the human without the divine, or with the divine without the human. And this what happens in all the mysteries, which surpass all the knowledge realization that is formed in us through the senses, especially the eyes. (S4)

In Eucharist Christ Does Not Get Divided To Us But We Get Gathered In Him

When we partake of Him, He is not the one who gets divided by distribution, but we are the ones who get united with Him.

He has been glorified on the cross and by the Holy Spirit “to gather into one the children of God who are scattered” (John 11:52). Accordingly He does not get divided in the distribution, but **by the distribution the scattered become His holy body.**

He does not become what we are, but we become what He is. If He became what we are he would had become in the corruption of death. But it is us who become what He is, as His resurrection concurs our corruption, and His power converts our weakness into non-death. (S9).

The Relation Between Baptism/Charismation And Eucharist

Because He married every believer in Baptism, He comes to us marrying the entire congregation harmonizing it in His body. (S9).

We who accepted the Holy Spirit and by Him we were stamped in the Holy Charismation in Baptism, the Holy spirit has enlightened our visions and planted in us the death - concurring life of Christ.

He Himself is the One Christ that transfers into us this mysterious life in the glorious sacrament (of Eucharist). This does not become planting of God’s life in us anew, but because we get this seed in baptism we return and cling mysteriously to God. This is like the flow of life from the head to the members of the one body. (S 5).

One Church, One Priest, One Baptism, One Eucharist, One Altar

Those who perform baptism in all corners of the universe, perform one baptism with one faith and one Lord. It is one power in every time and place, and stable grace that does not change no matter how time and place changed, because it is the baptism of the One Lord (who is the one priest) in His One body the catholic church. (S 7).

As baptism is one the alter is also one. The Baptism is one because it exists in the one church. (S 8).

The alter of the one catholic church is one alter no matter how numerous, because as baptism is one so is the alter. (S 7).

Accordingly it is one Eucharist for one Lord that does not change by time and place. (S 7).

The Holy Spirit Is The One Alter

The alter is one, that is to say the Holy Spirit, at which the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is offered. As Christ is not placed on many scattered alters, but gather the scattered into one.

This is a great mystery that mind cannot understand because man moves from a place to a place, while the Lord sends, by the Holy Spirit, His divine human life from the bosom of the Father, and he does that with His intense love. (S 10).

Comments by Dr George Bebawi in the same book:

- + St Athanasius 7th canon: “The alter ... is alive for ever ... He is the erected alter in front of the Lord in heavens, He is the Holy Spirit”
- + The alter consecration prayer in our church says: “Rational alter for the non-blood speaking sacrifice”.

Sacramental Relations In The New Testament

Between Baptism and Charismatism:

We gained the Holy Spirit in Charismatism because of the union with Christ in baptism “and all drank the same supernatural drink. For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ.” (1 Cor 10:4).

"Jesus said ... 'whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'" (John 4:13-14).

"Jesus ... proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water. ' Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive..." (John 7:37-39).

Between Baptism and Sacrament of Repentance:

“Jesus said ... ‘He who has bathed (been baptized) does not need to wash (have a another baptism), except for his feet (repent), but he is clean all over...'” (John 13:10).

Between Baptism and Eucharist:

In baptism we “...put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). And we have to do that before we can participate in the Eucharist.

In the gospel according to Mathews in chapter 22:1-14 Christ gave the parable of the wedding feast (Liturgy) in which a king (Christ) ended up inviting everybody, good and bad, to the wedding banquet (Eucharist). However, one of the invitees was not wearing wedding garment (Baptism) and for that the king deprived him from participating in the banquet and ordered his servants to cast him out.

The Spiritual Practice

The orthodox way of life does not separate Spiritual Practices from Old Testament, New Testament, Salvation Doctrine, Sacraments, and Liturgies. Here are some examples:

Nineveh Fasting

- ❖ We do not just read Jonah's book and mentally or emotionally contemplate on it in our homes or in bible study groups, but we actually fast with the people of Nineveh asking with them for God's forgiveness.
- ❖ However, because we are now under the New Covenant we, as children of God, acquire forgiveness by the pouring of Christ's life into our nature through the descent of the Holy Spirit onto us in the Liturgy and the participation in His Body and Blood. That is why we celebrate the Liturgy during the three days of fasting and the day of feast.
- ❖ In these four liturgies we start by reading, in order, a chapter from the four chapters of Jonah's book.
- ❖ The gospel reading of each fast liturgy contains a reference to Jonah as the symbol of Christ. Mathew 12: 35-45, Luke 11:29-36, and Mathew 15:32 – 16:4, respectively. "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Mathew 12:40), "For as Jonah became a sign to the men of Nineveh, so will the Son of man be to this generation." (Luke 11-30), "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah." (Mathew 16:4).
- ❖ The gospel reading of the feast liturgy is from John 2:12-25 in which Christ says: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19). Then Saint John the beloved commented: "He spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken." (John 2:21-22).
- ❖ Then the hymn during distribution says: "Jonah in the belly of the whale, like Christ in the tomb three days".
- ❖ In the gospel reading in the third day of fasting Christ said: "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." (Mathew 15:32) We hear this statement while we have been fasting for three days and Christ is going to fill us with his life-giving Body and Blood.

How awesomely beautiful is our church! How gloriously compassionate is our God!

The Prodigal Son Inheritance

In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32), if you try to understand what was the inheritance that the prodigal son squandered in view of what Adam squandered it becomes obvious that the parable is referring to the Image of God. From that point you can have much deeper understanding of the parable.

At the end of the parable the father said about his prodigal son that he: “was dead (by losing the Holy Spirit), and is alive; he was lost (by the corruption of the image of God in him), and is found.”

Praise is to be to our Lord and Savior.

Pride And Servility

- ❖ When the devil tries to fill your heart with pride remember that you are made of dust “God formed man of dust from the ground” (Genesis 2:7).
- ❖ When the devil tries to fill your heart with self-belittling and servile thoughts remember that you are made according to the Image of God “God created man in his own image” (Genesis 1:27).
- ❖ Therefore you need to remember that you are very capable person to live in goodness and to provide goodness to others. But you equally need to remember that this goodness is a free gift from God, and not from your own toile. “What have you that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?” (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Dogmatic Basis Of Spiritual Commands In The Epistles

Going through the multitude of commands in the Epistles we can easily see their dogmatic basis. As an example Saint James in his Epistle warns us about the misuse of our tongue “with it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the likeness of God.” (James 3:9).

The Good Wine Given By Christ

In the miracle of the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), in which Christ transformed water into wine, the steward of the feast said to the *bridegroom*: "Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but *you have kept the good wine until now.*" (John 2:10).

It is a known fact that the older the wine the better and the newer the wine the poorer.

In Daniel 7:9 Christ was described as the “One that was ancient of days”.

Galatians 4:4 states: “When the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son”.

By making the connection between the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Christian doctrine, we can easily see that the old good wine that was kept until the time had fully come is the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom of our soul, who quenched our thirst for eternal life which could not be quenched by the other wines, i.e. the Law and the Prophets.

Sound Understanding Of Knowledge

Man Has Two Eyes:

“If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.” (Matthew 18:9).

“If your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell...” (Mark 9:47).

This text talks about two eyes. One of them has two states: causing you to sin OR not causing you to do so.

Then what does the second eye do?

“Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness. Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.” (Luke 11:34-35).

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23).

What are these two eyes then? Furthermore what is the meaning of the word eye to start with?

The function of the eye is to see, and when you see you know. So seeing is knowing.

What were the two kinds of knowing that were available to Adam and Eve in Paradise?

- + Knowledge through communion in God’s life by eating from the Tree of Life i.e. the Eucharist.
- + Knowledge in isolation from communion in God’s life and in refusal to participate in it or to rely on it, by eating from the Tree of Knowing Good and Evil.
- ❖ The first leads to life, and the second caused death.
- ❖ The first leads to true knowledge, and the second lead to false one.
- ❖ The first ignites love, and the second generated hate between Adam and Eve.
- ❖ The first produces true freedom “If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). The second produced slavery to sin “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Genesis 3:7).

- ❖ The first quenches man's thirst for happiness "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him [i.e. the Holy Spirit] will never thirst" (John 4:14). The second produced temporary illusionary happiness "Every one who drinks of this water will thirst again" (John 4:13).

Therefore There Are Two Eyes:

One can see the beauty of the creator and the other can see the beauty of the creation.

- ❖ The first one is the eye of the inner man, i.e. the Image of God in us, by which we are required to focus on God's beauty. When this eye is sound, by accepting the dwelling and the work of the Holy Spirit, the whole body (i.e. being) will be full of light. See (Luke 11:34-35) and (Matthew 6:22-23) above.
- ❖ The second one is the physical eye that is welcome to enjoy the beauty of his creation *to some extent*.

So, if you enjoy the beauty of the creation, then you are sharing with Adam and Eve eating from the trees of the garden.

But, if enjoying this beauty kept from contemplating in God's beauty, then you are sharing with them eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

St. Symeon The New Theologian In His Homily 59:

What other eye does He mean here other than the mind? This eye can be simple if it sees simple (pure) light. Simple (pure) light is Christ. Thus, whoever has in himself the light of Christ, which would shine in his mind, about him it is said that he has the mind of Christ. When your eye, that is, the mind, is simple, that is, shines, then ... all the parts of your soul, will be light; and to the contrary, when your mind is evil, that is, darkened and extinguished, then your whole soul will be dark. Thus, think well—is darkness or light in you? ...Look well at this, that you might not be deceived and think that you have light in you when it is not light, but darkness.

Thanksgiving Prayer
To Our Lord Jesus Christ
For His Salvation Economy

- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You are the controller of everything.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You are the lover of mankind.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You control everything according to Your love to mankind.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You love mankind according to Your ability to control everything.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus the Pantocrator and the Philanthropist.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You Son of God for You have incarnated and became man.
- ❖ Thank You Son of God for by Your union with human spirit devil could not capture it in Hades when it left Your body. Instead it liberated those who were there and entered them into Paradise.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for by our union with You in Baptism You gave our spirits the capability to enter Paradise when they leave their body.
- ❖ Thank You Son of God for by Your union with human body, it became impossible for Your body to see corruption when Your human spirit left it at the cross.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for by our union with You in Baptism You made our bodies continue in union with You when our spirits leave them, and to resurrect in incorruption in Your second coming.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You Son of God for by Your eternal union with man You have imprinted in him Your image forever.

- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for by our union with You in Baptism You imprint in us for ever the image of the Son of God, by which we become sons of the heavenly Father by adoption.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You Son of God for, despite You are in a state of eternal union with the Holy Spirit, You accepted the Holy Spirit in Your Humanity for our sake.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for, because we are sons, You pour on us from You Your Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Charismation, by whom Your image shines in us, and by whom become learners from God, and by whom we “fulfill all righteousness”.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for, when You were offered all the sins that were offered to Adam and his sons, You rejected them and therefore You won against them for ever.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for Your success against the temptation on the mount in what Adam and eve as well as the people of God in the wilderness, failed.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for we do not know You as a teacher only, or an example only, but also as a power, planted in our organs, to fulfill these teachings and to follow this example.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You planted in us in Baptism the seed of victory over the sins that are offered to us and the devil deceptions that we are subjected to.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You water this seed with Your blood and feed it with Your body, in the Eucharist.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You endured all these physical and psychological pains with obedience, thanksgiving, and forgiveness, in order to give us the ability to see your face in our pains, so that we might obey, thank, and forgive.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You in the Garden of Gethsemane accepted by intention to have all our inequities placed on You, then You carried our sins on the cross. So You became a curse for our sake. Then You abolished our inequities and sins by Your death, Then You purified us from them by Your Sacraments.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for, by departure of Your human spirit from Your body by death, You trampled death and humiliated its authority. Because Your body did not see corruption nor Your spirit was captivated in Hades. Because Your divinity did not separate from either one.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for Saturday of Light in which Your human spirit went to Hades victorious over the authority of Satan, liberated those who spent all their life under bitter slavery, and entered them into Paradise.
- ❖ Thank You Son of God for, by resurrecting Your humanity from death, You gave it eternal life which death has no authority over, and which qualifies for entering the bosom of the Father.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for You gave us in Baptism the seed of abolishing death and its authority, and the seed of eternal life, and for enabling this new creation to grow by the descent of Your Holy Spirit in the Liturgy and Eucharist.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You Son of God for ascending Your humanity to heaven to sit on the right hand of the father where it got glorified by all the glory of the divinity.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for, by the mystery of Your ascension, You gave us in Baptism and Eucharist the deposit of our ascension with You. So we became capable

of tasting the sweetness of Your divinity and seeking “the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God”.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for establishing the church by the descent of Your Holy Spirit upon Your holy disciples in Pentecost, and for Your work through her to save souls and forgive sins.
- ❖ Thank You my Lord Jesus for Your second coming and for resurrecting our bodies with bodies similar to Your resurrection body, and for taking us with You to homes of light which You prepared for us, O You the Philanthropist and the Pantocrator.

Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy ... Lord Have Mercy

Please Lord Accept This Offering
Through The Intercession Of Saint Mary And All The Saints
And Bless The Project Of Purchasing A Parish
For Your Servants In North San Diego