

# *A Gift From God: Jesus Christ*



"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.  
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and shall call his name Immanuel."

Isaiah 7:14

*All glory, praise and thanks is Yours: The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit One God as it was in the beginning, now and forever.  
Amen and Amen.*

***God's Word in Isaiah 9:6***

*"For a Son has been born for Us, a Son has been given to Us, and dominion has been laid on His Shoulders; and this is the Name He has been given: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."*

*Amen and Amen. Alleluia.*



*A priest once said, and how true what he had said: The whole Holy Bible can be summarized and understood by one verse which is a saying by God to Israel through His Prophet Malachi: "I have loved you" (Malachi 1:1).*

*This booklet is a gift to anyone who has heard that God have said that on a certain day people would say: "Look, He is the God of my salvation: I shall have faith and not be afraid, for Yahweh is my strength and my song, He have been my salvation." (Isaiah 12:2) and would like to know God's plan for our salvation to repeat as Simeon the upright man declared when he saw Jesus: "Now, Master, You are letting Your servant go in peace as You promised; for my eyes have seen the salvation which You have made ready in the sight of the nations; a light of revelation for the gentiles and glory for Your people Israel." (Luke 2:29-32). And, with Virgin Mary, we can sing a new song: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:46).*

*Accordingly, to God who loved us, we can say:*

*We thank you God, The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit for everything You've done though we are unworthy. All glory is Yours now and forever. Amen and Amen. Alleluia.* 

*On behalf of God's Children  
Whom He had redeemed:  
Niran Noel Iskandar Salmon*



## *Foreword*

*Each of us, child or adult, appreciates receiving a gift. Most gifts delight and surprise us.*

*Sometimes children are so delighted and surprised that they tear the wrapping from the gift so that they can reach the delight and surprise that is inside.*

*But, quite often, children lose interest in the gift that they have received. They put the gift aside. They never pick it up again.*

*An adult's response is meant to be different. Usually, adults unwrap their gifts carefully because they appreciate the levels of meaning that are associated with gift-giving and gift-receiving.*

*Adults also recognize that some gifts are so precious that they need to be opened and looked at and used over and over again so that their meaning can be treasured more and more.*

*"A Gift from God: Jesus Christ" is a gift that deserves to be opened carefully and reflected upon again and again so that, over time, it can reveal its levels of meaning.*

*When used for reflection and meditation, "A Gift from God: Jesus Christ" will lead an adult believer into a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus.*

*The insights that are within "A Gift from God: Jesus Christ" will be revealed with careful unwrapping and with careful unpacking. The insights are worth searching for.*

*Fr Ezio Blasoni SM*



## *Introduction*

*This booklet aims as a comprehensive teaching tool to explain God's Love & Mercy for us through His Free Gift Whom He sent for our salvation: Jesus Christ; such Love & Mercy that existed in God's Heart from the beginning.*

*The first article sheds more light on the Mystery of Salvation and the Ministry of Lord Jesus Christ; God's Love and Mercy, and gives them factual explanation that aims to uplift the individuals' understanding of the Mystery, and helps attaining higher spiritual level. The learning includes the most important basic elements for proclaiming the Good News as planned by God and taught by the disciples, presenting a cycle:*

- *Going from the overshadowing loving mercy of God in the beginning of the times,*
- *to the preparation in the Old Testament;*
- *the incarnation and the mission of Christ;*
- *the Cross, the Healing, the Redemption and the Resurrection;*
- *the descent of the Holy Spirit;*
- *and to finish presenting the love of Jesus that accompanies His flock through the Eucharist till the end of the ages.*

*The rest of the articles are complementary articles that would explain major points that link the Old Testament with the New Testament, and God with us:*

- *Cain's and Abel's Offerings*
- *Abraham*
- *The Ark of the Covenant*
- *The Fruit of the Promised Land*
- *Jesus Christ: The Redeemer*
- *The Sea, the Mist/Cloud and the Black Clouds*
- *The Swaddling Cloth and The Cerecloth*
- *The Son of the Carpenter*
- *The Healer*
- *God's Holiness (1) & God's Holiness (2)*
- *Our Relationship with God*
- *The Loving Son*

*Since the subject requires God's help to understand, then it is important to pray to God for the Gift of Understanding, saying:*

*"Heavenly Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit lead us to the fullness of Light and Truth and let us taste the sweetness of the true wisdom of Your Word and be embraced always with Your Divine Providence in Jesus Christ Your beloved Son Who reign with You and The Holy Spirit One God. Amen."*



# *A Gift From God: Jesus Christ*

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# The Mystery of Our Salvation

This article explains the Mystery of our salvation, i.e. God's plan for our salvation (Acts 15) through the steps pointed in the “Introduction”, and the Ministry of Lord Jesus Christ; God’s Love and Mercy.

The explanation uses images formed in a mysterious way in a prayer book; and for me they are icons from God painted in oil to transmit the supernatural and to help us to spiritually see what is beyond. As defined in [www.jpnnordin.com](http://www.jpnnordin.com), icons are an important part of the spirituality and worship of the Eastern Orthodox churches. Originally, the word "εἰκόνα - icon" means: “What refers to a person who is above”. There are several key things to note about icons:

- Icons are not worshipped in and of themselves; rather they are portals to worship. The icon itself is a vehicle. Its object is to transmit the supernatural, to help us see what is beyond.
- No living person is ever portrayed on an icon.
- There are a semi-official set of approved icon topics. The artist is not free to invent new icons.

## The Icons in the Prayer Book

The book containing the oil paintings [i.e., icons] described in this article is an Arabic prayer book that used to be given to those who were receiving their 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion in Kuwait. It was printed in 1962 in Jerusalem at the Franciscans Fathers’ Press, eighth edition. Below are two pictures of the front and back cover of the book so that the reader can imagine its shape. These pictures are of a similar book to the book where the icons appeared as I no longer have the book but one of my friends who participated in the first communion in that period had lent me her book.



Front Cover



Back Cover

It includes:

- (1) Prayers supposedly every Christian knows by heart,
- (2) The Ten Commandments of God,
- (3) The commandments of the Church and the seven sacraments in the Church,

- (4) The steps of the Latin Rite Holy Mass and the response to them,
- (5) Prayers before and after receiving the Holy Eucharist,
- (6) The Rosary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus along with the prayers that follow it including the request for more laborers for the harvest,
- (7) The Rosary [Only three mysteries as the book was printed in 1962] and the prayers following the Rosary including the Litany of Virgin Mary, and
- (8) Other prayers to Virgin Mary Mother of God.

There are eleven icons appearing in this 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion Prayer Book on certain pages, and the meaning of the icon has been linked to its location within the book and the prayer that's on that page. These icons, explained in the sequence of its appearance within the book, describe the Ministry of Lord Jesus Christ, our salvation, where:

- In Matthew 5:17, Jesus Christ said: *“Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them”*.
- In Luke 4:18, Jesus Christ said: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord”*.

The icons also illustrate:

- The Words in John 6:26-58,
- The Letter of Saint Paul to the Hebrews,
- The words in the letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians 1:10-29 and Ephesians 1:1-14,
- How God answered the prayers of the distressed as mentioned in Psalms 85, 98 and 102,
- How God clothed us in the garments of salvation and wrapped us in the cloak of integrity (Isaiah 61:10), and
- How God fulfilled His promise told to Ezekiel as He is concerned about His Holy Name (Ezekiel 36:16-28) and He want His people, who are called by His Name, who believe in Him to be holy.

Though the book is an Arabic book, but the icons' sequence is looked at from the end of the book to the beginning of the book, i.e. from Left to Right [as if someone is holding the book wanting to page it, so the end of the book is on the left hand side of the reader and the beginning of the book is on his right hand side], in other words from West to East as an indication to the purpose of the Ministry of Lord Jesus Christ, and who He is, which is:

**“The Shining Star leading us from Darkness to The Light”**.

**Notes to See the Icons:**

1. Comparison between the pages of the book where the icons appeared and the similar book without the icons:



The book where the icons appeared

The similar book without oil

2. The figure below shows the natural color of the paper and the color of the paper where the oil is [i.e., oily].

Color of the Paper covered with Oil [Oily]



Natural Paper Color without Oil

3. In order to imagine certain shapes within an icon, either a dotted shape is made around the oiled-shape, e.g.:



or a picture of similar shape is shown opposite to it outside the icon, e.g.:



or Dark dots were drawn to highlight the shape, e.g.



4. At the bottom of some pages there is a yellow color that has nothing to do with the icon, as it was automatically printed by the camera indicating the date when the photo was taken.



## First Icon:



The 1<sup>st</sup> Icon ... The overshadowing loving mercy of God  
in the beginning of the times

The first icon is found on the inside cover page [the back cover of the Arabic book, which is the first page within an English book and the last page within an Arabic book] where it is filled with oil. It represents God's loving mercy that overshadowed on the creation in the beginning and continuing to the end, this icon indicates that:

1. **"Jesus Christ's Ministry started from the beginning"** which is indicated by the sequence of the icon, i.e. the first, where:

From the beginning, The Word, Jesus Christ Son of God, is with the Father and the Holy Spirit One God:

- *In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. Now the earth was without form and void, and there was darkness over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters* (Genesis 1:1-2).
- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. He was with God in the beginning* (John 1:1-2).

2. **"Jesus Christ's Ministry is for the purpose of radiating light for the world as He is the Light to give eternal life"** [oil is a source of light when ignited], and as the light is known to be the source for life, so spiritually,

the knowledge of God [i.e., The Light] give eternal life (Hosea 6:1-3 and 6; 2:18-25), where:

- **God said: 'Let there be light' and there was light.** (Genesis 1:3); the first words spoken by God and written in the Gospel.
- **When Jesus spoke to the people again, He said: 'I am the light of the world'** (John 8:12), and
- **Eternal life is this: to know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.** (John 17:3)

3. **"Jesus Christ's Ministry is that He would make the whole creation dedicated to God"** [the oil fills the entire paper], where the head of the new believer is anointed with oil, the seal of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 2:4-5 & 9-10), similar to the anointment with oil of the head of whoever was selected by God in the Old Testament to be King or priest dedicated for serving Him (Exodus 30:22-33, Isaiah 61:1-3).
4. **"Jesus Christ's Ministry is showing the loving mercy of God that hovered over the creation in the beginning"** [the oil fills the entire paper], where *"the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters"* (Genesis 1:2) in the sense that the Spirit of God embrace all.
5. **"Jesus Christ's Ministry is to proclaim the Kingdom of God: God is Love"**, where we, human beings, are in God and God in our hearts working in us to become one [complete blending of oil with paper] united by the mutual love for each other that fill our hearts (John 14), where God "The Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit" commanded us to love as He love, and care about the physical and spiritual needs of others (2 Corinthians 3:1-3); such love that is poured by The Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) that generates the Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 13) that yield in our hearts and our thoughts and our actions the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-25).
6. **"Jesus Christ's Ministry is to create a new Earth and a new Heaven"** [the color of the paper has changed]: "Kingdom of Heaven", where the Heart of the Incarnated God is its soil which grow hearts on His Image watered by His Precious Blood, "The Free Reviving Water", and God is its Sun of everlasting brilliant light (Revelation 21 & 22, Isaiah 65:16-21).

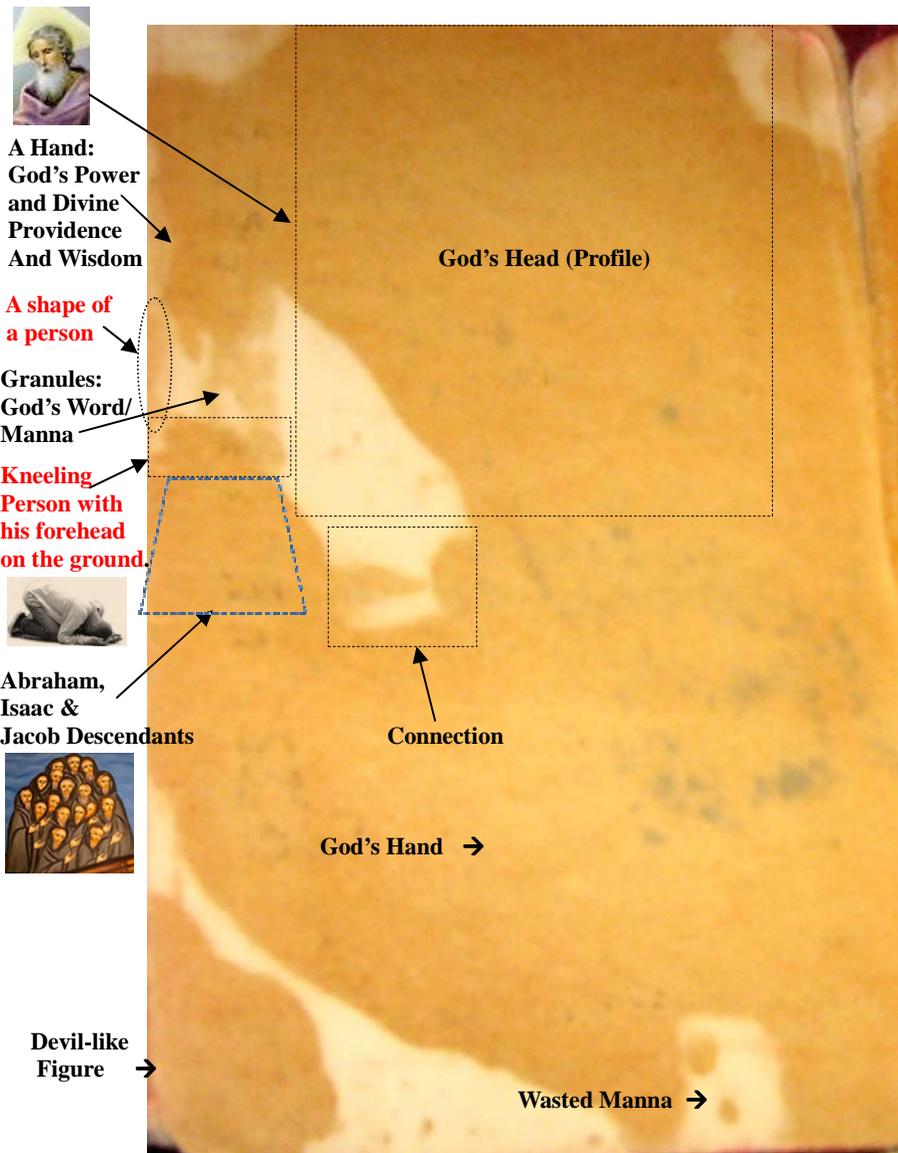
Note: The black marks on the icon were caused by a small paper having a drawing of The Risen Lord that used to be given on Easter at the entrance of the Church, and it was left in the book of prayers.

## Second Icon:

The second icon appears on an empty page at the end of the book [see page -3- "Notes to See the Icons", first note], a sign that God wanted to begin preparations for His thoughts and plan with people who need to disregard the idea of worshiping other gods in order to be filled with the knowledge of Him only, and only worship Him (Joshua 24:2-4).

Within the icon, shown on the next page, the following can be seen:

1. A profile [i.e., side image] of God's Head [this does not mean that God look like this but as in the Book of Revelation, God sit on His Throne and thus He have a shape (Revelation 4) that the prophet Ezekiel saw in a vision and wrote: "*High above on the form of a throne was a form with the appearance of a human being.*" (Ezekiel 1:26)].
2. At His forehead [mind] there is what looks like a hand with flexed fingers except one finger pointing down, which symbolize the power of God and His Divine Providence/Help and Wisdom. The Bible revealed "God's Hand and Arm" in several verses where the purpose is not to describe the parts of the body of God, but to enlighten the concept of God's power compared to the parts of the human body and its functions (e.g. 1 Kings 8:15 & 42, Job 1:11; Psalm 8:6; 18:35; 23:4; 77:15; 89:13-21, Ezekiel 3:22; 21:22).
3. Emanating from this hand are granules that appear as:
  - (1) Rain and Snow representing God's Word, Teachings and Gifts [e.g. Wisdom] (Isaiah 55:10-11, Psalm 72:6, Deuteronomy 32:1-3), and
  - (2) Manna; bread from Heaven (Exodus 16:4-16).
4. The granules are poured down to a person who is kneeling in front of God on the top of a mount that represents his descendants. And, we note that God's Face is bent down looking towards this person.
5. In front of the hand, there is a shape of a person indicating to the people who spoke God's Word by the power of the Holy Spirit [i.e., prophets]. There is more interpretation on page -30-, after explaining the 5<sup>th</sup> icon.
6. There is a connection between God and the man/people that are held with His Hand/Arm and are receiving the Word/Manna. And here, the hand/arm symbolizes God's love and affection (Hosea 11:3-4, The Song of Songs 8:3). The connection is between two shapes: a circular shape from God's side and another shape from the people's side.
7. There are some wasted Manna from God's hands.
8. On the bottom right-hand side of the icon, there is a devil-like figure looking at God and what He hold in His Hand.



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Icon ... The Preparation in the Old Testament

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Icon ... The Preparation in the Old Testament

Jesus Christ was slowly introduced and prepared for before His actual coming as The Messiah. The second icon covers the period before Jesus Christ's birth; from the day God selected to have a nation whose father is Abraham; to take them by His Hand, i.e. His Divine Providence [i.e., The Wisdom of His Mind], where He cared for their lives as any man take care of his treasure; He turned evil plots into man's own profit; He gave power and strength (Psalm 68), and raised prophets for guidance and teaching His precepts.

The period of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ included:

### ✓ **Selecting a nation.**

God appeared to Abraham and he bowed to the ground and God made a Covenant between Himself and Abraham (Genesis 17:1-7). Afterwards, his descendants knelt in prayer to God. Accordingly, the connection between God and the people underneath the kneeling person receiving the Word/ Manna can be interpreted as follows:

1. **From God's Side**, the circular shape: Here, we must remember that God said: *"As I live, I do not take pleasure in the death of the wicked but in the conversion of the wicked who changes his ways and saves his life ... I shall judge each of you by what you do, House of Israel"* (Ezekiel 33:11-20). He also said: *"I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put My Spirit in you, and make you keep my laws, and respect and practice my judgements"* (Ezekiel 36:26-27), and accordingly, the shape represents:

1. **Stone of Israel**, where when Jacob [Israel] blessed his twelve sons, he mentioned the word "Stone of Israel", i.e. Rock, as a metaphor for God, Israel's protector, where He assisted Joseph who ruled the people of Egypt and the people of Israel with wisdom (Genesis 49:22-26). *"Yahweh will do the fighting for you; all you need to do is to keep calm"* (Exodus 14:14), and the Lord will bring the people out of the land of slavery to his Holy dwelling, the sanctuary (Exodus 15:17). Prophet Moses also used the word "Rock" as a metaphor for God (Deuteronomy 32:4); as well as Prophet Isaiah described God as "Rock", Israel's refuge (Isaiah 17:10), and trust in terms of dependability (Isaiah 26:4). God also have described himself as "Rock" while confirming to the sons of Israel that no other gods exist (Isaiah 44:8).
2. **The Promised Land** that God promised the Sons of Israel to live in; a rich land that represents the end destination of all of us: Heaven,

God's Home, and His Holy Living Heart; and from the harvest of this land they and all the generations after them will be enriched and be satisfied and full [refer to Article: 'The Fruit of the Promised Land'].

3. **The Living Bread** that would prevent the soul from hunger and complaining against God and join it to God's Heart, that is:
    - (1) The Word of God, and thus obey it, and
    - (2) In the next phase: The Real Manna/Eucharist, and thus come to it, have it and be filled.
  4. **The Rock** from which the Living Water was gushed as a sign that God is with His people (Exodus 17:6-7).
  5. **David's Smooth Stone**, the first of five stones, which beat out a strong war man, Goliath (1 Samuel 17), as an indication to the "Divine Help"/"God's Name" to overcome the forces of Satan that surpasses the human's weak forces of the one who refuses the taunt of others to God's Word, Will and Actions, and accept their challenge (1 Samuel 17:25).
2. **From the Kneeling Person's Side:**
1. **The male's foreskin**, where the Covenant with God is related to the circumcision of His people (Genesis 17:9-14, Acts 15:1). And with Moses, the "bridegroom of blood" was introduced on account of the circumcision (Exodus 4:24-26) where the blood of Moses' son saved him from death.
  2. **Elongated tongue**, for:
    - (1) Praying, praising and glorifying God's Name and His Works (Psalms),
    - (2) Tasting the sweetness of God's Word (Psalm 34:8, Ezekiel 2:8-10 and 3:1-3), and
    - (3) Drinking the Living Water.
  3. **A long nose**, larger than normal and extremely flowing with long thin shape towards God, indicating to:
    1. The nose is no longer doing its function but inhale the sweet aroma of the Spirit, and
    2. The twelve tribes of Jacob [Israel: the Jew/Hebrew] who are known for their long noses.
  4. **A pointing finger** towards God, as an indication to:
    1. God is the God worshiped by the people of Israel; from Him come the aid they need, and in Him they trust ["*My faithful love, my*

*bastion, my citadel, my Saviour; I shelter behind Him, my shield, He make the people submit to me" (Psalm 144:2)].*

2. The finger as the tongue refers to prayer to God, which is the door to God's Heart, that is taught by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26), where it is written: "*Blessed be Yahweh, my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle" (Psalm 144:1), and "In every place, then, I want the men to lift their hands up reverently in prayer, with no anger or argument" (1 Timothy 2:8). Prayer makes the human heart get closer to God; and believers should inform others about God and His Will and Works in words and deeds [i.e., to become a mirror of God's Heart, the merciful and loving heart, to attract others to God, e.g. Ruth and Naomi (Ruth 1:16)].*

The connection between God and the people underneath the kneeling person receiving the Word/ Manna is unbroken and constant as an indication to:

- The love of God, obedience to His Word, and dependency on Him is a duty at all times.
- Prayer, praise, and thanksgiving are at all times (Psalm 86:3), and performed by everyone: angels, humans and all works of God from nature (Psalm 103, 145).
- At time of distress, people turns to God and call upon Him from their hearts to satisfy their desires (Psalm 145). And, especially when the conscience is troubling because of sin, man prays and relies on God's Mercy; God respond and man rejoices (Psalm 6 and 16).

The understanding of the shape of the connection is fully comprehended by understanding the memorial stones, the altar and the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament, where: memorial stones and altars were erected in places where God appeared to man and as a witness to God's Divine Help, and sacrifices are a way to enter into a closer relationship with God. The sacrifices/offerings are divided into three groups: Gift, Communion and Atonement for Sin (Book of Leviticus). These sacrifices were named "Korban" which means literally "what is brought nearer, i.e., given to God" or "consecrated thing". The Israelites had carefully kept the sanctuary and the altar in the temple built by King Solomon as "House for God" undefiled, and they had to build a new altar when profaned, and offered burnt offerings, communion and thanksgiving sacrifices on it, and celebrated yearly the days of dedication of the new altar (1 Maccabees 4:36-59). The history of erecting the memorial stones and the altar is as follows:

- ✓ Noah built an altar to the Lord and presented burnt offerings on it, and its smell was pleasing to God (Genesis 8:20-21).

- ✓ The first altar built by Abraham [Abram] to God was at Shechem, the Oak of Moreh, where God appeared to him and told him "*I shall give this country to your progeny*" on the mountain between Bethel on the west and Ai on the east and invoked God's Name, i.e. mentioned God's Name to the Canaanites who worshiped other gods (Genesis 12:6-9 and 13:1-4), before the famine and his departure to Egypt.

Abraham also built an altar at the Oak of Mamre, at Hebron, in the land of Canaan, west of Jordan plain (Genesis 13:18), after his return from Egypt and dividing the land between him and Lot. Again God appeared to him and promised to give the land to him and his descendants.

Abraham also built an altar on a mountain to offer his son as a burnt offering to God upon His request to try him, and God provided a ram to be burnt instead of Isaac, the son of Abraham, on that place, and the place was called "Yahweh provide" (Genesis 22:1-14).

- ✓ Isaac built an altar to the Lord and invoked His Name in Beersheba where God appeared to him and promised him His Blessings (Genesis 26:23-25). At that place, Isaac's servants dug a well.

- ✓ At the beginning of his life, and having fled in fear of Esau his brother to Haran, Jacob didn't build an altar but put up, on the ground where God stood beside him in the land between Beersheba and Haran, a pillar from a stone as a monument and poured oil on top of the stone. Jacob considered that place as "the abode of God" and the gate of heaven and he called it "Bethel" after being named "Luz". In this place God made a promise to Jacob, and Jacob also promised God to give Him the tithes of everything God provide him if He keep His promise to be with him and bring him back safely to the land of his father and give that land to him and his descendants who will be maximized as the dust on the ground (Genesis 28:10-22). This stone was as a witness between God and Jacob.

Jacob had another memorial of stones set up at Mount Gilead, at Galeed, as an indication that God is the witness to the treaty between him and Laban [the brother of Jacob's mother, and his father's cousin] after they ate together on that stone so that they won't betray one another and that Jacob would not marry other women besides Laban's daughters and treat them well (Genesis 31:45-54).

After his safe return to the land of Canaan and reconciliation with his brother Esau, he tented opposite the city of Shechem, bought that land and erected an altar which he named "El, God of Israel" (Genesis 33:18-20), where Israel is the name given by God to Jacob after he wrestled with him when he returned from Haran before meeting his brother (Genesis 32:23-29).

At God's request, Jacob fled from the land of Shechem to Bethel, where he'd already put the stone as witness between him and God, and built there an altar to God (Genesis 35:1-8).

- ✓ At God's request, Moses built an altar from dust or non-carved stone to God, everywhere He chose to have His Name remembered, to sacrifice the burnt offerings and communion sacrifices from his sheep and cattle, and God shall come to him and bless him (Exodus 20:24, Deuteronomy 12:4-11).

On Mount Sinai, God gave His Word and the law to Moses who announced it to his people and it was written in "**The Book of Covenant**", and they promised to carry out what was written. At the bottom of the mountain, Moses built an altar and twelve monuments and offered the communion sacrifices and sprinkled half of its blood on the altar and the other half on the people to be "*the blood of the Covenant which Yahweh has made with Israel*" (Exodus 24:3-8). On that day, on top of the mountain, seventy of the elders of Israel saw God (Exodus 24:9-11).

- ✓ At the request of God, Joshua son of Nun, assistant of Moses, while the Israelites were crossing the Jordan River towards the land promised to them by God, and as God stopped the stream, twelve men, representing the tribes of Israel, picked up twelve stones from the dry ground of mid-Jordan, from the position of the legs of the priests, the holders of the Ark of the Covenant, and crossed the river and put it on the solid ground where they camped, and called the place "Gilgal", to be a sign to the Israelites forever and for all peoples of the Earth that "the Jordan's water separated before the Ark of the Covenant" and "God's Hand is mighty and capable" and "people should always stand in awe of God" (Joshua 3:14-17, 4:1-24). On the same day, Joshua erected another monument from twelve stones on the spot where the priests stood (Joshua 4:9).

✓ **Providing protection, physical food [the Manna, Water and the fruitful land], and spiritual food [God's Word, Law and Commandments]**

God poured down His blessings and heavenly graces over Abraham's Descendants; He set them free from captivity and destroyed their enemies, and led them through the waters into the desert to the promised fruitful land. He accompanied them in the cloud and fire. He gave them His Word, Law and Commandments through Moses, and Manna to survive [the bread from Heaven given to Moses' people for 40 years while they were in the desert (Exodus 16). In John 6:31 people said to Jesus: "*Our fathers had*

*manna to eat in the desert; as scripture says: He gave them bread from heaven to eat”], but that Manna was not The Bread Of Life in itself, because although people ate it and heard God’s Word they still followed other Gods, disobeyed His Word and died in the eyes of God (Ezekiel 36:16-18) [see the wasted Manna from God’s hands to the devil-like figure on the bottom right-hand side of the icon]. Also, in the desert, God provided water from the rock. Saint Paul the Apostle understood what actually/spiritually happened and explained it in his 1<sup>st</sup> letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 10, verses 1-5.*

✓ **The Sons of Israel knew God, The Rider on the Clouds, and they remember Him always and His actions, and await His coming**

God’s Work is always remembered by the Israelites, and many are the readings from the Old Testament that remember God’s Work so that it will be known from one generation to the other. For example:

- In Psalm 68 people prayed remembering God, The Rider of the Clouds, and God’s Work:

*Sing to God, play music to His name, build a road for the Rider of the clouds, rejoice in Yahweh, dance before him. Father of orphans, defender of widows, such is God in His holy dwelling. God gives the lonely a home to live in, leads prisoners out into prosperity, but rebels must live in the bare wastelands. God, when you set out at the head of Your people, when You strode over the desert, the earth rocked, the heavens pelted down rain at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel. God, You rained down a shower of blessings, when Your heritage was weary You gave it strength. Your family found a home, which You in your generosity provided for the humble. (Psalm 68:4-10)*

Also, this icon illustrates the following:

- ❖ God, who considered Sons of Israel as His Children and He bowed to them and held them in His Arms (Hosea 11:1-4). In this icon, there is a sideways image of a face, i.e., the Face of God. In general, the face represents the identity of the person. As if, here God is inviting us not to see His facial expressions but tells us: "Come to Me and know Me to see how much I loved you, I held you up with My Hand and kept My Eyes on you".
- ❖ Sons of Israel, the worshipers of God, and about God holding to them leading them to victory as in the Psalms:
  - Psalm 15:1-3 *“Yahweh, who can find a home in your tent, who can dwell on your holy mountain? Whoever lives blamelessly, who acts uprightly, who speaks the truth from the heart, who keeps the tongue*

*under control, who does not wrong a comrade, who casts no discredit on a neighbor”*

- Psalm 18:2 *“Yahweh is my rock and my fortress, my deliverer is my God. I take refuge in him, my rock, my shield, my saving strength, my stronghold, my place of refuge”*
- Psalm 27:4-6 *“One thing I ask of Yahweh, one thing I seek: to dwell in Yahweh's house all the days of my life, to enjoy the sweetness of Yahweh, to seek out his temple. For he hides me away under his roof on the day of evil, he folds me in the recesses of his tent, sets me high on a rock. Now my head is held high above the enemies who surround me; in his tent I shall offer sacrifices of acclaim. I shall sing, I shall make music for Yahweh”*

❖ Climbing to the top of the mountain to meet God, for example the meeting of Prophet Moses with God (Exodus 24 and 34:1-28).

**In Summary:** The period of preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ, planned by God, included:

- ✓ Selecting a nation, where circumcision of the people was a sign of their belonging to Him and to fulfil the Covenant for Salvation.
- ✓ Providing protection, physical food [the Manna, Water and the fruitful land], and spiritual food [God’s Word, Law and Commandments].
- ✓ Holding them in His Hand [Divine Providence: show strength and victory (many examples including: 1 Kings 18:20-40)].
- ✓ Giving them strength and crushing their enemies [turned evil plots to the good of mankind].
- ✓ Teaching them the meaning of holiness and rituals, and how to approach Him through prayer, fasting and sacrifice.
- ✓ Filling the Prophets with the Holy Spirit to prophesize about The Christ “The Saviour” and the signs of His coming.

### **Third Icon:**

The third icon appears on the ‘Index Page’ indicating that this icon includes the content of the book, i.e. "The Mystery of Salvation".

The third icon shows a profile of God’s Head as in the second icon, and He is looking at and holding a woman looking towards Him [only the profile of her head is shown], and underneath her there is a shape of an open mouth or a big fish in His Hand. Underneath God’s hand, on the side, there is a shape of human being. On the bottom right-hand side of the icon there is a heart.



Profile of a head of a woman looking towards God

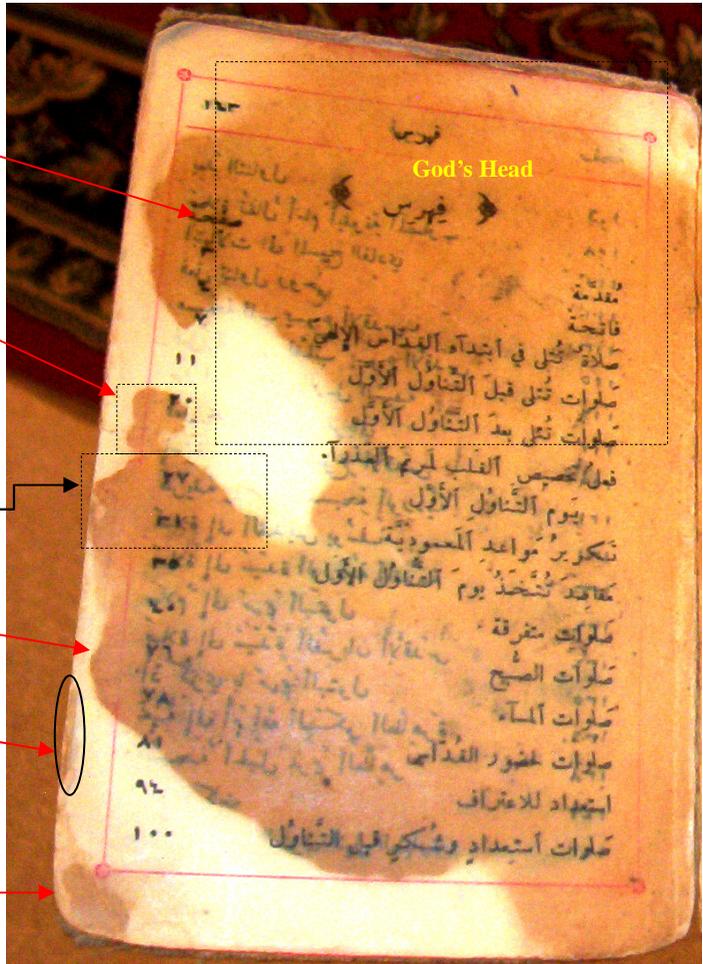


Open Mouth Or A Fish [The woman's Descendant]

God's Hand

Shape of a human being

Heart



The 3<sup>rd</sup> Icon ... The Incarnation and The Mission of Christ

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Icon ... The Incarnation and The Mission of Christ

When the time was right, i.e., people knew that:

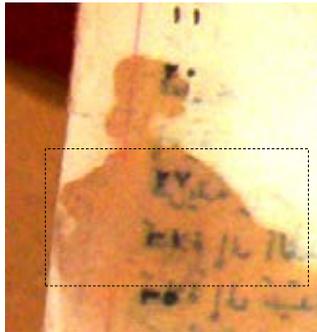
- (1) There are Heavenly Laws,
- (2) There is a sacrifice given for the forgiveness of sin,
- (3) The need of scriptures to become nearer to God, and
- (4) A savior will be coming,

God chose a woman, the Immaculate Virgin Mary, to tell us about the love He hold for us and His Mercy that will free people from slavery to sin [Note the

heart on the bottom right-hand side of the icon replacing the devil-like figure in the second icon].

Immaculate Virgin Mary is the same woman Tobit prophesized about when he said in his hymn: “... *Within you [Zion], generation after generation shall proclaim their joy, and the name of her who is Elect shall endure through the generation to come.*” (Tobit 13:11). And that's also what God inspired to Virgin Mary when she said in her hymn, The Magnificat: “*Yes, from now onwards all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me*” (Luke 1:48-49).

Underneath the profile of Immaculate Virgin Mary we see her only descendant whose life was cut short and had no descendants to talk about as prophesized in the Book of Isaiah (53:8) and declared in Acts 8:33, i.e. Jesus Christ, The Messiah. Immaculate Virgin Mary’s descendant takes the shape of two things:



1. **An Open Mouth:** As an indication that He is “God’s Word”, where: “*The Word became flesh, He lived among us, and we saw His glory, the glory He has from the Father as only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” (John 1:14).



2. **A Big Fish:** a fish that can be linked to:

1. The Easy Catch: “*Look, I am standing at the door, knocking. If one of you hears me calling and opens the door, I will come in and share a meal at that person’s side.*” (Revelation 3:20).



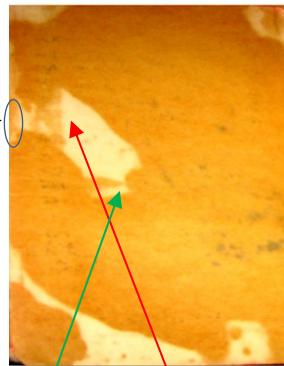
2. The big fish in the Book of Tobit (6:2-9) [refer to Article ‘Jesus: The Redeemer’], that was caught (A big fish is drawn) by Tobias on the request of Angel Raphael; caught with full strength so that it will not go back to the Tigris river, caught and:

- Part of its flesh was used as immediate food, and the rest was reserved by salting for future feed.

- Its gall was used as ointment to remove the white spots on the eye of a blind person to give him back his sight.
  - Its heart and liver were burnt so that the smoke would remove any affliction caused by evil spirits or demons.
3. The fish that Saint Peter caught and found in its mouth “God’s Word”: That is enough to pay the toll [i.e., he found God’s Word] for himself [Jews] and for Jesus [representative of All Christians] (Matthew 17:24-27).
  4. The big fish that took Prophet Jonah in its belly to the shore where God wanted His Will to be done for the salvation of Nineveh’s People. Prophet Jonah was safe there.



Shape of →  
Human being



Shape of →  
Human being

In the icon, and compared to the 2<sup>nd</sup> icon, we note that the granules [God’s Word and The Living Bread] descending from God’s Forehead had disappeared from its position, as well as the connection between God and the people of Israel, to emphasize that the offspring of Virgin Mary, i.e. Jesus/Immanuel (Matthew 1:20-25, Luke 1:31) is “The Word” and “Bread of Life” [He is the protection, the filling, the healing and peace of mind to the poor and the Giver of life], and also He is Israel’s Stone, refuge, strength, the promised land, living water, sacrifice and a sign of the presence of God always with man, and now He is the only mediator between God and man for salvation to have eternal life (1 Timothy 2:5), and in His Name [i.e., “Son-of-God”/”Saviour”/”God is with us”] we pray to God and He respond (John 16:23-28). We also note that the human shape that symbolizes the prophets had been moved from in front of the granules emanated from God’s Mind down underneath God’s Arm with smaller body than it was to signify that the prophecies about the coming of Christ have ended but the believer should be a witness and ambassador of the Lord Jesus to guide others to Him.

The Descendant of Virgin Mary will take the Sovereignty over the world from the evil, i.e. Satan (Matthew 28:18, John 16:33), and make "Love" as the basis of this world, for His Work springs from the heart of God as represented in the shape of a heart on the bottom right-hand side of the icon replacing the devil-like figure in the second icon. So as to say: "My Lord and my God. I realize that the devil's work is to change the feelings of love and service and sacrifice for others and give priority to the love of self, and Your Work is to forgive and restore these feelings because You are "Love". Yes, you are in constant contact with whom they keep on asking for Your Help to help them learn their fault and give them victory over their weakness and ideas of the devil".

A figure: (1) Piece of food, or  
 (2) A man holding to the fish



If we look closer at the opened mouth of the fish, we will notice that there is something in front of it. With the enlarged picture, the figure can be either a piece of food or a shape of a man holding to the fish. Here again we can see the resemblance of Jesus Christ and the big fish, where: Big fish eats the smaller ones. Jesus Christ, Full of Grace and Truth, called the first disciples, taught them, and gave them the power [The graces of His Holy Spirit] to be like Him, i.e. His followers will be fishers of men as He was to them (Matthew 4:19, Luke 10:17-20) to make God known to all generations.

Looking at both the second and the third icons, we will notice that Abraham, his descendants [through their connection with God] and Virgin Mary are all facing God; a posture representing that **our trust and worship is only in Him and to Him**. While if we look at the position of the descendant of Virgin Mary represented by "Opened Mouth"/"Big Fish", i.e. Jesus Christ, we will notice that the face is away from God looking at whoever is in front of God as if:

**He is a FREE GIFT from God's Hand to us.**

## From the second to the third icon: Has the Mind of God changed?



Jesus Christ said to His Disciples: *“Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. In truth I tell you, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke, is to disappear from the Law until all its purpose is achieved.”* (Matthew 5:17-19)

Some people might think that God have changed His law dramatically regarding the way of worship and sacrifice, but Saint Peter explained it for the Jewish Pharisees who believed in Jesus Christ and how the connection with God became "the Gift of the Holy Spirit from God to man" (Acts 15:5-7). And, we can ask ourselves:

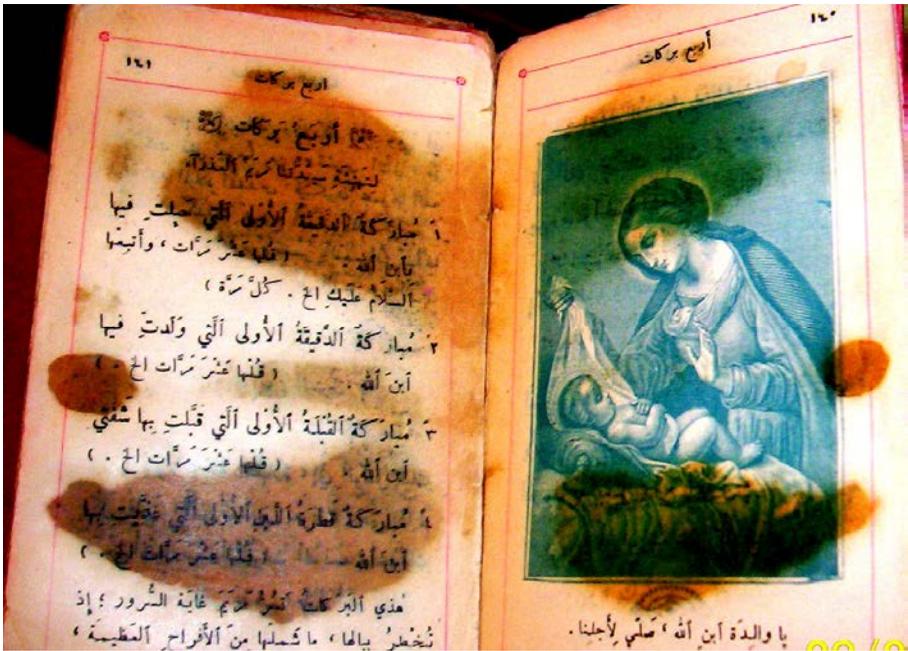
1. Would we accept the coming of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer without the understanding of the meaning of offering/sacrifice [From Abel's and Abraham's offering, till Moses' offering: The blood of a lamb], or learn this slowly until His coming to the world?
2. What law is more acceptable and understandable to follow at the beginning: A law that is fulfilled by earthly material things or a law that is spiritually and heavenly based? (Hebrews 9:1-15).

God have not and do not change (Hebrews 13:18) but man cannot understand “His Wisdom” (Ecclesiasticus 42:17-24) or what “everything is due in its season” means.

## Fourth Icon:

The fourth icon exists on two pages in the book where there is a picture of Virgin Mary with Jesus Christ as a baby and she is holding the swaddling cloth on one page, and a prayer to congratulate Virgin Mary for the blessing of: (1) the first moment The Son of God was conceived in her womb, (2) the first moment she gave birth to Him, (3) the first kiss she gave Him, and (4) the first drop of milk she fed Him.

Somehow, this icon, the picture and the prayer say a lot about “Who Jesus is”, “How He came into the world”, “How He died and returned back to the Father”, and “How He physically stayed with us on earth even after His death”.



The 4<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Incarnation and The Mission of Christ

The icon consists of a shape of a dove with opened wings in the top on both pages surrounded with different shapes of different texture [i.e., oiliness], and underneath it there is a shape of a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and a round piece of bread on each side, with a shape of a cloud above and connected to the baby on the Right side and the shape of an angel above the piece of bread on the same side. And, in between the two babies, there is a shape of a cross and on top of it there is a shape of a small cloud.

For ease of explanation, the icon will be divided into two parts: “Left Side” and “Right Side”. Consider someone had held the book to explain the icon and had faced the book towards the viewer as in the picture. The “Right Side” is the right of that person and at the same time it is the right of the icon, the “Left Side” is the left of that person and at the same time it is the left of the icon. This consideration would apply to the rest of the icons.

Right Left



And, there are “Two Aspects” on which the explanation of each side depends, i.e. each side of the icon is explained according to the annotated aspect, where:

- **First Aspect:** Left side: Human Nature, and Right side: Divine Nature
- **Second Aspect:** Left side: Living on earth before Ascension, and Right side: After Ascension, i.e. Living in Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:12, 40-49).

The two aspects are independent from each other, i.e. it does not mean that on earth Jesus had only human nature and in heaven He have Divine nature.

Right Side

Left Side

**Different Shapes**

**Angel**

**Eucharist**

**Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and connects from the head to the cloud on top of it.**

**Cross with a cloud on top of it.**

**Different Shapes**

**Holy Spirit in the Form of a Dove**

**Pita Bread & Eucharist**

**Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes. This end is the leg. (Check the picture below).**



The 4<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Incarnation and The Mission of Christ

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Incarnation and The Mission of Christ

Many prophets of the Old Testament had prophesized the coming of The Messiah; and Tobit, though he was not among those prophets but a lay good/holy person [i.e., a servant of the Holy Spirit in body and soul – the different shapes surrounding the shape of the Dove], had praised God in his hymn (Tobit 13:11) and said:

*“A bright light shall shine over all the regions of the earth; many nations will come from far away, from all the ends of the earth, to dwell close to the Holy Name of the Lord God, with gifts in their hands for the King of Heaven...”*

Since His birth: The bright light, “Jesus Christ”, He was visited by the Magi who came from the East with gifts in their hands (Matthew 2:1-2), and till now He, in The Holy Eucharist, is visited by all nations with their gifts: A humble, meek, sorrowful, and loving heart [Gold, i.e., most expensive thing to man: his heart], thankful for its salvation [Frankincense, i.e., Prayer], and proclaiming His Kingdom [Myrrh, i.e., Oil of Confirmation to the dead soul] by bearing witness to the Good News of God's Grace & Love (Acts 20:24).

#### 1. 4<sup>th</sup> Icon ... First Aspect, where Left Side: Human Nature & Right Side: Divine Nature

“Divine Nature”

“Human Nature”



By the power of the Holy Spirit, in the form of a Dove on the top of the two pages and surrounded with angels, Jesus Christ, The Son of God, was incarnated and became a baby from Immaculate Virgin Mary [the Baby on the left hand side of the Holy Spirit] (Luke 1:30-35, and Matthew 1:20-21).

The Baby exist on both sides of the icon indicating that He have both natures: Human and Divine [where the right side has the baby’s connection to the cloud on which He will be coming on judgment day or the cloud covered Him on Mount Tabor, or the cloud of God mentioned in the Old Testament].

After His death on the cross [shown in between the left side and the right side of the icon with a cloud on top of it indicating the voice that was heard earlier on the mount that said: *“This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!”* (Matthew 17:5)], He gave us Himself [real presence] in the Holy Eucharist again in both Holy natures: Human [i.e., Holy Body and Holy Blood, Holy Soul; Lamb Of God], and Divine [Source of eternal living: Bread of Life, Living Water, The Way, The Resurrection, The Truth, Redeemer, Healer, i.e., having the power of forgiving the sins against God]. Note that the round shape representing the Holy Eucharist exists on both sides. Yes, **He is "The Divine Grace, and the Vessel of the Divine Grace and the Giver of the Divine Grace"**. Also, the cross with the cloud on top of it indicates that:



1. The Transfigured/Crucified/Resurrected Jesus Christ [The Rain & Light] is the “Bow in the Clouds” [where White Light is separated into a spectrum of colours when penetrating a drop of water/rain] that God gave us as a sign for His Covenant with all creatures and a mirror reflecting His Glory (Genesis 9:12-17, 2 Corinthians 3:17-18, Revelation 4:3).
2. Christ's death on the cross that took place in Jerusalem is ‘The Salvation’, and that was always in God’s thoughts (Luke 9:28-36, 2 Timothy 1:8-10).
3. The Crucified/Resurrected Jesus Christ is the “Tent of Meeting”/”Temple of Yahweh” with all its contents [including the water that gushed from His Side for cleansing] that was covered with The Cloud so that whoever comes to Him would see God’s Glory filling the place day and night throughout the journey of his/her life (Exodus 40:16-38, 1 Kings 8:10-11, Isaiah 6:1-4, Ezekiel 43:1-9, John 1:14, 2 Corinthians 4:6).
4. Jesus Christ’s Body is The Temple that was raised in three days by Jesus’ own power as God (John 2:19-22).

Thus:

- ✓ God wanted to feed us on earth with the Living Bread & Water being His Son, Jesus Christ [note that the baby in swaddling clothes was laid in a manger: a place where animals’ food is put], to make us grow in spirit and become His Children on earth and later on in Heaven and join Him on His Table there [Jesus in Heaven is the same Jesus in the Holy Eucharist; check the angel above the Holy Eucharist on the right side].
- ✓ The existence of the baby on the right hand side connected to the cloud indicates Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and His ascending to Heaven in body and soul, His return to the Father [in spiritual body!!] and He is ONE with God, The Father and The Holy Spirit (Psalm 68).
- ✓ Jesus have two natures: In Human nature He is the Son of Man [Son of

Mary], and in Divine nature He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16:13-17). In short: Having the Baby & the Holy Eucharist in both sides indicates the real presence and existence of Jesus Christ [Human & Divine] in the Holy Eucharist (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

- ✓ The purpose of this icon is not to see The Holy Trinity: One God, but to try to understand the Second Person of the Holy Trinity: Jesus Christ Son of God who lead us by the power of God through the Holy Spirit to holy living with each other on earth according to God's law: Love & Mercy [Kingdom of God on earth] and eternal life [Kingdom of God in Heaven].

## 2. 4<sup>th</sup> Icon ... Second Aspect, where Left Side: Before Ascension & Right Side: After Ascension

### 2.1 The Left Side of the Icon: Before Ascension.

Before Ascension



←Pita Bread  
& Eucharist

←Baby wrapped  
in swaddling  
clothes. This end  
is the leg.

On earth, Jesus Christ [Son-of-God] was incarnated by the power of The Holy Spirit and took the form of a man [New born baby: Son-of-Man] having both Human nature and Divine nature. On the Last Supper day, He gave Himself [Body and Blood], though still existing on earth before His Death, in the form of Bread and Wine respectively for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 22:19-20). It is the first time that Jesus Christ actually existed in two forms at the same time: Jesus Christ [Human and Divine] who was on earth is the same Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist now existing on earth having His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity [A Baby's Pure Heart full of love; a Meek, Humble, Passionate and Merciful Heart; and a Holy Sacrifice]. It was in His Own Words that He existed in the Holy Eucharist. Having the Holy Eucharist on this side would also indicate He exist as human in the Holy Eucharist. How humble is that! **All praise and glory to God for His 'Indescribable Precious Gift'!** Amen.

On earth, Jesus Christ was recognized by the people in two incidents:

1. **As a Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes** [The little helpless figure in swaddling clothes represents the complete submission of Christ to the physical conditions governing the human race. And, it also represents a clean and holy person (Ezekiel 16:4)]. When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, the angel appeared to the shepherd and told them: *“And this will be the sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes”* (Luke 2:12).
2. **In the breaking of bread.** After His death, Jesus Christ appeared to Cleopas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus but they didn’t recognize Him until He took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them (Luke 24:30-31).

## 2.2 The Right Side of the Icon: After Ascension.

After Ascension



After Jesus Christ’s Resurrection, He is and will be recognized by the people in two incidents:

1. **In the Holy Eucharist** [daily]. In the last supper, Jesus Christ took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples saying: *“This is My Body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me”* (Luke 22:19). This is when He established the Blessed Sacrament: The Holy Eucharist. Nowadays, during the Holy Mass, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine is changed into Jesus Christ’s Body & Blood and becomes our offering to God: A cereal offering consisting of wheaten flour prepared [unleavened] with oil and on which wine was poured, and at the same time an animal offering of a lamb (Leviticus 1 till 7).
2. **In His coming on a cloud** (Psalm 68). When Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, a cloud received Him out of the disciples’ sight; two men stood by them in white apparel and told them: *“This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into Heaven”* (Acts 1:9-11). Comparing this to the descending of Yahweh in a cloud on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:5), we would say: **“Jesus, my Lord, and my God”**.

In the icon, the clothing of the baby on the “After Ascension” side, which is similar to the clothing of the baby on the “Before Ascension” side, remind us of the shroud that was left in the tomb after the resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ to signify that He is no longer there (Luke 24:1-12). Yes, the cerecloth [i.e., shroud] was left in the tomb as a sign for the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, as who will come and take the body of the deceased after taking off the shroud? The one who took the body, presumably, will take it as it is and when he gets home, he will then do whatever he likes with the dead body, which by the Jews tradition should have been buried and therefore had to be covered by the shroud. Who can remove the cerecloth from the body that is covered with blood in a short time and without being noticed by the guard who were by the door of the Tomb? If someone wanted to steal the body, they won't think to remove the shroud inside the tomb. As the swaddling cloth was a sign for God to say to man “I came”, so was the shroud left as a sign for God to say to man “I've gone, it is done, I'm alive in another clothing”. He who has the keys of death and of Hades say: *"I am the Living One. I was dead and look I am alive for ever and ever"* (Revelation 1:18).

Now, if we wanted to apply the icon to us humans as Children of God, then the cross with the cloud indicates the following:

To go from left side into the right side; Earth into Heaven, we need to imitate Jesus Christ on earth to be born again:

1. Be baptized by The Holy Spirit, where baptism is washing in the Pool of Siloam “Pool of The One who has been sent”, Pool of Peace, in order for our sight to be restored (Nehemiah 2:14-3:15, John 9:1-7), i.e. to drink the water from the fountain of Living Water, and to wash in it too, i.e. to melt in Christ as salt or sugar dissolve in water, and
2. Be fed by the “Bread of Life”: The Holy Eucharist, and abide by the Word of God [i.e., God's Will] thus becoming God's Children: Calling our God “Father” from all of our hearts, carry the cross [i.e., Our true steadfast Love to God, i.e., putting into action the teachings of Jesus Christ, and working in the Kingdom of God proclaiming the Good News of human's salvation without fear (2 Timothy 1:8-10) and serve others for His Glory] and follow Him, as **no glory without a cross**.

And there we will see Him as we will be like Him. The shapes around the Holy Spirit represent the workers in God's field, i.e. His Kingdom; everybody is in God's service praising His Holy Name and working by His Will: His Word and His Spirit of service to others, some of them in the form of an Angel and the other with no specific body as an indication to anyone who wants to be on the footsteps of the Son-of-God offering himself for the love of God to serve others. The texture of the shapes after resurrection is different than the

ones before resurrection; they are more oily as an indication to the luminous body that we will have after death (1 Corinthians 15:42-57). Our body will change where Jesus Christ said we will be like the angels in Heaven; they don't marry or get married (Matthew 22:30).

If we examine the posture of the baby within the icon, we will notice that it is for a baby who is held in the arms and on the lap of the person holding him. In comparison with another posture of a baby laying on a bed, i.e., not held by someone (See both pictures below), we will notice that the posture in the icon represents: Jesus Christ: ***“The Only Son Who is close to The Father’s Heart Who has made Him known”*** (John 1:18). And through Jesus Christ, we become God’s Children whom He hold in His Arms tenderly. He is our Father Whom we trust, remembering His Words (Isaiah 49:15): ***“Can a woman forget her baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne? Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you.”***



### Fifth Icon:

This icon exists on the two pages having ‘The Glorious Mysteries’ of the Rosary.

The icon consists of two parts connected together as one but each is on a page:

1. The right side of the painting is a side-profile of a face of a man with closed mouth, and a reflection of the same face but has opened his mouth widely. This painting resembles a wise man who would not speak out of his own, but speaks God’s Word to teach others God’s ways (Ezekiel 3:22-27).
2. The left side of the painting is a side-profile of face and part of the body of a ‘Woman’ looking up [to Heaven] at God as if in prayer. There is also a cross underneath the breast of the woman, or underneath her hands that are crossed on her breast, i.e. over the abdominal area, which indicates that she offers her life to serve the One who died on the Cross for her salvation, i.e. Lord Jesus Christ.

From the location of the icon, we can say that both persons are righteous and filled with the Holy Spirit, and they are the first in giving glory to Jesus Christ and asking people to listen to Him.

Right Side: A Man

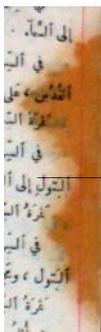
Left Side: A Woman



The 5<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Work of The Holy Spirit

### 5<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Work of The Holy Spirit

A Man



← Profile of a Man's face

← Reflection

A Woman



Profile of a woman's face looking up.

PS: The picture of the woman is shown in black and white for a clearer view.

Cross →

Four main couples, man and woman, fit into the characters of these paintings in four different times of the life of Jesus Christ:

1. Prior to the birth of Jesus Christ: (1) Zachariah, and (2) his wife Elizabeth.

**Zachariah** was mute for a time and then filled with the Holy Spirit he spoke blessing God with great words in his canticle and prophesized God's visit to His people and His plan for their redemption from all enemies, i.e. sins (Luke 1:67-79).

**Elizabeth** who was barren and God listened to her prayer and she gave birth to John, the Prophet of the Highest. In addition, her greeting to Mary gives glory to the Child whom Mary will bear; in her words [being filled with the Holy Spirit], and in the action of the baby in her womb as he leaped for joy the minute she heard Mary's greeting (Luke 1:41-45).

2. When Jesus Christ was born: (1) Simeon, and (2) Anna.

**Simeon** [Upright and devout man, i.e. filled with the Holy Spirit] who was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ, and *when he saw Jesus, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace... for my eyes have seen Your salvation..."* (Luke 2:25-32).

**Anna** who was a prophetess, i.e. filled with the Holy Spirit, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher, served God with fasting and prayers night and day. The instant she saw Jesus [when His parents brought Him into the Temple to present Him to the Lord], she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem (Luke 2:36-38).

3. When Jesus Christ started His mission: (1) John The Baptist, and (2) His mother Immaculate Virgin Mary.

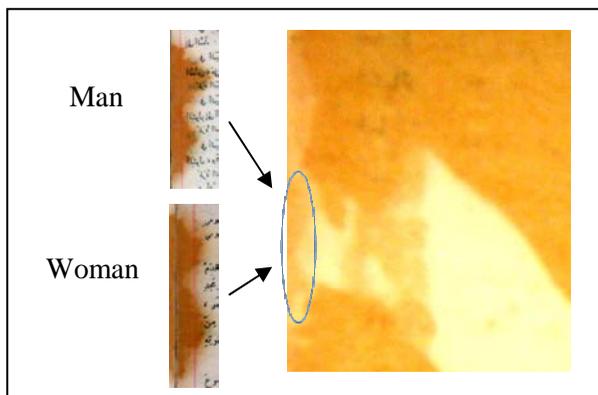
**John the Baptist** is known to be a horn of salvation (Luke 1:69) who, filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb, went before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways and give knowledge of salvation (Luke 1:15-17, 76-80). He is the one indicated in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make His paths straight ...'"* (Luke 3:4-6).

**Immaculate Virgin Mary, full of Grace**, was the woman whom the Holy Spirit came upon and she gave birth to the Lord (Luke 1:26-35) who was crucified and died on the cross [the painting has a symbol of a cross underneath the breast of the woman]. In the Wedding at Cana, Virgin Mary was the first to tell people [the servants] to listen to what Jesus Christ say, trust Him and do what He ask them to do without hesitation (John 2:1-5).

4. After the death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection: (1) Joseph of Arimathaea, and (2) The Ointment-bearing Women.

**Joseph of Arimathaea**, a member of the Jewish Council and secret follower of Jesus Christ (John 19:38) who opposed judging Jesus. After the death of Jesus Christ, he declared boldly and without fear for himself his love for the Lord Jesus as he went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body and bought linen and wrapped Him and put Him in his grave (Matthew 27:57-60, Luke 23:50-53); his works reflected his faith in the Lord Jesus.

**The Ointment-bearing Women**, who served the crucified Jesus boldly and fearlessly depending on God, as though fear overcame them but did not prevent them from walking to the tomb to anoint the crucified body of Christ (Matthew 28:1-2, Mark 16:1-3), and became the first to announce to the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead.



Going back to the Second Icon, and looking at the oil figure in front of God's Hand/Divine Providence [that was not explained earlier], and comparing it with the shape of the man [flipped horizontally] and of the woman in this icon as shown below, we can write:

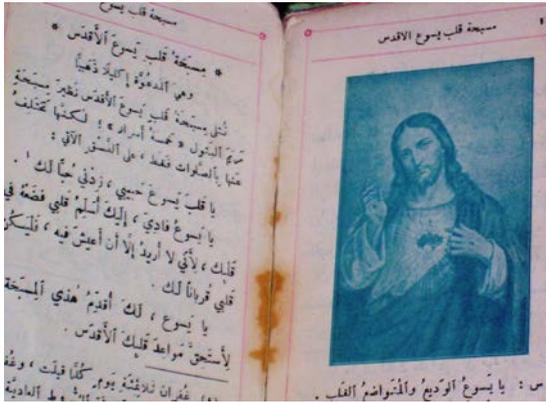
From the beginning, God have chosen certain people and entitled them to know His plans (Genesis 18:18-19, John 15:15) and have a partnership with Him for human salvation. Through those people God continue to fulfill His purpose of bringing blessing to all people (Genesis 12:3). From one generation to the next, people emerge, securing God's plan of salvation and blessing though they didn't realize it at the time [Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Prophets, Virgin Mary and St. Joseph her spouse: the silent worker who submitted totally to God's Will, the Apostles, Followers of Jesus Christ (Matthew 2:13-15, John 12:16, Romans 8:26-30)]. Those people have in their hearts the characteristics of the Messiah's Sacred Heart [i.e., God's Image], willing to be sacrificed for the sake of God's plan of redemption for the whole world, the plan that was fulfilled with Jesus Christ Crucified and Resurrected (Isaiah 6, 7, ... 12), and carried on by His followers. And to help man fulfill his part in God's plans, God have graciously given to us through The Holy Spirit the power of His Love in order to act in **partnership with Him** in making Him known worldwide as the Loving Father who would like to bless all nations and have their salvation by forgiving their sins through His Son Jesus Christ, i.e. bringing all nations from the darkness of 'not knowing God'/'being away from God' back to God's Light (Romans 5:1-11).

## Sixth Icon

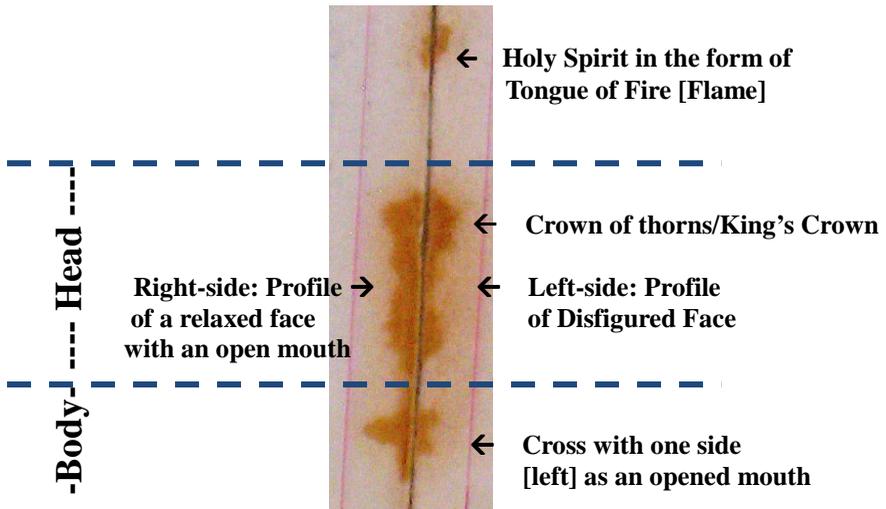
This icon exists on the pages having the prayer of the Rosary of Sacred Heart of Jesus; that requests Jesus Christ to put our hearts into His, let our hearts become a sacrifice for Him, and make our hearts meek and humble like unto His. The prayer and the icon represent **the work of the Cross, the Healing, the Redemption and the Resurrection**, i.e. "The One Body in Christ".

Right side

Left side



The 6<sup>th</sup> Icon ... One Body in Christ / The Cross, the Healing, the Redemption and the Resurrection



## 6<sup>th</sup> Icon ... One Body in Christ / The Cross, the Healing, the Redemption and the Resurrection

The 6<sup>th</sup> icon can be divided into three sections, as shown in the previous page, as follows:

1. On top part of the icon there is the Holy Spirit in the form of “Tongue of Fire” [Flame].
2. The middle part is of a head of a person with two different profiles having a crown of thorns or crown of a king on his forehead indicative to Jesus Christ the King, where:
  1. In the left-side profile: Jesus Christ on the cross. He is in pain and has a **disfigured and distorted face** without contours as was described in Isaiah:
    - “*Without beauty, without majesty, no looks to attract our eyes*” (Isaiah 53:2-3), and
    - “*Like a sheep that is led to the slaughter-house, like a lamb that is dumb in front of its shearers, like these he never opens his mouth*” (Isaiah 53:7).
  2. In the right-side profile: Jesus Christ after resurrection. He is **calm** and **His mouth is open** as if He is talking.
3. On the bottom part, underneath the head, there is a cross with one side opened as a mouth [left side] referring to the followers of the Lord Jesus: “The Body of Christ”.

Having the Holy Spirit on top of the icon and seeing the head connecting to the body indicates that the followers of Jesus Christ will be born of the Spirit (John 3:8) and they will be filled with the Holy Spirit forming “**The One Body in Christ**”. It also refers to the promise of God: **Redemption and Resurrection is for everyone who becomes one of this body due to the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ till death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead** (Romans 5 and 6).

This icon also indicates that Jesus Christ is the head of a body consisting of the people who will carry the cross [i.e., share His sufferings and teachings to become true images of Him (Romans 8:17; 28-30)] and follow Him, and they will proclaim the good news for salvation, i.e. God’s Grace, to all nations (Acts 20:24, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). They will also pray as He had prayed:

1. To His Father, on the Mount of Olives: “***Let Your Will be done, not mine***” (Luke 22:42) as a sign of their love to God, and
2. For His enemies, on the cross: “***Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing***” (Luke 23:34) as a sign of their love to others.

Actually, having the cross with an opened mouth would remind us with the words uttered by Jesus on the cross before His death. Contemplating on these words and the mystery of "One Body in Christ" opens broad prospects towards knowing "God is love" to include God's love for man and man's love for Him and his fellow man. Perhaps these words are the most beautiful expression of this kind of love that is in Jesus' Heart, and thus reflect the characteristics of His Heart and what is in His Mind [i.e., His Character (Isaiah 11:2-3)] (Matthew 12:33-35, Proverbs 10:11; 13-14; 20-21); in addition, they are realistic examples for the beatitudes that He mentioned during His teaching on the mountain to the crowd that followed Him regarding the loving hearts and the true happiness, which would be gained by being in the heart of God, because they reflect His Image to others as they are filled of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 5:3-12). The Holy Spirit that is given to us will pour into our hearts the love of God (Romans 5:5). This love is characterized by:

1. Forgiveness as a kind of Mercy towards others and as God's Nature/Characteristic: "*Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing*" (Luke 23:33-34). "*Blessed are the merciful, they shall have mercy shown them.*" (Matthew 5:7). **The Spirit of Knowledge.**
2. Providing comfort, i.e. the Good News regarding salvation, to the people who admit their mistakes and know their weakness in comparison to God's Holiness and who fear God's Justice: "*In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise*" (Luke 23:39-43). "*How blessed are the poor in spirit: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*" (Matthew 5:3). **The Spirit of Wisdom.**
3. Consoling the broken-hearted, and loving others by thinking of their physical and/or spiritual suffering [i.e., the grief of losing God because of "spiritual death"/Sin], and finding solutions to minimize the pain within their heart by reflecting God's Image [i.e., Love] to them: "*Woman, this is your son*" and "*This is your mother*" (John 19:26-27) [for a mother who lost her son, the best person who can console her is the one who knows her son and her son loves him more than others and was with him at all times in order to speak always about her son without fatigue; in addition the best person to solace a young person who had lost his dearest friend is the mother of this beloved to make him feel his existence always through her talk about him]. "*Blessed are those who mourn, they shall be comforted.*" (Matthew 5:5). **Spirit of Consolation.**
4. Human's yearning for God 'The Living Water' (Ezekiel 47:1-12, Revelation 22:1-2): "*I'm thirsty*" (John 19:28) [no one can fulfill this thirst but God: The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, or any person who provides The Living Water on behalf of God, accordingly we see the soldiers who crucified Jesus Christ offering Him vinegar instead as an indication to the persecution that will face His followers by the people who

would not believe in Him; and drinking the vinegar is a sign of bearing the tribulations for the love of God]. "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for uprightness: they shall have their full.*" (Matthew 5:6) and "*Blessed are those who are persecuted in the cause of uprightness: the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.*" (Matthew 5:10). **Spirit of Fortitude.**

5. Trusting in God, and give oneself to His Will, and ask for His aid always: "*My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*" (Mark 15:34) and "*Father, into Your Hands I commit my spirit.*" (Luke 23:46). "*Blessed are the gentle, they shall have the earth as inheritance.*" (Matthew 5:4) and "*Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God.*" (Matthew 5:8). **The Spirit of Understanding and the Spirit of Piety.**
6. Accomplishing our mission according to God's Will [i.e., Living by God's Word]: "*It is fulfilled*" (John 19:30). "*Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognized as children of God.*" (Matthew 5:9). **The Spirit of Fear of God.**

The connection between the head and the cross indicates that:

1. He will stay with us forever, and
2. We are attached to Him, and to His Cross [i.e., Teachings] firmly.
  - ✓ His followers will have a meek, humble, noble and generous heart who love God and others and take it upon themselves to yield a harvest through their perseverance (Luke 8:15), and they will ask for forgiveness for their enemies [whoever hurt them] to show the love and mercy and forgiveness of our God and His children.
  - ✓ His followers will be united with God, their Father, as Jesus Christ is united with His Father through His love and obedience unto death. An example is Saint Stephen (Acts 7:55-60).

In other words, the icon can be explained in the following writing:

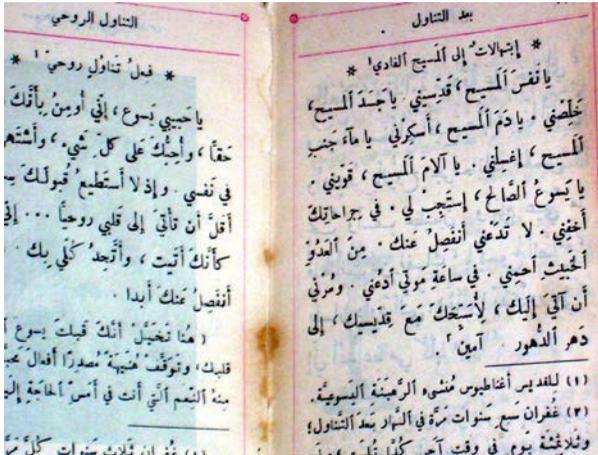
*If the wood of Jesus Christ's Cross spoke, shall we hear it screaming in pain from the entrance of the nails through its veins? Or, complain from the heavy body laid on it? Or, it will raise high in the sky and stand firmly on earth holding the Holy Body and absorbing the Running Blood with all the power that it has and scream loudly to its Creator along with Whom it hold: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34)?*

Our voice can be loud as well, and heard by many, showing the love, mercy and forgiveness of our Father and His children. Our voices can be raised in prayer for enemies before friends. May we all keep our trust in Jesus Christ and fix ourselves firmly to His Cross [i.e., Jesus Christ's Teachings] and make it the cross of our soul that we need to carry with us and follow Him to God's Kingdom.

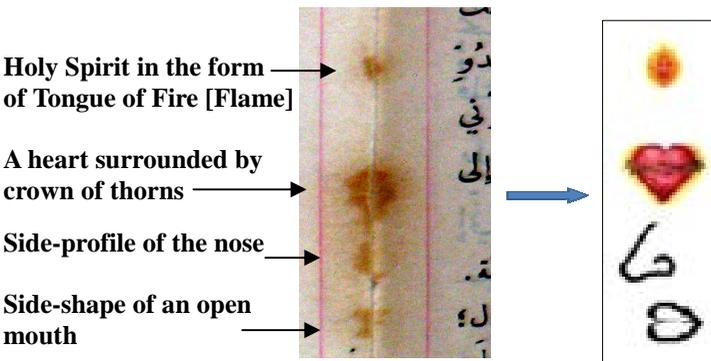
## Seventh Icon

This icon exists on two pages having the prayers of:

1. Asking for Holy Communion spiritually [in the absence of the Holy Eucharist], and
2. “Soul of My Savior ...” that is prayed after receiving the Holy Eucharist requesting Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist to sanctify and make us holy to be able to see God on our death.



The 7<sup>th</sup> Icon ... “New Birth in Spirit and Uniting with Jesus”



In Matthew 6:22, Jesus Christ tells us that the lamp of the body is the eye; and the tongue speaks what is in the heart [i.e., the mind], also all actions come from the heart. In the icon, there is a face painted from the side, and instead of the eye there is a heart; and the mouth is open. On top of the face there is the Holy Spirit in the form of Tongue of Fire [Flame]. A sketch of the icon is drawn as shown above.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Icon ... “New Birth in Spirit and Uniting with Jesus”



This icon is understood if we believe that having the Holy Eucharist [Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart] is a kind of receiving the Holy Spirit. The more we receive the Holy Spirit in the Holy Eucharist, and surrender to its power, the more we become like Jesus Christ, and have His Heart conquer ours. Accordingly, we will see others with His Heart and treat them the same way He would treat them, i.e. with love and mercy. So, this icon and prayers represent: “New Birth in Spirit and Uniting with Jesus”.

With such profile, the icon represents:

1. **Jesus Christ** who see the world with His Sacred Heart; the heart that is full of love to His Father and everyone else and Who proclaimed God's Kingdom with wisdom. His Body is full of light as His Heart is Compassionate and Holy. He is the Light of His Father's Eyes [Son of God] sent to us to lighten our way to the Kingdom of God, and change us to be light for others. In Psalm 80, people prayed and said: “*God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved*”, and God listened to their prayer through Jesus Christ.
2. **Followers of Jesus Christ** [God's Image on earth] who are baptized with the Holy Spirit, and see others through Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart to reveal His Love to them. In other words, for anyone who would look at the world through Jesus' Heart, he will be able to worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:21-24) talking and acting in a wise way to evangelize God's Love, Mercy & Grace. It is through the repetitive “baptism with the Holy Spirit”, i.e. “baptism with blood”, by having the Holy Eucharist that we imitate Jesus Christ, and become perfect as Our Father is. “*Blessed is the man who walks in justice and speaks what is true*” [Righteous man] (Psalm 15).
3. **The Pentecost.** When the Holy Spirit came upon the Disciples:
  - ✓ He showed them where their treasure is, so their hearts stayed there.
  - ✓ He gave them all what they needed to testify to the Truth leading to eternal life.
  - ✓ He attached their hearts to Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart who became their lamp that lightened for them the darkness so that they, in turn, will enlighten to all.
  - ✓ They started to see things through this Sacred Heart [“The eye is the lamp of the body”] that hold all the love and mercy for every one of us.
  - ✓ He made them commemorate God's Law, speaking things that come from the Sacred Heart and preaching, with wisdom, God's Love, Mercy & Grace for all.
  - ✓ He made them clean as all their actions [speech or thought] come from God's Holy Heart.

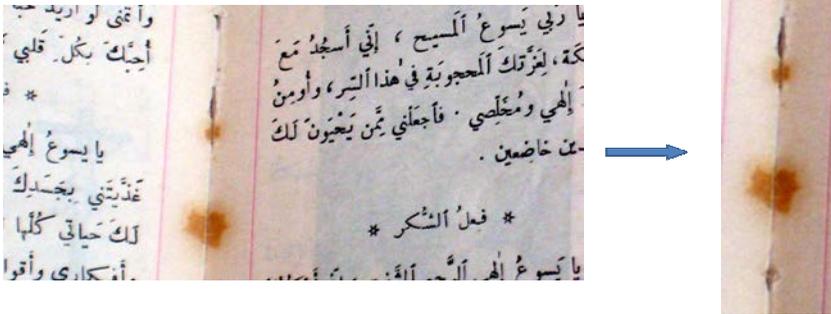
## Eighth, Ninth & Tenth Icon:

Three similar icons painted on the pages for prayers after receiving the Holy Communion.

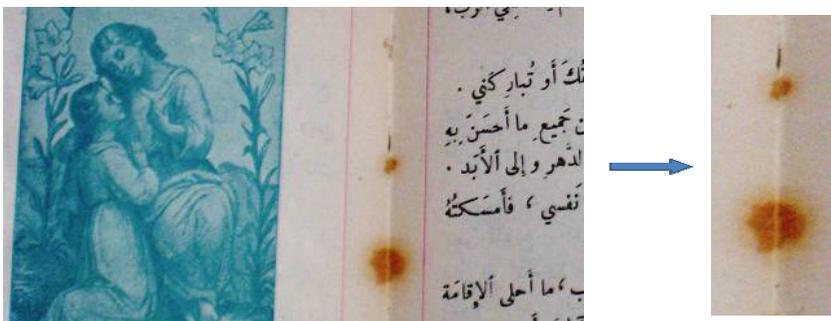
### Eighth Icon



### Ninth Icon



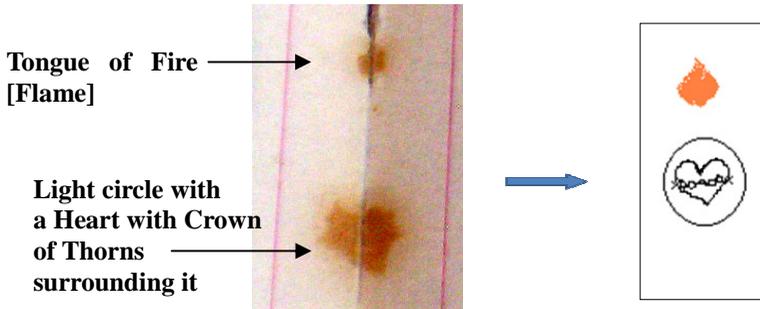
### Tenth Icon



The 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The mystery of God's presence in the Eucharist:  
Jesus' Sacred Heart: Food for the Soul

## 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Icon ... “The mystery of God's presence in the Eucharist”

The painting is a light circle with a more contrasting heart with a crown of thorns surrounding it inside the circle [representing the bread], and on top of it a Tongue of Fire [Flame] representing the Holy Spirit who change the bread into Jesus' Sacred Heart [Body and Blood, Soul & Divinity] during the Holy Mass.



The icon represents **Jesus Christ, “God”, in the Holy Eucharist: His Sacred Heart, Food for the Soul.** This is the heart of flesh that replaces our heart of stone (Ezekiel 36:26-27) to show God’s Holiness to others; a heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit.

This is the New Testament’s Ark of Covenant. This is the Heart that suffered the pain of sacrifice and was surrounded by a crown of thorns, and was lifted on the Cross to give life to its eaters [The crown that surrounded the Ark represents the ‘Bond of Peace’]. Yes, as if with the Ark of the Covenant, God is telling us: "You who are baptized into Christ, and have obeyed His Word, and have eaten His Body and drank His Blood, and became a fruitful tree that hallows My Name with all humility, reverence and joy: You're in My Heart as My Commandments are in your hearts". With the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist, the people stand before the Ark of the Covenant, proclaiming to God and saying: "Come, and reside on what our hands has made, and stay with us, and bless us to walk behind You as the light to others." [refer to Article ‘The Ark of the Covenant’].



The Ark of the Covenant

**The Eucharist is a token of the love of God for humanity till the end of time: "God is with us through His Loving Heart".**

Again, if some people asked "Has the Mind of God changed? Could it be that after man has learnt according to the Levites' priesthood would change to be according to the priesthood in the order of Melchizedek?", and for those people, God replied through the Old and New Testament, as He is the Almighty Lord, i.e. Teacher, and Father who loved man and wanted to tell him: "Don't be afraid, I am with you always, and I'm not going to let anyone take you from Me. My Sovereignty is stronger than any sovereignty, just trust Me", and that's what He emphasized in His first promise to man while talking to the snake [i.e., Satan]: "*I shall put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers: it will bruise your head and you will strike its heel*" (Genesis 3:15), thus confirming, according to what happened later on, to the relation between "God, the Savior" and "God's incarnation that is sealed by physical death and resurrection to conquer death by death", as He is the Holy One who is sincere to all His promises and fulfil them.

God do not change His mind as it is not easy to believe the change and thus believe God's Word and His Will to mankind, but what appears to us as a change has already been planned by God for He know us and how we understand things so He wanted to facilitate the idea of accepting Christ and His Ministry and priesthood in order to do what He asked us through His Disciples in the Last Supper in remembrance of Him (Luke 22:19-20) and realize "God is with us".

At the beginning, in the days of Abram, God showed us Melchizedek, King of Salem and priest of God, who brought bread and wine (Genesis 14:18), and then, in the days of Moses, God put a barrier between man and the priesthood that offered blood sacrifices, burnt offerings and cereal offerings, and that barrier was the kinship to Aaron and the tribe of Levi of Jacob [Israel] starting with Aaron (Numbers 3:1-13), and now the door of priesthood is open to everyone, although narrow (Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:24) as it is limited by "resemblance of Christ" and became of spiritual kinship to "Jesus, Son-of-Man" [*Jesus said: "I am the gate"*] (John 10:7-9).

The preparation of anyone to step from "Living by the body" to "Living by the spirit", step by step to gain all the spiritual blessings from God, is exactly what Lord Jesus had done when He forgot his parents and gave His Life to God and called him "Father" and remained in the temple devouring teaching through listening, asking and discussing His thoughts about Scripture without fear. Yes, God is "the Father, the Teacher", so Lord Jesus, "God incarnated", took "Teaching" as a way for His life since childhood (Luke 2:46-49), and Nicodemus witnessed that "*He came from God as a teacher*" (John 3:2), to get us to eternal life by knowing God and His redemption that He prepared for us

[*"Eternal life is this: to know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent"* (John 17:3)].

He who does not know God as a teacher will not understand that the change in priesthood from Levites' priesthood to priesthood of the order of Melchizedek [i.e. *"as in the years of old"*] is not a revolution but fulfilment through Lord Jesus Christ as He completed everything else (Prophecy in Malachi 3:1-4). This change is to complete "Perfection" to prove that God love the whole world, and the Passover offering, the sacrifice of thanks and forgiveness is the same, not through burnt or cereal offerings and animal sacrifices but through Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Teacher and the Holy One (Hebrews 7, 8, 9, 10). This "Perfection" allowed Jesus to perform the Mystery of the Eucharist where bread and wine are transformed to His Body and His Blood, respectively, i.e. to a "Living Sacrifice", that give life to whoever eat It with faith, and make Jesus a God who is with us at all times. Without the priesthood of Aaron we will not understand the meaning of the sacrificial offering of atonement for sin or for Thanksgiving, and without the priesthood of the order of Melchizedek we will not understand the meaning of bread and wine and thus their substantial transformation during the mystery of the Eucharist to be the living Christ, body and blood, the sacrificial atonement for Sin and sacrifice of thanks to God. The first priesthood was bound to invalidate to complete the second and final priesthood, and for people to stop offering burnt offerings of certain animals in a certain temple in a certain place but offer the Eucharist everywhere and for all Nations [see Figure -1-], as Jesus said *"Nobody puts new wine in old wineskins, otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and run to waste, and the skin will be ruined"* (Luke 5:37).

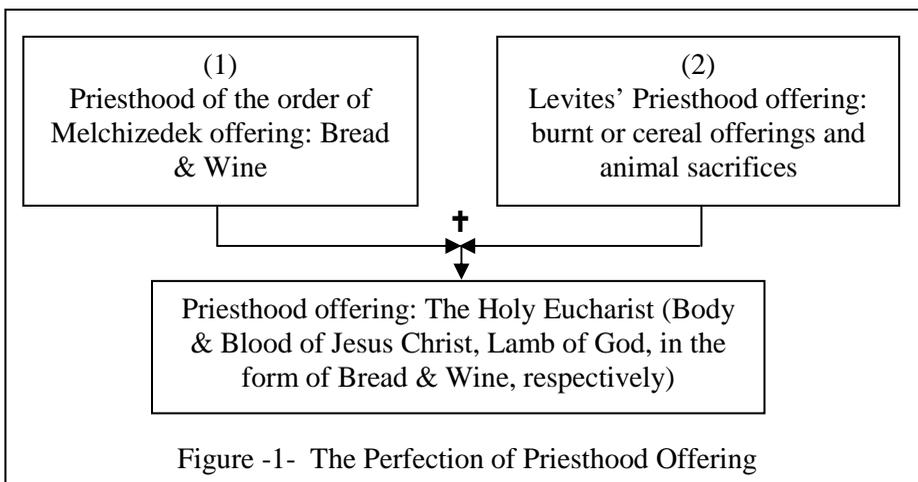


Figure -1- The Perfection of Priesthood Offering

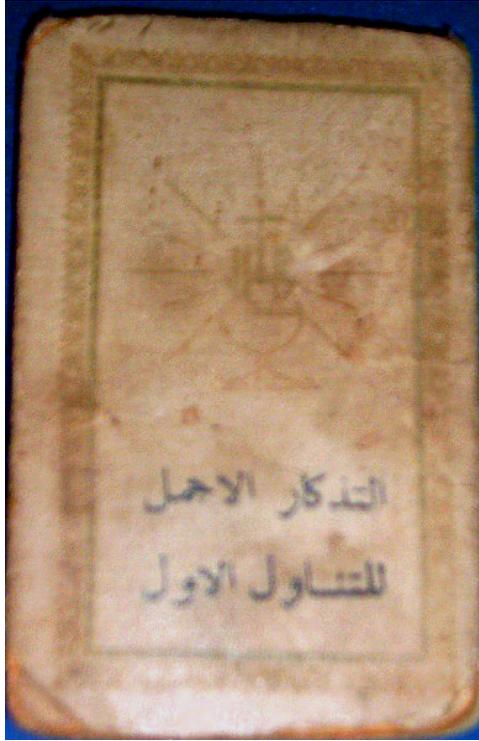
God told Moses: "I shall fix my home among you and never reject you. I shall live among you; I shall be your God and you will be my people" (Leviticus 26:11-12), and surely He did walk in front of the Israelites in a column of fire at night and a column of cloud in the morning and took them to the promised land after setting up the priesthood of Levi, the ritual of sacrifice, and the law (Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers). Prophet Isaiah also prophesied while addressing the Israelites about deliverance: "*Yahweh marches at your head and the God of Israel is your rear guard*" (Isaiah 52:12), and that was after their crossing into the promised land; while Prophet Micah, with the inspiration of God wrote what disproves any debate that God did not become human: "*For look, Yahweh is leaving His Home, down He comes, He treads the heights of earth. Beneath Him, the mountains melt, and valleys are torn open, like was near a fire, like water pouring down a slope. All this is because of the crime of Jacob, the sin of the House of Israel*" (Micah 1:3-5). This was fulfilled through the Lord Jesus Christ and the mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

In the beginning, when God created the Heavens and the Earth, and with the creation of each element in a day, He saw that what he had created was "Good", and when He finished creating everything, He saw that it was "Very Good" (Genesis 1:1-31). The Bible doesn't say that God completed His work on the sixth day but on the seventh day, and He blessed it and made it Holy because in it He rested (Genesis 2:1-3). In his letter to the Hebrews chapter IV St Paul wrote about the seventh day and the resting place which God swore that some would not enter it (Hebrews 4:1-5, Psalm 95:11), and this place [i.e., "the inheritance"] was resembled on earth by "the promised land" that God promised to give to the sons of Israel who knew him, which fruits are but the "Holy Heart of Jesus Christ" [refer to Article "The Fruit of the Promised Land"].

On the cross, Jesus' last word was: "It is fulfilled" (John 19:30), and this is the word that God saw pleased with and saw that everything was very good and holy too. This is the event that factually fulfilled God's thought, "The Work of the Seventh Day", after which God rested with joy, and the Word that He sent came back to him after completing its mission of salvation to mankind and the permanent existence of God with mankind. This is the day when God said to the whole mankind:

"Come, get in and enjoy as you are My Joy, you are the people of My Kingdom, you are the children of My Church [*You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God .... On this rock I will build My community*" (Matthew 16:16-18)], I prepared for you everything to live".

## Eleventh Icon:



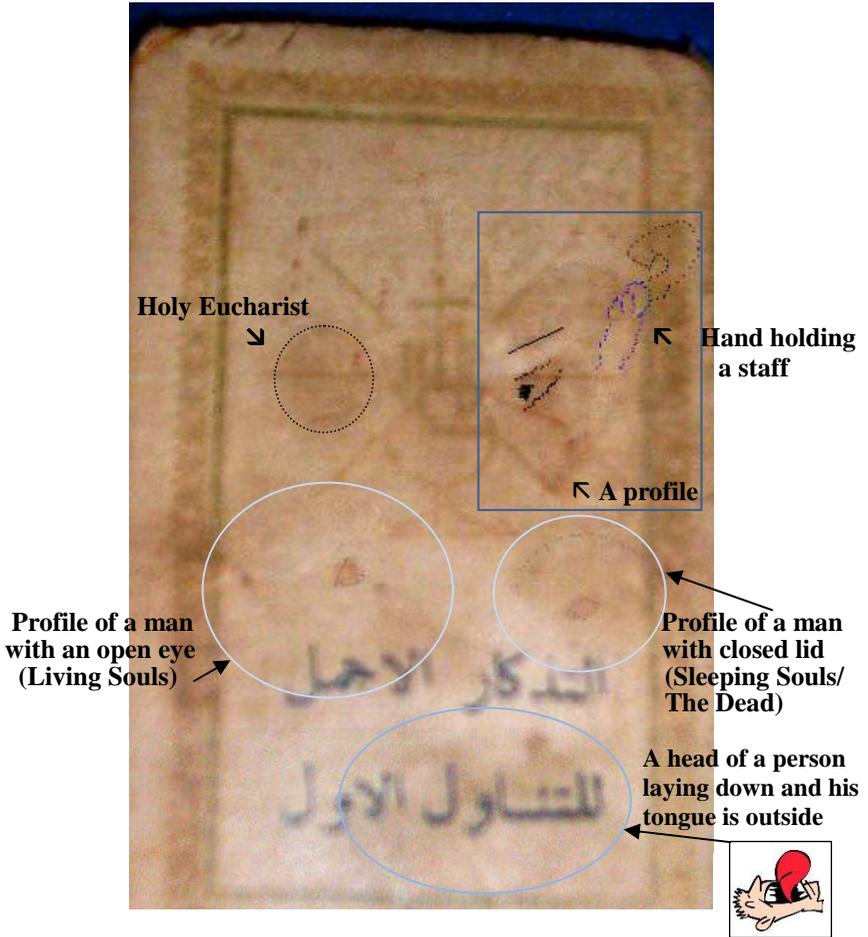
The 11<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Good Shepherd

This icon is on the front cover page of the Arabic book; i.e. the first page, and at the same time it is the last icon in the book.

The icon consists of a profile of a man with big eyes, representing Jesus Christ, and holding with His Hand, that is near His Head, a staff; His Eyes are looking at a profile of a face that has opened eyes looking at Him [he represents the Living souls], and on His Breast there is a profile of a man but with closed eyes [he represents the Sleeping/dead souls]. In the lower part of the icon there is a head of someone laying down with his face looking up, and his tongue is outside his opened mouth indicating to the accuser who accuses the faithful before God and tempts people to sin [i.e., Satan and his work (Isaiah 29:20-21)], and now in the presence of Jesus Christ he was hurled down (Revelation 12:10, Isaiah 29:22-24). Giving 'the tongue' as a symbol of the devil is completed by adding: There is no comparison between "The Tongue of Fire that ignites hearts with love to gather" as referring to the Holy Spirit and "The Tongue that ignites the fire of division" as a reference to Satan.

# 11<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Good Shepherd

The icon is re-produced with dotted shapes to clarify the interpretation explained below.



The icon is for The First and The Last; the Good Shepherd holding His Staff and looking at us with tender eyes (Ezekiel 34:11-16, John 10:11, 14). And, in his heart are the souls who rest in peace.

In front of the Face of Jesus Christ there is a round shape representing the Holy Eucharist, i.e. The Eucharistic Sacred Heart of Jesus, which exist also in a faded colour in the 5<sup>th</sup> Icon in front of both the reflection of the man with opened mouth, and the cross on the woman’s side [see the figure on next page]. This indicates that: “After Jesus Christ’s death everyone who believes in Him will share this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to bring forth God’s

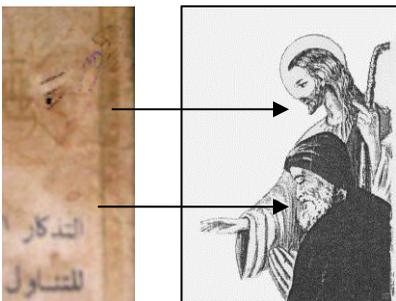
Eucharistic reign having His Spirit of “Holiness and Love”, “Wisdom, Mercy and Divine Providence”, “Forgiveness, Counsel and Peace”, and “Power over Satan and evil spirits” within each one of them to give it to others (John 7:37-39); and will proclaim that reign in all ways as a sign of thanksgiving and glorifying the Lord”.



In this icon, God tell us: ***"I am the Good Shepherd. You are in My Heart, keep Me in your heart. Make My Word and My Love live in your hearts"***.

A prayer was handed over to me, and it seems that it is what we can hear coming out from the lips of the person looking at Jesus Christ: *“To Thee, O Jesus of Love, we consecrate all the trials, joys and happiness of our family-life. And we beseech thee, dear Jesus, to pour out Your blessings on all its members: absent, present, living and dead. And one after the other, when we fall asleep in thee O Jesus, may we find our family, reunited in your Sacred Heart. Amen.”*

Note: A nearly similar painting of the face and the staff is found on the cover page of the biography of Saint Charbel of Lebanon, by Fr. Paul Dhaher, 1978 [Picture -a- is part of it]. In the icon, the end of the staff, with which the shepherd collect the sheep, is towards the Face of Jesus Christ and He is holding it with His hand showing three fingers near the top of His Head.

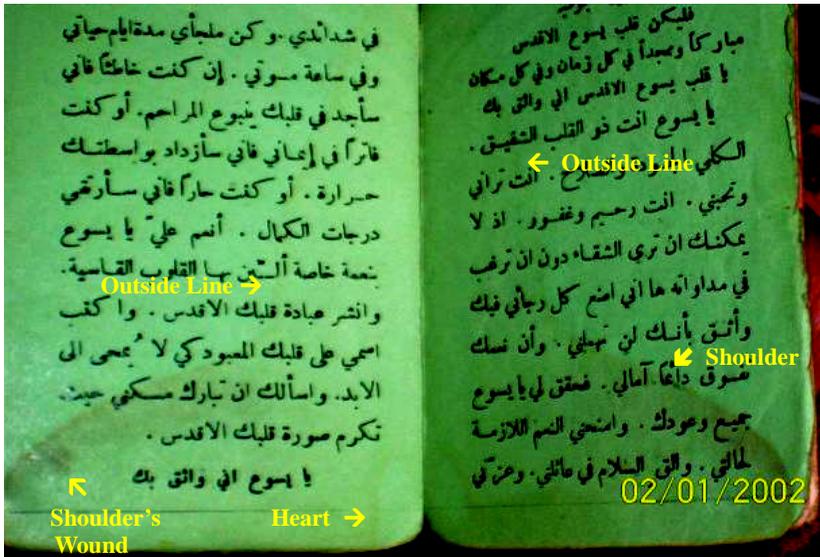


Picture -a- Part of the cover page of the biography of Saint Charbel



Picture -b- Seeing the eleventh icon as explained above.

## Twelfth Icon:



The 12<sup>th</sup> Icon ... The Heart

Although this icon is not in the book, it appeared on a page of a prayer to Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart [who is also 'The Holy Eucharist'], and it seems that understanding Jesus Christ will not be complete without a Twelfth Icon. The prayer is a daily prayer as part of consecrating ourselves to Him and Trusting His loving and tender Heart in all our needs especially when we die. The page on which the prayer existed was kept always inside the book of prayer.

This icon was not made with oil as in the icons within the prayer book, but appeared on the paper as if it was painted with a pencil. The paper colour is green.

The painting is in light shadow for part of a body [the shoulders] and a face without particulars [just the outside line] with another line for the hair that reaches the shoulders. On the right shoulder there is a mark [which might represent the mark left on Jesus Christ's Body from holding the cross on His Shoulder, as Lord Jesus mentioned to Saint Bernard (778-842)]. On the bottom and in the middle of the page, there is a light shape of a heart, where its colour is the original colour of the page. This icon represents what Jesus Christ said: *"Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"* (Matthew 11:28-29), and in another words what a priest once said: *It is not important to seek now the particulars of the Face of Jesus Christ, rather to look at His Heart and know its feelings and seek to dwell by it and in it. Amen.*

## **Conclusion (Matthew 5, 6, 7)**

Jesus Christ has summarized His teachings into the following: “*Enter through the narrow gate*” (Matthew 7:13). This Gate of Holiness and Justice (Psalm 118), where: *Jesus Christ’s Heart with its feelings of Love & Mercy is the only way to the Kingdom of God.*

In order to enter through the narrow gate [i.e., become righteous and just, be clothed in the garments of salvation and wrapped in the cloak of integrity (Isaiah 61:10)] we need to imitate Jesus Christ.

In order to make our hearts as meek and humble as the heart of Jesus Christ Who made of His Body an altar and offered Himself willingly as a pleasing sacrifice to God (Exodus 20:24, Deuteronomy 12:4-11), we need to build our house [i.e., our heart] on His teachings [the rock] and do God’s Will as He did on the cross when He sacrificed His life for all of us thus showing us God’s Love & Mercy. We need to make of our body that is of dust an altar and put on it "our will" as sacrifice for God and seek "His Will be done", and keep God's Name in our hearts where He will dwell. We need to engrave His teachings into our hearts and work on it [His Teachings, which is summarized to ‘love and serve others’, is ‘the cross of our soul’ that we need to nail ourselves to and never let fall from our heart]. A simple way to do that is to come nearer to God and ask Him and He will provide us with the peace our soul is longing for.

For the faithful, they should pray for the repentance of sinners, and work on this, as they should work on loving for others [including their enemy] what they love for themselves, i.e. ‘Eternal Life with God’.

The sinners, whose sins are God’s enemy, are the ones who become disobedient to God’s Word and allow the evil spirit to work in them and harden their hearts towards the needy. Everyone can be a sinner at anytime; no one is holy by his own.

Before trying to correct other sinners, every person should:

1. First correct himself, and
2. Armour himself with the virtues of the Holy Spirit [i.e., have Christ’s Spirit in his heart] in order to be strong to stand in front of Satan at the time of trial and defeat him so that he will become fruitful and worthy to be called Child of God, by:
  - ✓ Prayer: (1) Verbally; and (2) In action including but not limited to sanctifying his actions, forgiving and praying for his enemies, receiving the Holy Eucharist, and doing acts of love and mercy for

the sake of God's Love as God's love is above everything. Also, living by the words of 'The Lord's Prayer' is praying in action.

- ✓ Fasting: (1) On sin; and (2) According to the way that pleases God: To be merciful and just towards others and love them as he love himself, i.e., doing for others [towards their body and soul] what they cannot do for themselves and help the needy (Isaiah 58:1-14).

"The Lord's Prayer" in action is also fulfilled by attending the Holy Mass: Coming as Children of God filled with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to work in "*God's Kingdom of Service to Others for God's Glory*"; we praise and glorify God's Holy Name, listen to God's Word and have the Holy Eucharist [Jesus' Sacred Heart: Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity] as a food for our soul, and for the forgiveness of sins keeping in mind that we should have forgiven whoever has sinned against us before asking for forgiveness as that is God's justice [unless we forgive we cannot be forgiven] and an indication of our love for Him. At the end of the Mass, we go out taking God's Love to spread it to others.

*O Jesus Christ, come and fill our hearts with Your Unconditional Love so that we can all pray: May Your Sacred Heart be blessed and praised at all times and in all hearts; O Sacred Heart of Jesus we trust in You. Amen.*

## Following Jesus



He who wants to ride on the colt and follow Jesus should believe that God sent Jesus, called Son-of-God and Son-of-Man, saying: "*It is too little for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the Earth*" (Isaiah 49:6), knowing that Jesus is sending him/her to be a light to the world (Matthew 5:14), to proclaim to the ends of the Earth ***the promise of salvation through the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ because of the faithful love of God*** (Luke 2:76-77, Mark 16:15-16) . Yes, to be (1) a servant fed in God's House by His Word: Incarnated and in the Holy Eucharistic, and obedient to the Word of God with all his/her mind and capabilities, and (2) a son through loving God, "The Almighty Father of All", and loving others, "brothers in Christ", with all his/her heart.

# Cain's and Abel's Offerings

From the beginning, man wanted to offer something to God, something out of what was produced as a result of the sweat of his face, i.e. his own work as a sign of gratitude and love to God. Both Cain and Abel, Adam's sons, offered part of their produce, and God looked with favour on Abel and his offering while He passed Cain. God knew the depth of Cain's heart that made him carelessly offer a produce that is not the best of what he has or even the first of his produce; an offering that is not fit for God; an offering without love, appreciation and respect (Genesis 4:1-16). With time, God explained to man that He don't want a material offering from man rather He want a contrite, humble and pure heart (Psalm 51) which in God's Eyes is more precious than anything else as it resembles 'His Own Heart'. If we considered Cain, Adam's eldest son, a symbol for the Jews whom didn't believe in Jesus Christ because their hearts were away from God, then Abel will be a symbol for Jesus Christ, the image of God's Heart, whose blood was on them as they were responsible for His death (Matthew 27:25) as Abel's blood was on Cain (Genesis 4:9-15). Now, considering Cain as a symbol for the people of the Old Testament and his offering resembles their offering, then Abel will represent the people of the New Testament and his offering resembles their offering. Both offerings are from God and to God, but God looked with favour on Abel's offering and chose it, as He declared regarding His Beloved Son [Our offering from and to God] and said: "*This is My Son, the Beloved; My favour rests on Him.*" (Matthew 3:16-17), and "*This is my Son, the Chosen One.*" (Luke 9:35).

God didn't leave Cain [a sinful man] in the wilderness to be killed even as a revenge for what he did, as this was not His intention when He favoured Abel's offering, therefore He put a mark on him in order not to be killed, and to show him [within the coming descendants] that God can and is willing to change his offering into Abel's one so that he will not be lost [*"Though Yahweh punished me sternly, He has not abandoned me to death"*] (Psalm 118:18). The thing that distinguished Abel's offering was: 'Quality' and 'Life', where the flock has blood in it, and the blood represents "Life" (Genesis 9:3-4), and this is a symbol for us that God, on the Last Judgement Day, would select whoever has a meek, humble, charitable and loving heart that fruits acts of mercy, and not a dead heart that has no feelings towards others as Jesus Christ explained in His speech to His followers (Matthew 25:31-46). Accordingly, we can hear Cain's voice [representing the stoned-heart man] shouting to God and calling upon His Mercy with broken heart, saying:

*“My Lord, My God ... From the bottom of my heart, I’m sorry for what I did that deserved to be dead ... but I plea to Your Most Merciful Heart to accept from me the produce out of the work of my own hands; the produce of my heart, the soil where I’ve worked ... to change it to the offering that you’d accept; to the lamb that my brother had offered and had favour in Your Eyes ... and I will be grateful with thanks and praises to Your Holy Name for You came back, changed me and looked at me, and made me worthy to stand in front of You”.*

and, God listened to him in the Holy Eucharist, where God made the Holy Mass as a feast where He would accept Cain’s offering from bread and wine that has no life in it and change it through the Holy Spirit into a living offering filled with life: Bread of Life; Body and Blood of the Lamb that was laid down as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins: Jesus Christ (John 1:29), who would change the hearts of the people who are called for this feast that does not have life in it with meek and humble hearts filled with the Spirit of The Living Jesus Christ. This change of heart cannot be achieved without faith and belief that a man does not deserve putting an offering in front of God before he washes away any hate rage and evil thoughts from his heart (Exodus 3:1-6).

In the Scriptures, we hear: “A man reaps what he sows” (John 3:6, Galatians 6:7), and “Man’s actions/speech comes from what is in his heart” (Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 15:18), that is: man will reap good if what is in his heart [soil] and mind is good, and will reap evil if what is in his mind and heart is evil. Though, God is capable of changing man’s behavior if this man wanted to change, and God will add fertilizer to his soil in order for his tree to be fruitful with good produce.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the ‘Meek and Humble Heart’ that you have given us to look at and adore, and with this Heart we will praise Your Holy Name forever. Amen.*

***“O Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make our heart like unto Thine”. Amen.***

*St. Alphonsus deLiguori*



# Sons of Abraham



In the Holy Bible, few people had an intimate relationship with God, and these relationships showed us part of God's Thoughts and therefore part of the qualities of God's Heart. One of these relations is the relationship of God with Abraham [Abram son of Terah, Noah's descendant from Enoch from Seth son of Adam].

Abram knew God and walked with Him as his ancestors did, particularly Enoch (Genesis 5:21-24) and Noah (Genesis 6:8-9), whom God spoke with, and appeared to as He did with Abram (Genesis 12:1-3).

From his childhood, Abram knew in his heart that God is the Creator who provided everything, as each generation was telling the next generation about God. After God's revelation to him, there was no longer a reason to doubt God's existence, and he obeyed God because he loved Him. God blessed Abram and gave him the Gifts of the Holy Spirit both spiritually and physically; He gave him: Wisdom, knowledge, understanding, piety and righteousness (Genesis 12:1-10; 13:4, 18), fortitude (Genesis 14:14-16), and the ability to provide counsel based on the fear and love of God and love of others (Genesis 13:8). When Abram confronted the enemy to free his people, he knew that God would be his shield and that he will be able to defeat his enemy as till that moment he had not received what God promised him, otherwise who can defeat the army of five kings with 318 soldiers? He went to the enemy at night, defeated them and pursued them to the borders, and recovered his nation and their possessions [a sign of wisdom and strength and perseverance]. Abram knew that God was the reason for his success and wealth, and accordingly he refused to take any gift from the King so that no one would say that he became rich because of the King.

God have privileged Abram with many things, and with that God revealed what was in His Thoughts:

- Abram was the first person mentioned in the Holy Bible that he built Altars to God for two reasons: (1) In the places where God appeared to him at different times to keep the memory of these events, and (2) In order to pray and call upon God's Holy Name (Genesis 12:7-8, 13:18) as Noah did when he built an Altar to God and presented burnt offerings on the Altar to Him (Genesis 8:20).
- Abram was the first person to be called Hebrew, i.e. he came to Egypt from another land which was given to him by God (Genesis 12:10, 14:13) and after a while he left and returned back to the land that God promised to give him and his descendants after him (Genesis 12:6-7, 13:14-18). In the beginning, the land where he lived was not his but God made it so, just as the Heavens that did not belong to Mankind but God made it so. Abram was a model of Adam whom God created in paradise and gave him power, but when he faced difficulties [i.e., the famine in the promised land] he showed mistrust in God's Word [i.e., sinned], and left it and went into a strange land [Land of Egypt] where he was afraid for his life, so he tended to not to say the complete truth about himself without thinking about the consequences. He feared men and allowed others to make mistakes without their knowledge for his own interest and safety, and he became rich because of that. But God revealed the whole truth using discipline; God revealed sin as His Will was not to put man to death but to defeat sin. God was with Abram, and he was not killed when the truth was revealed, but conversely he was told about the exposure of his identity [this will lead to his purification as knowing the truth will lead us to understanding the way of purification and redemption] and God took him back again to the promised land [Heaven]. And here, God reveal to us that self-love leads to fear for own property and of others that produces unacceptable behavior in God's Eyes which make us stray away from God if it was not for His Divine Providence for bringing us back to Him.
- Abram was the first person mentioned in the Holy Bible that he wanted to give himself up for the rescue of close relatives from captivity, thus paving to what God will be doing for His loved ones and firmly rooting the idea of "love" where people would do for others: (1) what they cannot do for themselves, and (2) what they would like from others to do for them. This kind of love is what God is looking for between mankind.
- Abram was the first person to ask God for a sign that confirms God's Word and Promise to him, and God was not angry, on the contrary He showed Himself to him as burning fire and column of cloud (Genesis 15:17) walking between the bodies and their souls/lives [i.e., the pieces of meat with its blood (Genesis 9:4-5)] thus referring to the souls that will live with God [its age is three years, i.e., have completed its knowledge of

God the Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit] being sponsored by a righteous man, i.e. priest, who have taken away their sins in the presence of the meek Son and the Holy Spirit [i.e., the two birds that didn't die (Genesis 15:7-18)]. This sign is given to us by God in the Divine Liturgy, since God resides with the man/woman who is baptized by a priest [Priesthood is represented by Abram whose duties are to guide mankind to do what satisfies God and remove evil thoughts from the heart (Genesis 18:17-19)] so God would come and reside in the heart.

- Abram was the first person mentioned in the Holy Bible whom God changed his name from Abram to Abraham to indicate that he will be the father of many [Abraham is considered the father of all believers in God, and in a similar manner, a priest is considered to be a spiritual father to many] (Genesis 17:4-8).
- Abram was the first one whom God gave him a mark by which a man would be consecrated to God: Circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14).
- Abram was the first one mentioned in the Holy Bible that God appeared to him as three men speaking together as one person. Abraham spoke with Them as one [The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit three persons in One], and provided them with drink and food prepared from his bounties that God provided him, as if with this work he is returning to God part of what He gave him through attending to the needs and comfort of a stranger. Seeing that, God showed Abraham how the Three Persons can be separated in order to complete God's work (Genesis 18:1-22). Note that others, represented by Lot, did not recognize the Person of The Son and the Person of The Holy Spirit, but saw angels performing God's Will to separate the righteous who is filled with the Spirit of Knowledge and Understanding to persevere in faith without despair from the sinner, so that he will be saved from the punishment for sinning, as on Judgment Day where the wheat are separated from the weeds, as weeds are burnt, and the wheat is taken to the Lap of God The Father (Matthew 13:24-30).
- Abram was the first one mentioned in the Holy Bible that plead with God for the sake of his brother, i.e. mankind (Genesis 18:23-33).
- Abram was the first one mentioned in the Holy Bible that felt joy in his heart as a result of obeying God out of love of God despite the pain in his heart while he obeyed and gave his son as a sacrifice to God. This joy is similar to the feeling of God The Father while sacrificing His Beloved Son to be a Sacrifice of Sin on behalf of the whole world, as He was pleased to do so for His Love to mankind. When a man sacrifices himself, then the amount of psychological pain is considerably less than if he sacrifices one of his sons; as the father-son relationship is deeper than the attachment

between a man and himself. God, not only blessed Abraham with these feelings, but also raised Abraham to be the Father of many and gave him to resemble Him where His children's souls will sit on His lap after their death (Luke 16:22-31).

- Abram was the first one mentioned in the Holy Bible that had full trust in God at time when there is no hope and disbelieve and said to God, by action: "Your Will be done". He trusted that God will not forsake him and let him kill his son. He trusted that God love him and He will provide a substitute for his son, and said beforehand: "God Himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering" (Genesis 22:6-8).

Although the Holy Bible did not mention priesthood directly, or exercising certain rite by a priest, or that man must pay the tithes to serve God before Moses' days, but we read about it for the first time on Abram's days in Melchizedek, the king and the priest who gave blessings instead of God and gave the people bread and wine and accepts taking tithes as a token of love from man to God who blessed him, gave him food, and gave him victory over his enemies (Genesis 14:17-20). Therefore, Melchizedek was a symbol for God The Son "King of the Jews" who gave mankind the bread as His Body and wine as His Blood in the Last Supper for the forgiveness of sins [crush our enemy] and later on during the Holy Mass. Priesthood became essential to provide bread and wine that came down from Heaven [The Holy Eucharist] to the people for the forgiveness of sins, and give blessings. Abram was a symbol of mankind who would give tithes to thank God for the blessings God have given him. Perhaps God wanted to teach us as usual on the stages of the Holy Mass with what happened with Abram from events: For the first time, an incident of 'falling into captivity' [i.e., sinning] is mentioned, and man by his own cannot free himself but requires someone whom God have blessed to free him. When the prisoners are set free [i.e., their heart becomes pure without any hostility or hatred towards others and God through confession, asking for forgiveness and repentance], then they can come to God to take their Spiritual Food and blessings through the Holy Mass, and during which he give the tithes, in love of God, to be given to the poor [God don't change (Psalm 102:26-27), and He is the only teacher to what is in His Mind for His Glory (Ecclesiasticus 42:15-25)].

*My Lord and my God, my Heavenly Father and my Teacher, whom you've planned Your invitation to us to share Your Table that is filled with Spiritual Food after You freed us from our captivity, please make us worthy to step forward towards Your Rich and Humble Table with loving hearts, pure hearts, generous hearts, hearts sacrificing for others, grateful and thankful hearts in order to deserve Your blessings so that we will live with you forever. Amen.*

# The Ark of the Covenant

When someone asks you to carry for him an item and deliver it to someone else who lives in a different area without letting this item slip from your hand, then the first thing that you would ask for is its weight, i.e., whether it is heavy or light. If the item was too heavy then you might refuse carrying this item especially if you are weak and don't have muscles. On the other hand, if you love the person who asked you for this favor then you might think of empowering yourself before you accept doing what is required. If Jesus Christ asked you to proclaim the Gospel to all nations, or if He asked you to carry a cross and follow Him, or if He asked you to carry His Light to others by being light in your actions, then what would your reaction be?

God have given us, in His beloved Son Jesus Christ, the grace to be like Prophet Isaiah where He said to him: *"It is not enough for you to be My servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel. I shall make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach the remotest parts of earth"* (Isaiah 49:6). Jesus Christ want us to be a light to the world so that God's salvation may be known to all peoples for God's Glory (Matthew 5:14-16) [Just like Saint John The Baptist who identified Jesus Christ to be The Lamb of God to others]. So, are we a light to others? Are we working according to this "God's Will" in our homes before reaching to other people? Is it a light weight on our shoulders, or is it too heavy?

In the Old Testament, the Tribe of Levi [from whom the priests were selected: From Aaron and his descendants (Leviticus 21:1)] were responsible for carrying and taking care of the Dwelling that has inside it the 'Ark of the Covenant'/Testimony (Numbers 1:48-51, 18:1-7) and other furnishings. God asked Moses to build the Dwelling and its contents as He showed him. The Ark of the Covenant is a rectangular chest [like a coffin] made of wood coated from inside and outside with pure gold, and surrounded by a crown made of gold; inside it the two Tablets having God's Ten Commandments [also named Testimony or Tables of the Law] were put; and a sheet made of pure gold called "Mercy-Seat" was put on top of the chest as a cover, and on the sides of the cover two winged-creatures, i.e., Cherubim, were attached (Exodus 25:10-22, Deuteronomy 10:1-5). The Chest had four rings distributed on two sides, where two poles can go through the rings to allow people to hold the Ark without touching it.



Nowadays, were we able to hold the heavy weight of the Ark of the Covenant on our shoulders to move it from one place to another, or did we let it fall and it was given to someone else to hold with all the love, humility, reverence, patience and joy that he/she has in his/her heart? Have we sanctified ourselves [felt remorse, and repented for our sins] and pulled hatred from our hearts before we get closer to God to touch Him without Him being angry with us (Matthew 5:21-26)?

Looking at the symbols of the Ark of the Covenant, we can understand that the Ark of Covenant represent to us the Cross we need to carry [i.e., the Word/ Teachings of God sealed with His Mercy: Jesus Christ, our salvation, atonement/expiation for our sins], which the Lord Jesus Christ wish from all of us to carry on our shoulder with love and humbleness ("*Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, My yoke is easy and my burden light.*" (Matthew 11:29-30)), and follow Him to where God is. As with this cross is our victory over our enemies [our sins] thus having eternal life (John 11:25-26, 16:33), and without it the devil and evil spirits [sin] will conquer us and we will die. We shoulder our cross as the Ark of the Covenant became the yoke to the two milch cows, which never had a yoke before, and walked from the land of the enemy to the land of the people of Israel (1 Samuel 6:7-8).

The Ark of the Covenant was a reflection of the heavenly realities that God wanted to announce to us (Hebrews 8:5, Revelation 11:19): Jesus Christ having two natures: Divine and Human [Coffin made of wood and gold]; being The Word of God [inside the coffin were the Tablets having God's Commandments] and also the Savior and God's mercy to us, where it is only through Him that we can stand before God without blemish, a Grace that is only made by God [The Mercy-Seat was made of pure gold, i.e. "The Atonement", surrounded by the Cherubim and on which the cloud will reside and Moses will speak to God].

In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant was the means of God's presence with his people, i.e. "God with us" (Exodus 25:8). And, the birth of Jesus in the New Testament is the resurrection of the codes mummified and put into the coffin to the end of times; where:

1. 'Truth'/'Word of God' [represented by the Tablets of Commandments] was incarnated,
2. 'The Way' [represented by the bread from heaven that was given by God to the children of Israel on their way that they have taken to cross the desert of Sinai: Manna] was embodied, and

3. 'Life' [represented by the rod of Aaron that budded, and bloomed and gave almonds (Numbers 17:16-25)] was incarnated filled with the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Fortitude, the Spirit of Knowledge and Fear of God (Isaiah 11:1-9, Luke 2:40-52) in order to give life to others by staying watchful over God's Word as God is the Watchful Tree (Jeremiah 1:11-12);

thus was "The Way, Truth and Life" through whom people would go to the Heavenly Father (John 14:6), and there was Jesus: "God with us" (Matthew 1: 20-23, John 14:8-10, Psalm 43). This reminds us when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River while the Ark of Covenant, held by the priests, stayed firm on the land of the river as the waters were cut off and stayed still as a single mass (Joshua 3:7-17); in the same way, Jesus Christ, Word and Eucharistic, will keep the effect of sin still until we pass to the promised land. *Glory to You, O God, as what You have taught to your people in a thousand year was made in one day.*

In the Holy Bible, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit, in the Old Testament it is mentioned that God asked Moses to put the jar of Manna in front of the Testimony to be preserved for next generations (Exodus 16:32-34), and after some time to put the rod of Aaron also before the Testimony. Between the two periods, the Ark of the Covenant was made and the Testimony was put inside the Ark inside the Tent of Meeting (Exodus 40:1-3, 16-21); and we also read in "1 Kings 8:9" and "2 Chronicles 5:10" that "*There was nothing in the Ark except the two stone tablets which Moses has placed in it at Horeb, the tablets of Covenant which Yahweh made with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt.*". There was no mentioning that the jar and the rod were put inside the Ark of the Covenant except in the New Testament in the Letter of Saint Paul to the Hebrews Chapter 9 verse 4. This would indicate that in the Old Testament God gave His Law to His people, and the Manna was not meant to be food for eternal life rather it is a testament for God's Divine Providence in helping them through their journey from Egypt to the promised land, while with the coming of Jesus Christ, who did not come to abolish the Law but He actually supplemented it as He is "The Word of Life" and "The Real Food" for everyone who wants to live with God. Also, the will of God for people not to know the time when the jar and rod were placed inside the Ark is a confirmation of what Jesus Christ said that not a person will know when the time of the coming of the Son of Man on the clouds will be as it is only God's knowledge (Matthew 24:26-36, Acts 1:7).

Prophet Baruch wondered about "Wisdom": 'The Commandments of Life - A book that pleases God' and the way to reach it and grab it and said: "*Who has ever climbed the sky and seized her to bring her down from the clouds?*"

(Baruch 3:9-36, 4:1-4), and perhaps man has forgotten that the Word of God has become close to him, in his heart to work by it as God gave His Commandments to Moses (Deuteronomy 30:6-14). Therefore, God completed the meaning of His Commandments and the concept of the way to Him [i.e., the promised land] through the Heavenly Food that He revealed from Heaven, carrying within it the eternal life to whoever believes in it (John 6:48-58). People asked for "Wisdom", and God gave them an embodied living wisdom through the acts, words and feelings of His beloved Son Jesus Christ. People bended their necks to be disciplined by God, and God showed them "Wisdom" and said "Listen to Him (Luke 9:35), and you will live".

The Ark of the Covenant is a reflection of the heavenly realities: Now, as God wanted us to see His Heart that is burning with the fire of love towards us, so He opened His Heart and show it to Moses who saw the Ark of the Covenant in the temple of God; this Holy Heart that is incarnated in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. By the work of The Holy Spirit [The golden Mercy-Seat], the bread and wine that is made by human hands turns into the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ; i.e. turns into Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is the Heart that suffered the pain of sacrifice and was surrounded by a crown of thorns, and was lifted on the Cross to give life to its eaters [The crown that surrounded the Ark represents the 'Bond of Peace']. Yes, as if with the Ark of the Covenant, God is telling us: "You who are baptized into Christ, and has obeyed His Word, and has eaten His Body and drank His Blood, and became a fruitful tree that hallow My Name with all humility, reverence and joy: You're in My Heart as My Commandments are in your hearts". With the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist, the people stand before the Ark of the Covenant, proclaiming to God and saying: "Come, and reside on what our hands has made, and stay with us, and bless us to walk behind You as the light to others."



Another truth God revealed to Moses through The Ark of the Covenant is: "The Good News: Salvation is for all". Four Evangelists wrote about God's Word, Hypostasis of "God The Son", by the power of the Holy Spirit [represented by the Four golden rings that were attached to two sides of the chest (Exodus 25:12-14)]: Two of whom are Disciples of Jesus Christ: St. Matthew the Apostle and St. John the Apostle, and two of them are followers of St. Paul the Apostle: St. Mark the Evangelist and St. Luke the Evangelist. Also, God selected two men to bring the Good News before the Israelites and the rest of nations [Two wooden poles covered with Gold]: St. Peter and St. Paul the Apostles (Acts 9:10-16, 11:1-18). The holders of the Ark of the Covenant know that they humbly and without droop are holding all sides of a

cross of wood and above it Jesus Christ crucified, raising Him on their shoulders and walking to all corners of the world proclaiming the forgiveness of sins by the blood of the Lamb (1 Corinthians 1:17-31; 2:1-9, Galatians 6:14). The holders of the Ark of the Covenant know that no one is preferred over the other; one plants and the other waters by the Grace from God, and their work will complement God's Will on earth (1 Corinthians 1:10, 3:5-22).

For the followers of Jesus Christ [The Church/Kingdom of God on earth], the Ark of the Covenant is a coffin for their dead bodies that had put its sins inside the wounds of the Crucified Jesus Christ and let His running Blood wash it away until the Resurrection when the pure hearts with straight spirits that God has created within them through His Son will be resurrected. Those people have washed their sins through Jesus Christ, and attached their hearts with His Word, and have eaten the Heavenly Manna so they became fruitful trees who with the Cherubim kneel to God and praise His Holy Name saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Your great glory. Hosanna in the highest". Yes, in the New Testament all believers [Fathers, mothers, priests and other consecrated people to God, as everyone has built his heart as a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2:4-5)] share the responsibility of carrying the Ark of the Covenant and preserving it from falling into captivity, i.e. to carry the glory of God to others without changing His Word. The bearers of the Ark of the Covenant are tied together with the Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ; they are humble, cannot see themselves better than others, and no one longs for other people's blessings or belongings because God is the One who divided these gifts; they love each other without hypocrisy, and carry the weight of each other [i.e., forgiving each other and covering the defects of whoever abused them, and reminding each other about the Commandments of God and abiding by it]; they are meek and patient (Ephesians 4:1-7) in order not to upset the balance and lose control to carry the Ark forcing the one who lost the balance to touch the Ark of the Covenant which he is not qualified to touch [because of the Holiness of the Ark] and because of that he will die, as he did not obey God's Word (2 Samuel 6:1-7).

*I shall give thanks to You, Lord and King, and praise you, God my Savior. I give thanks to Your Holy Name for You have been my guard and support and redeemed my body from destruction, ... (Hymn of thanksgiving by Jesus Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus 51:1-30)).*



# The Fruit of The Promised Land

When a farmer grows trees in his field he aims to see a healthy harvest, a delicious fruit; and when parents think of having a child and give birth to one they aim for him/her to be as they are if not better. As the farmer does his best in preparing the soil, adding fertilizers, spraying insecticides so that the fruit will be healthy, similarly the good parents take care during pregnancy, feed the child in infancy and afterwards, provide love and care, teach, train, and be harsh if needed so that:

1. Everyone who meets the child will be impressed as his/her actions will show their parents' good character,
2. The child will not harm or disrespect others, and
3. He/she will be loved from everyone else so that he/she can be forgiven when doing a mistake as it is not always other people forgive sins as parents do.

When God took the Israelites, 'His Son' (Exodus 4:22-23), by the hand out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1, 3-4), He promised them that they would enter a rich land [their final destination, i.e., Heaven] from whose harvest they would benefit; a harvest that will feed them and feed all the generations to come; a harvest that will be all that they will ask for in order to live happily in the new land, i.e. their Father's House, and all that He asked for is to honour Him as a Holy Father (Malachi 1:6). As a Father, He is always there, waiting for His Children to ask Him for their needs and He will provide [the needs that He know will benefit them and keep them in His House]. Jesus Christ in His teachings told us that Our Father will be pleased to give us the Holy Spirit if we asked Him, and we do that when we pray, whether by words or actions, the Lord's Prayer that He taught His disciples to recite (Luke 11:13). God, The Father and The Son, know exactly the benefits of the graces of the Holy Spirit to people as it will turn their hearts into heart of flesh and renew their spirit.

In His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5, 6, and 7, Luke 6:20-49), Jesus Christ blessed the people [meaning: "they are happy"] whom the Holy Spirit dwell in their heart, who have faith, hope and love; and gave them to eat from the fruits of the promised land being the "Spiritual Children of God" as "Israel" [Land of wheat and barley, of vines, of figs, of pomegranates, of olives, of oil, of honey (Deuteronomy 8:8)], the fruits that were watered by the running water coming out of the spring of mercy, the spring of peace and consolation, the spring of adoration, and the spring of love that springs unceasingly out of God's Heart: The Fountain of Living Water (Jeremiah 2:13):

1. **Poor in spirit:** The people who know that God created their flesh from dust and it will return back to dust, place all their trust in God, obey only Him, and never consider themselves as an equal to God and ignore His Word as they know that He will feed them with what they need from the fruit of the promised land to stay alive and live with Him forever: ***Wheat and Barley*** [i.e., The Bread of Life: ***God's Word written and incarnated:*** Jesus Christ (John 6:35, 48, 51-58)].
2. **Who mourn:** The people who become aware of their sins, mourn their misfortune at disobeying God's Word, but understanding His Love and Mercy will be given wine from ***the Vine*** [i.e., ***God's Console/Redemption/Power of His Right Arm:*** Jesus Christ (Isaiah 52:9-10, John 15:1 & 5)] of the Promised Land to make them happy forever.
3. **Gentle, Merciful and Pure in Heart:** The people with tender hearts, who are meek and merciful, who love others and do no harm to them but help them in all their needs, and at the time when they are treated badly they would forgive and turn the other cheek, as they know that this is how God will treat them and He will give them shelter under ***the big fig tree*** [i.e., ***God's Providence/Protection:*** Jesus Christ (Isaiah 53:1-12, Matthew 11:28-29)] of the Promised Land and make them taste the sweetness of its soft fruit [i.e., see/inherit Jesus Christ and accordingly see God The Father].
4. **Who hunger and thirst for uprightness:** The people who have zeal for God's Holy Name so they hunger and thirst for rightness as this is how others would see God's Holiness through them and they will not profane God's Holy Name, and God will feed them with ***pomegranates*** [i.e., ***God's Love/The Truth:*** Jesus Christ (1 John 4:9-10)], the juicy and healthy fruit of the Promised Land; the fruit that comes out at the end of a branch on the tree, the branch that starts as a thorn and then when the leaves start to grow on it in Spring turns into a branch that will hold the fruit [This resembles the pain that Jesus Christ suffered so that our sins are forgiven and we can be called Children of God for His Glory].
5. **Peacemakers:** The people who have peace in their hearts, working through Divine true wisdom, trying their best to spread that peace to others by proclaiming God's Kingdom and the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ who is Peace, ***the olive tree*** of the Promised Land, and God will make them olive trees just like His Son: They will know Him as their Holy Father and glorify Him through praise and work of righteousness (James 3:13-18). These people believe that Jesus Christ is the cornerstone for the Temple of God, the Living Stone, as well as He is the two olive trees standing on the sides of the lampstand of gold, who came at the time of

redemption to build the House of the Lord: (1) Olive of Priest as He is the high priest (Hebrews 8 & 9), and (2) Olive of the King [a representative of the people] as He is the King, and He is the one who made them living stones that would build spiritual homes (Ephesians 2:17-22), as He made them priests and sons, heirs to the Kingdom dedicated and confirmed with oil for God (Zechariah 4, Revelation 1:6; 11:4, 1 Peter 2:4-10). These people are enlightened by the Light, the outcome of burning the olive oil [i.e., **God's Spirit/God's Robe**: Jesus Christ (Psalm 104:1-2, Isaiah 61:1-3, John 1:1-4)] and they become children of God; a light to others for God's Glory.

6. **Persecuted in the cause of uprightness**: The people who would give themselves willingly for the sake of God, they do this out of their love for Him with joy knowing that God will give them the sweetest reward, just as the sweetness of honey; the thick juice [namely, Silan] that comes out of the dates which is the fruit of the *palm tree* in the Promised Land [i.e., **God's Glory**: Jesus Christ [also Eucharistic] (Exodus 40:34-35, John 1:14, Romans 3:23)].

For these people, their houses [i.e., hearts] are built on solid rock [i.e., The Faith in God's Word and Messiah that was sent to us out of His Heart (1 John 5:1-4)], the iron of the Promised Land, looking towards the hills searching for God; mining for the copper [brass]: the Divine part of the bronze alloy from which the snake, that Moses lifted in the desert to cure the Israelites from the bite of the fiery snakes [i.e., a result for abandoning God], was made (Numbers 21:4-9). Amazing how the bronze alloy consists of copper and tin combined in one as Divinity and humanity are combined in Jesus Christ.

Amazing how the fruit of the Promised Land is **Jesus Christ's Sacred Heart**, as He was identified to be a fruit when Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, greeted Virgin Mary and said: "*Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is The Fruit of your womb*" (Luke 1:41-42). And how much the saying: "*The tree is known by its fruits*" is true for God when we see Jesus Christ's Heart; i.e. hear His speech and see His actions (Luke 6:43-45). Oh what Promised Land (Psalm 23): A green pasture where cattle graze to produce fatty milk so that curd will be eaten, and bees feed on the flowers of its trees to produce sweet honey for whoever eats it will be able to discern the good from evil and know how to refuse the bad and choose the good (Isaiah 7:14-15, 21-22). For the ones who wander in the Promised Land, they will be like babies who never stop feeding from the breast from which the spring of mercy, the spring of peace and consolation, the spring of adoration, and the spring of love springs unceasingly (Isaiah 66:10-14); they are the children who repented, washed their sins with the Blood of The Lamb, trusted and praised

God, and reflected their Father's Holiness to others for His Glory (Isaiah 30:18-26, 60:18-22); they are the new shoots of the Vine that will bear fruit for others (Psalm 1).

In His teachings to the crowd who followed Him (in Matthew's Gospel), Jesus Christ wanted them to know God as a Loving Father Who attend always to our needs and ask His angels to protect us, Just, Merciful, Peace-Maker, Trustworthy and Truthful to His promises, Holy, Loving to all people but dislike wrong-doing, Constant-worker Who hates laziness [as laziness generates lies (Matthew 25:14-30)], and wanted His Children to be like Him by having His Spirit dwelling in them (Matthew 10:19-20). In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus Christ mentioned God as The Father over 24 times, and as any good father:

1. He is the Head of His House where His Will and Word are honoured by His children.
2. He lift-up His children and hold them by His-side so tenderly giving them warmth and love.
3. He accept happily the return of the prodigal son, where repentance is the first step on the road to the Father's House.
4. He give His Kingdom to any child who would invest in the wealth of his father for the sake of other children.



Hosea 11:3-4

Yes, it is Jesus Christ's intention that we know God's Holy Name "Our Father in Heaven" not in the understanding of a 'Name' but in the 'meaning/ characteristics behind the name' and act accordingly. Actually, God sent Jesus Christ for us as 'The Son' who is on His Father's side close to His Heart (John 1:18) so that:

- (1) We will know Him better,
- (2) We will live with Him in a relationship that is eternal where the feelings towards a father do not end when the father dies in body; a relationship that is unique where there is only one father to any child and Fatherhood love does not split between more than one person, and
- (3) We will love Him as any child loves his father and accordingly love all His other children as brothers/sisters (1 John 5:1).

We, Followers of Jesus Christ, are the spiritual **House of Israel** to whom God have promised the Spiritual Fruitful Land and His Protection from any harm, and make them fruitful as long as they honor Him as a Father (John 5:24). As the relationship between God and Israel was a Father-Son relationship, so it is with Jesus Christ and all His followers. By sending Jesus Christ as The Son, God confirmed His Fatherhood to us and His Feelings towards us: One of The Mysteries of God's Kingdom that was incarnated and revealed through the Holy Spirit in the womb of our Mother Virgin Mary. It is God's intention that

His Fatherly Love is to be known by all spirits including the blind, the crippled, the sick, the dumb, and anyone who cannot reach Him; He came to them and cured them (e.g., John 5:5-9), and asked whoever knows Him to act on His behalf and do the same as He gave them the power over Satan to bring back the lost souls (Psalm 111 & 145). It is God's intention that we know Him through Jesus Christ and all spirits to honor The Son as they honor The Father (John 5:23) so that they will be born of Spirit not of body (1 John 5:1) and be God's Children.

In the Old Testament, God said to Prophet Ezekiel that He would curse the country [House of Israel] whose people are unfaithful to Him with famine, wild beasts, the sword and a plague to make it a desert and denude it of them and only keep the faithful ones (Ezekiel 14:12-23). Yet, in His Compassion, we see Him reminding Prophet Ezekiel about His promise to be 'The Sanctifier of Israel' who would gather the House of Israel under one kingdom with one king on a rich soil (Ezekiel 37:21-28), a promise He fulfilled by sending "His Only begotten Son", known to be as Son-of-David, to be for the repentant the Bread of Life and The Truth defeating spiritual famine, the Holy Lamb of Salvation defeating all beasts of the devil, the Word as a sword with two edges to fight with, and the Faithful Healer who stay with us and conquer even death. It is God's Will that all are to be saved when they believe in whom He had sent and named Jesus "The Redeemer" and Emmanuel "God with us" (Matthew 1:21-23).

In the beginning, when God created the universe, He took from the soil of the land, made man and blew into him the Breath of Life and man became a living being with a pure heart; an image of Himself (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7). This creation is seen daily in The Holy Mass: By the Words of Jesus Christ, The Holy Spirit is blown into the bread and wine that are made of the seed-bearing plant and seed-bearing fruit, and an Image of God is made; a Pure Heart: Jesus Christ's Heart; A Heart that will give food for our hearts and make us grow to be God's Children.

*O God, some people cannot love You as a Father, so I ask you to let Your Holy Spirit dwell in our heart, so that we can call You with full confidence and with all our heart and say: Father, I love you and look forward to seeing You and living in Your House forever. Amen.*



# Jesus: The Redeemer

## On the Cross ... Feelings ... Sin ... Redemption ... New Birth

Many things have taken place on the cross, and this event made us astonished, and we stand silent before God's love for us. And, when we compare God's love for us and our love to Him we find that whatever we do we cannot love God as He love us. On the cross we understand that God's love for us is more than a love of a Creator to his creation as He could create others if we did not love him, but He loved us as His own children, as part of Himself, and fear over us as His eyes' pupils defending us by Himself. So, what happened on the cross??

On the cross:

1. That is when Jesus Christ, Son-of-Man, son of Joseph [as it was thought], of King David's descendant, of Adam, son of God (Luke 3:23-38), had took on Himself [on His own body] to represent the sinful nation of Israel [i.e., they would represent any sinful person] as described in Isaiah 1:5-6: *"The whole head is sick, the whole heart is diseased, from the sole of the foot to the head there is nothing healthy: only wounds, bruises and open sores not dressed, not bandaged, not soothed with ointment"*. That is when He asked His Father, on behalf of the nation: *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* (Mark 15:34) as King David asked in his prayer (Psalm 22:1), and then, again on behalf of the nation, He cried: *"Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit"* (Luke 23:46), trusting that His Father love this repented nation and in what He is doing His Father is telling them that their souls will resurrect and have eternal life as their sins will be forgiven as long as they repent and come back to Him through Jesus Christ.
2. That is when Jesus Christ fulfilled, for the second time, what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: *"He Himself bore our sicknesses away and carried our diseases"* (Isaiah 53:4) where our diseases here are the sins that deformed His Body. During His life, He fulfilled this prophecy when He cured the sick, as sickness is the result of the original sin of Adam and Eve (Matthew 8:16-17).

3. That is when Jesus Christ became the easy catch (Revelation 3:20), the big fish (Tobit 6:2-9), that was caught by Tobias on the request of Angel Raphael; caught with full strength so that it will not go back to the Tigris river, caught and:
- a) Part of its flesh was used as immediate food, and the rest was reserved by salting for future food just as Jesus Christ's flesh that was given to His disciples in the form of bread while He was on earth and later on, after His death, given to anyone who would believe in Him through the Holy Eucharist; also His flesh being God's Word was heard by the people at His time and after His death.
  - b) Its gall was used as ointment to remove the white spots on the eye of a blind person to give him back his sight, in the same way the bitterness of the passion of Jesus Christ has cured our blindness [sinful state] and gave us our sight to see God's Glory.
  - c) Its heart and liver were burnt so that the smoke would remove any affliction caused by evil spirits or demons, in the same way Jesus Christ's Heart suffered (Psalm 22:14) and His Blood was poured out as if He was offered as an incense to God [prayer] and a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins so that the weary will find rest in Him [i.e., remove the pain due to sinning and its eternal consequences].
- And as both organs are important to the human body so is Jesus Christ to our soul. Where:
- As the heart is the key to life and an instrument that pumps blood to the whole body, so is Jesus Christ's Heart with His Love towards all and joining all in one body to God; and
  - As the liver produces red blood cells at infancy and childhood, and then in adults and later on it is a major factory in the body that (1) regulates the metabolism, (2) produces immune complex that fight infection and increase body resistance, and (3) detoxifies the body from toxic, so does the Blood of Jesus Christ that do not perish and give healthy life to all generations throughout their life till end of time. Amazing, how if the liver is affected by a disease then it will not function properly and the person becomes inactive; and in the same manner if our faith in Jesus Christ as Savior is not solid and it is affected by other beliefs then we will not be able to function properly as light to the world.
4. That is when the pain caused by people towards God by hurting His Feelings [by not loving Him as they should, not obeying Him and turning into worshiping false gods] is transformed into actual pain. And

accordingly, that is when the words of Psalm 22, though spoken by King David, but actually inspired by the Holy Spirit, are fulfilled by Jesus Christ, Son-of-God, in His Passion and crucifixion.

5. That is when Jesus Christ took on Himself all this pain as:
  - a) Physical pain all over His Body caused by: inserting the crown of thorns into His forehead, struck with fists, struck on the head and in the face with a staff, scourging Him all over His body, bearing the heavy cross on His shoulder, inserting nails into His hands and legs, and
  - b) Emotional pain caused by: the insults He heard, stripping Him from His clothes, mocking and the spit He received on His Holy Face and Body.
6. That is when Jesus Christ covered and washed away all these causes of pain [sins] from the top of His head till the bottom of His legs with His Precious Blood that came out from His Wounds. It is Jesus Christ's second baptism (Luke 12:50) with His own Precious Blood, where blood ran on His Body as water runs when it is poured on the top of the head.
7. That is when He asked His Father to forgive us; forgive our actions that hurt His feelings, forgive what we call a sin, forgive our selfishness in not loving Him as we should and walking away from Him and not listening to Him, forgive our hurting other people's feelings as all souls belong to Him.
8. That is when Jesus Christ became the Lamb sent from God to us, as a sign of love, to shed His Blood to:
  - 8.1 Be the "Sacrifice for Sin", i.e. take away our sins, sanctify us and give us life (Leviticus 6:17-23, 7:1-6).
  - 8.2 Inaugurate and authenticate the Covenant between God and Mankind for their salvation through the forgiveness of their sins (Hebrews 9:15-28, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Matthew 26:27-28). The New Covenant that will not be broken by God if we believed in the One whom He sent and obeyed His Word (Matthew 17:5, John 17:3-8), as this Covenant is sealed with Jesus' Life where God said that the "*blood is life*" (Deuteronomy 12:23). A Covenant that is everlasting as Jesus is Immortal God in Heaven (Mark 16:19).

In other words, that is when God showed His Love to us; and when we acknowledge this love we will become Children of God as we were given a share in His Spirit (1 John 4:7-17).

9. That is when God showed His true love to us, the love that He spoke about to Hosea; a compassionate forgiving love of a husband who will never desert his disloyal wife but came to her tenderly and stay in her midst (Hosea 11:8-9), and on that day the Canticle of Isaiah was sang and became a reality not only by the Virgin Mary and Simeon the righteous man but by every person who believed in God's promise as what was written was fulfilled: *"And, that day, you will say: 'I praise you, Yahweh, you have been angry with me but your anger is now appeased and you have comforted me. Look, he is the God of my salvation: I shall have faith and not be afraid, for Yahweh is my strength and my song, he has been my salvation.' Joyfully you will draw water from the springs of salvation and, that day, you will say, 'Praise Yahweh, invoke his name. Proclaim his deeds to the people, declare his name sublime. Sing of Yahweh, for his works are majestic, make them known throughout the world. Cry and shout for joy, you who live in Zion, For the Holy One of Israel is among you in his greatness."* (Isaiah 12:1-6).

And every time we look at the cross we can sing it, remembering the water and blood that ran out of Jesus Christ's pierced Heart after His death as a fountain of Mercy to all humanity who are thirsty for God's love.

10. That is when He fulfilled what He said in the Last Supper about His Body and Blood, and gave us for the first time the eternal Korban [and later on through the Holy Eucharist by the power of The Holy Spirit] to be offered always to God for the forgiveness of the sins that we commit.
11. That is when God, The Father, splash His anger on our enemy Satan by forgiving our sins, and tell him that he and his evil spirits are no more the one who have dominion and power over humanity, and handed this power to His Son Jesus Christ so that whoever trust in Him, repent and start drinking from the fountain of His Love and Mercy shall never die but have eternal life even though he/she committed earlier deadly sins (John 12:31-32, 1 John 5:19-20, John 3:35-36).
12. That is when Jesus Christ, a traveler on earth (Matthew 8:20), became the Good Samaritan who bandaged the wounds of the sinners, pouring oil and wine on them and looked after them in an inn [earth] and asked the innkeeper [Jesus Christ's followers] to look after them with what He gave us in the Old and New Testament [His Word and His presence in the Holy Eucharist], and He will give us our wages on the last day. That is why, as Children of God, we need to imitate Him and have His tender Heart to feed His creation so that everyone will be cured and saved (Luke 10:33-37).

13. That is when Jesus Christ gave us an utmost example of the unity between Him and the Father and He ask us, as Christians, to have the same unity with The Father and His Word [Jesus Christ, The Son]; i.e., a unity of love and holiness (John 17:20-26), a unity of obedience based on faith (Letter of Saint Paul to the Hebrews). Such unity is not just words on paper but is lived through perseverance/fortitude which is a gift/grace of the Holy Spirit that we need to ask God to fill our hearts with.
14. That is when the prophecy of Simeon is fulfilled and *a sword pierced Mary's soul so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare* (Luke 2:34-35) for God's Glory as inspired by the Holy Spirit, The Paraclete, who is sent to Jesus Christ's disciples and His followers by the Father, upon His request, after His Resurrection.
15. That is when Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus, became the first person who would see and understand God's Love for all of us in the pain that her Son endured silently in His painful passion. That is when she understood what her Son used to tell her and the other disciples about God's Love and His death to be given as a sacrifice [a lamb] for the forgiveness of our sins.

These sins though they do not cause physical pain to God, still cause emotional pain and need to be covered with Jesus' Blood to be forgiven. A pain similar to the deep pain caused by the betrayal of the loved ones to us after giving them all that we have; but how soon we forgive, forget and rejoice when they come to their senses and ask for forgiveness. Jesus Christ endure these pain just like a mother enduring the pain of giving birth; and how soon these pains are forgotten once she hears her baby's cry as a sign of life into him/her. Oh how happy is Our Father Who rejoice with the return of the lost child (Luke 15:11-32) and how pleased He is with Jesus Christ "His Heart" Who came searching for us and He had found us (Luke 15:1-10) and gave us life by reconciling us to Him [i.e., preparing us and putting on us the dress worthy for the wedding that we are invited to, where we will meet Him; preparing us to be God's Bride (Matthew 22:1-14)].

On the cross, our redemption was fulfilled from God's side for all nations as Jesus Christ died naked without clothes to identify Him from which tribe or nation He came from. He died and His Holy Face was without features ("*Without beauty, without majesty, no looks to attract our eyes*" Isaiah 53:2-3). It is a Gift that was given to us freely but with lots of pain; a Gift that gave us the chance to be born of the Spirit and be part of God's Kingdom. In John 3:1-21, Jesus Christ wisely explained to Nicodemus who came to Him at night [not because he was scared but as he had thirst for knowing God, he wanted **to be alone** with Jesus and ask Him about God without any interference from other people] that in order to be born of Spirit, we need to fulfill our thirst through

the Living Water that kindles God's Love, shown in His Son's sacrifice, in our heart and fill it with joy [similar to the joy of the widow woman whose only son Jesus Christ rose from the dead (Luke 7:11-17) and the joy our Mother, the Virgin Mary, felt when she saw her Son's resurrection]. This love, i.e. God's Love will be poured into our hearts and sealed through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) and give us power to love others as God loved us for God's Glory because God is Love. This love [when 'our thirst for it' is fulfilled through the Living Water] will give us power to surrender totally to God's will and put our trust in Him, repent wholeheartedly, reject sin, and do acts that will reflect God's Holiness to others by loving and forgiving others, doing charitable work towards the needy, and leading others to God's Love, i.e. we will be God's witnesses to others (Acts 1:8) as children imitating their Father. The Living Water that quenches the thirst is the same Living Water that washes and cleanses sins to show the purity of the heart. The Living Water is God's Word, God incarnated as Jesus Christ, Son of Man, The Redeemer who said: "*No one who drinks the water that I shall give him [i.e., believes in Him] will ever be thirsty again; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up for eternal life*" (John 4:14, 6:35). The Living Water that was held by the man [representing Jesus Christ] who led the disciples to the house [i.e., God's Kingdom] where the Passover is to be eaten [i.e., God's Table] (Luke 22:7-13) [Jesus Christ will show the way to God The Father; he/she who follows Him will reach Heaven [i.e., the upper room] and share His Passover Table]; and it is the same upper room where the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and they became His witnesses. And, the Living Water that flows from God's Heart is the Holy Spirit that we would receive from Jesus Christ when we believe in Him (John 7:37-39), and that would give us a new heart to be children of God (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

On the cross, Jesus Christ asked His Mother, Virgin Mary, to be a mother for the disciple whom He loved, and He asked that disciple to make His Mother as his own. By doing so, Jesus Christ, entrusting His Mother for a great role, is asking His Mother to be a mother for all of us who would like to be disciples/followers of Him and even to be loved by Him as much as He loved that disciple, and accordingly we will love Her as our own mother and she will have that role in our life.

On the cross, "The Immaculate Conception", the name Virgin Mary gave Saint Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes, France, in one of Her Apparitions, to indicate to herself, came to life not only to mean that she is The One who was conceived at birth without original sin, but also she is a symbol for holy souls who are God's Children and Bride in His Kingdom; a symbol for the Church as a communion of Saints; a symbol for the Kingdom in Heaven; the New Jerusalem that was conceived by the Blood of Jesus Christ, The Lamb. In other

words, “The Immaculate Conception” signifies also her role as the Mother of the Church as she is the Mother of the First-Born-Child of this Church (1 Corinthians 15:13-28); the Church who are born new through Water and The Spirit; who are born of The Spirit. This birth through an immaculate conception will make them Children of God; they will be part of the Kingdom of God in Heaven. This Kingdom that though its People’s Holiness will shine in God’s Glory to praise God with the angels, but it was through the earthly Jesus Christ, God’s Love and Mercy, the Son of Mary, and what He did on the cross, that it is conceived. All her children, being purified by The Son, loved God as a Heavenly Father, trusted Him and surrendered totally to His Will, carried their cross with joy and became His children on earth, thus creating God’s Kingdom in their hearts (Luke 17:20) and souls before reaching Heaven. This Church with its Queen and Mother is robed with the sun to give light to other creatures on earth (Revelation 12).



*“A pure heart create in me O Lord,  
and a resolute Spirit renew within me” (Psalm 51:10)*

*O Jesus Christ, when I take Your Holy Body and drink Your Sacred Blood please put my sins onto your Body, cover them with Your Blood, baptize me and wash them away. Then, please put me as a seed into Your Heart and feed me with the water and blood that came out from Your Heart and create in me a pure heart [having the power of God’s Love that The Holy Spirit pour into our hearts], just like Yours worthy to call My God “My Father”, to please Him, and to do His Will. Just as Your flesh was formed from the pure water and blood in Immaculate Mary’s womb [as she was conceived without sin] by the power of The Holy Spirit, My Lord, let Your Holy Heart be the womb that give me new birth. Amen*

*“Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us and give us peace. Blessed be God! Blessed be His Great Holy Name! Glory be to The Father, and to The Son and to the Holy Spirit One God for evermore”. Amen.*



# The Sea, the Mist/Cloud and the Black Clouds



In the Book of Revelation, while recalling the end of the world, the sea dries up and no more in existence, as an indication that the causes of evil would have no existence anymore because they were sent to the sea with the herd of pigs that had them (Matthew 8:28-32), and the sea was dried (Revelation 21:1). No more sin/no more death. Since the beginning and until that day, God created fish in the sea starting with the great sea-monsters [whales] (Genesis 1:21) as a symbol for the prophets of the Old Testament whom He sent until Jesus Christ and His Apostles, to smaller size fish as a symbol of the believers to be of benefit to man-kind and turn evil that is created by the devil [God's enemy] into good for all. Perhaps the devil has forgotten God's ability, authority and power (Job 38:8-11), and was blind as he did not see the mist/cloud that God has clothed him with, the mist that God rode and marched in front of His people when they strayed away in the desert and led them to the promised land; God has swaddled the raged salt water of the sea with the fire of His Holy Spirit that do not extinguish and who also accompanied God's people in their March (Exodus 13:21-22, 40:34-38). And in order to freeze the movement of the sea, God covered the mist with swaddling bands being black clouds that pour heavy rain: "the love of God: the Savior crucified"; He is Living Water [cloud] from Living Water [cloud], but He suffered and with His suffering He have removed all darkness and fear from the hearts of those who believed in Him [where black is a symbol of grief and pain as well as a symbol of darkness, fear and blindness]. With this wisdom that was in God's mind since time immemorial (Proverbs 8:22-31), this wisdom that cannot be defeated by evil (Wisdom 7:30), God held man-kind with His Hand [as the waistcloth/belt fits tightly to man's waist, so God has embraced all His Children with His Arms (Jeremiah 13:11)], and the devil did not understand [because he doesn't know what is in God's Mind] why God did not allow him to extend his hand to the righteous (Job 1:12).

Spiritually speaking, the mist surrounded the sea and stopped his outburst [as in nature, God had "*set the sand as limit to the sea, as an everlasting barrier it cannot pass. Its waves may toss but not prevail, they may roar but cannot pass beyond.*" (Jeremiah 5:22)], and instead for its salty water to hurt the trees, the

mist: (1) poured down rain and snow (Psalm 68): Sweet Water [the Word of God embodied in the Lord Jesus and the Holy Eucharist], and (2) poured down the Holy Spirit for the trees to grow and produce fruits (Isaiah 44:3-4), in order to become another kind of salt (Mark 9:49-50, Matthew 5:13), a salt that gives life, to preserve the beauty of the land and give seeds for other new trees, in addition to be a nutrition for others by giving them God's love that was poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). There is no death with life, as the swaddling cloth of the sea was also its cerecloth.

God swaddled the sea with a belt of light as a Rainbow in the mist where nothing underneath it can leak through it; "The Rainbow" that God has set to Noah as a sign of His Love and His Blessings, as a sign for the new eternal covenant [i.e., God's promise that waters will not become a flood again to destroy all living creature (Genesis 9:12-17)]; a "Rainbow" that appears when white light passes from air to water [drops of rain], "Light" that is always present but is not seen with the naked eye, but by faith it can be seen sparkling with its eye-catching beauty. God have surrounded the old world with the brightness of His Splendour and Holiness and removed its darkness. The Word of God with Job in chapter 38 had another significance not only to remind him that He is "God Almighty: The Creator" but to say to him as Lord Jesus, The Light of the world, said to His Disciples: "*I have told you all this so that you may find peace in me. In the world you will have hardship, but be courageous; I have conquered the world.*" (John 16:33).

Accordingly, the "*Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger*", the sign that was given by the Angel to the shepherds regarding "*The Saviour: Christ the Lord*" (Luke 2:8-12), is a sign for God's Splendour embracing the human nature which was conquered by the devil, and giving Himself as the Living Bread/food to humanity, where Christ is the Word of God being:

- The food of the soul [as the Manger is a rectangle box built of stone or wood with height of 50 cm, and placed in a barn or in a room in a house to put in it the food of the animals], and
- The Light of the World thus the Rainbow for all humans.

The words of the Lord Jesus to St. Peter the Apostle: "*Feed my lambs*" (John 21: 15), and His words to the Apostles: "*Let the little children alone, and do not stop them from coming to me*" (Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16), and the prayer of King David in his Psalm 23 describing God 'The Good Shepherd' (Jeremiah 31:10-12): "*Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing. In grassy meadows He let me lie. By tranquil streams He lead me to restore my spirit. He guide me in paths of saving justice as befits His Name ... Kindness and faithful love pursue me every day of my life. I make my home in the house of Yahweh for all time to come*", invite us to be shepherds in God's image:

Leading the sheep entrusted to us [i.e., the persons around us in our home, our work and our society] to the manger [i.e., the Church and the faithful believers] having the food that God prepared for them to eat; to the green pasture where they will eat and grow; to Lord Jesus Christ [Who said: "*I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever hunger; no one who believes in me will ever thirst*" (John 6:34-35), and also said: "*I am the Living Bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.*" (John 6:51)] where the complete nourishing food is in: (1) His Words and Life in the Bible, and (2) His Body alive in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist that He gave to His Apostles, and the followers afterward, during the last Passover Supper with them (Luke 22:19-20).

In the Book of Wisdom, inspired by the Holy Spirit, King Solomon wrote: "*I was nurtured in swaddling clothes, with every care.*" (Wisdom 7:4). And here also the swaddling clothes refer to God's Love and Mercy, and *with every care* at any cost no matter what it takes of hardship by Him. This is God's Divine Providence with all its meaning and its ways to educate whoever wants to be of God's Children/'Servants in God's Kingdom' who rely on God and put all their trust in Him (Ecclesiasticus 2:1-21).

Among the advantages of the swaddling clothe is it hides all body defects, in addition to straightening the baby's body. This is exactly what God's Love does for the sinner (Proverbs 10:12), and what Jesus Christ did when our faults/sins were hidden in His Wounds. The "Blood and Water" which were discharged from the body of Jesus Christ after His death on the cross as a symbol for "God's Love and Mercy" / "Holy Spirit and Life" / "Baptism and Holy Eucharist" are the clothes and swaddling clothe for whoever believed in Him, where whoever believe in Him will live even though he dies (John 11:25). The human who knows God [i.e., his heart is full of love] need to be also a swaddling clothe for others through forgiving and proclaiming love.

*O God, all praise is Yours, for whatever Your Hands created was in Him, and for Him and points to Him (Colossians 1:16): Lord Jesus: Word of God, Christ crucified, Son of God, Prince of Peace, Love. My Lord and my God, I trust in You. Amen.*



# The Swaddling Cloth and The Cerecloth (The First and The Last Clothes)



**A baby wrapped  
with swaddling clothes**



**A Cerecloth**

The swaddling cloth and the cerecloth were known and used since antiquity. Archaeological records point to the beginning of the use of the swaddling cloth about 4000 years BC in Central Asia, especially when people migrate from one region to another due to desertification, where babies are wrapped and carried in a backpack [source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swaddling>]. The usage of the swaddling cloth was not limited to that region but it was used widely by lot of nations because it helps the baby to sleep. As for the cerecloth, it is a cloth covered with wax that is used to wrap the dead to reserve the body from the effect of moisture and corruption until the resurrection as previously thought, as in the days of the Pharaohs.

If we wanted to know when do we wrap the new born baby with the swaddling cloth, and when did God used it with His son Israel, or even what is this swaddling cloth, then all what we need to do is to read what is written in The Book of Ezekiel about God's speech with Prophet Ezekiel regarding Israel [Israel whose king was David who admitted in Psalm 51 his sin, guilt and uncleanness [i.e., still in-blood as a woman after giving birth and before the forty/eighty days, the period of her purification, are completed (Leviticus 12:1-5)], and pleaded to God for His love and Mercy] saying:

*“At birth, the very day you were born, there was no one to cut your naval-string, or wash you in water to clean you, or rub you with salt, or wrap you in swaddling clothes. ... I saw you kicking on the ground in your blood as I was passing, and I said to you as you lay in your blood: Live! ... You developed, you grew, you reached marriageable age. ... but you were stark naked. Then I saw you as I was passing. ... I spread my cloak over you and covered your nakedness; I gave you my oath,*

*I made a covenant with you – declares the Lord Yahweh – and you became mine. I bathed you in water, I washed the blood off you, I anointed you with oil. I gave you embroidered dresses, fine leather shoes, a linen headband and a cloak of silk. I loaded you with jewels, gave you bracelets for your wrists and a necklace for your throat. I gave you nose-ring and earrings; I put a beautiful diadem on your head. ... Your food was the finest flour, honey and oil. ... The fame of your beauty spread through the nations, since it was perfect, because I had clothed you with my own splendor - declares the Lord Yahweh” (Ezekiel 16:4-14).*

By comparing what God did with Sons of Israel, we will realize that "The swaddling cloth" is "God's Splendour"; and disconnecting the umbilicus cord is detaching ourselves from the world of sin [i.e., earthly matters: causes of sin] and forgetting about that stage and engage with God in the era of solidarity: "marriage"; while washing in water is the new life of repentance from the old behaviour and uniting with God's Word to please Him [i.e., to listen and obey and practice]; therefore, rubbing with salt to strengthen the new born baby is the Divine Providence that fills his heart with God's Love to him and his love for God and His creation (Colossians 3:1-17, Matthew 5; 6; 7). As, the followers of Jesus Christ are the spiritual sons of Israel, then these steps are implied within the concept of the seven sacraments of the Church, as follows:

- Cutting the umbilicus cord is implied within the concept of the sacraments: "**Matrimony**" and "**Holy Orders [i.e., Priesthood]**" where humans would leave their father and mother and become attached to their partner: God,
- Washing with water for cleaning is implied within the concept of the sacraments: "**Baptism**", "**Penance and Reconciliation**" and "**Anointing of the Sick**" where repentance, recognition of sins and the intention of not to return to the wrong behaviour would lead to forgiveness and cleansing,
- Salting with salt is "uniting with God" to become victorious and pure [prevent our heart from becoming rotten], as salt is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ who empower us with the power of the Holy Spirit to become the salt of Earth, i.e., He fill our hearts with God's love, and this is implied within the concepts of the sacraments: "**Confirmation**" and "**Holy Eucharist: Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Lord Jesus Christ**"

And when all of these steps take place, we will be wrapped with the swaddling cloth that symbolizes the proper gown that we need to wear to attend the

wedding ceremony prepared by God at His House. The swaddling cloth is a piece of cloth, usually of linen, that wraps the new born baby after cutting the umbilical cord, wash with water to clean the blood and fatty layer which adorns/covers the body inside the womb, and rubbed with salt or olive oil to strengthen the skin; this makes the baby ready to be handed over to his mother to feed him with her milk and take him home. Therefore, the swaddling cloth here symbolizes that whoever wears it has become pure without uncleanness; hence we can understand why the Angel told the shepherds that the sign by which they will know the Saviour is "a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12) as an indication that this baby is Holy and wrapped with God's Splendour, in addition to the complete submission of Christ to the physical conditions governing the human race.

The swaddling cloth reminds us of the cerecloth, the cerecloth for the dead is like the swaddling cloth for the new born. When you make sure that a person has died [disconnected from life on earth], his body is washed with water and then anointed with perfume and incense, and ready to be wrapped with a piece of waxed linen robe called cerecloth to protect the body from becoming corrupted awaiting to go to Heaven: The Father's House; at that time the cerecloth becomes the swaddling cloth as we are alive in the Father's Lap.

Our swaddling cloth or cerecloth, that we meet God with, is our wedding gown, the gown of the luminous body that was put on us by Jesus Christ when we heard His Word and acted upon it, thus became worthy of salvation by His Death on the cross. This dress is the purity of piety and God's Brightness and Splendour; it is the fire of the Holy Spirit that God had shadowed us with when we were on the ground and cleansed us and made us His Children; accordingly, it is the "dress of the worker in God's Kingdom on Earth: the towel that replaced Jesus' outer garment to wipe the disciples' feet with after He washed them to make them relax after going through the tiring way in this life, i.e. it is the dress of service for delivering comfort to others, delivering God's love to others" (John 13:1-16). When man becomes aware that he/she is a son/daughter of God, and starts loving God, the zealous for God's Name will make him/her work to preach "the Gospel" and make God and His Love and Mercy be known to others, whether by word or by acts of compassion that reflect "God is Love". Man does this filled with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and armed with the qualities of Jesus Christ "God's Word and Love" [full Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17)]. Hence we can understand why the cerecloth [Linen cloth] was left behind in the tomb of Christ (John 20:5) in addition to being an indication that He have risen from the dead: He is The Light, The Purity, Splendour and Sublimity, whom do not need another dress on His Transfigured [Luminous] Body. As well, we can understand why Jesus

Christ said to the people surrounding Lazarus tomb: "*Unbind him, let him go free*" (John 11:44) after He brought him back to life on Earth in addition to being an indication that he is alive and free from sin, it is an indication that he no longer needs the cerecloth which impedes the movement of the body in this world [where the cerecloth represents: Blindness, paralysis, bleeding of the woman, leprosy, ..., selfishness, arrogance, greed, hatred and other physical and spiritual diseases and even death that make mankind stray away from working in God's Kingdom; i.e., diseases which Jesus cured], because with God's Power [Divine Providence] Lazarus' body is cured and is protected from decay, as God's Word had covered him and made him alive. We, as Lazarus, do not need the white linen material to meet God because we, who are baptized with the Living Water and Spirit, are clothed with the real 'swaddling cloth'/cerecloth: Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Romans 8; 13:8-14, Galatians 3:23-29).

For the follower of Jesus Christ, the dress of service [i.e., Full Armor of God] and the 'dress and jewelry' that God dressed Israel [i.e., His Bride] with is one, and it is of the Gifts and Work of the Holy Spirit (Wisdom 5:15-19), which consists of:

Full Armor of God



An Indian Bride



- The Breastplate and the Belt: Uprightness that is sprang of piety according to Faith, and commitment to the Truth - The embroidered dress and soft linen belt [where linen keeps the body from sweating so that it will not become dirty after it bathed], the linen headdress and the cloak of silk [As a sign of striking elegance: Holiness (Revelation 19:7-8)].
- The Shoes on the Feet: Fortitude to proclaim the good news for all - Shoes of fine leather where fine leather would not hurt the feet while frequent walking [As a sign of offering one's life with joy and relentlessly without fatigue to God's Will and Work because of his love to God].
- The Sword and the Shield: The Word of God and The Faith - The bracelets at both wrists being a valuable treasure gifted to her by the bridegroom [As a sign of the Bridegroom's wealth].

- **The Helmet: Salvation** - what is placed on the head:
  16. **Nose-ring** [As a sign of belonging to God through the “Breath of Life” and receiving the Holy Spirit in us thus becoming tools in God’s Hand (John 20:21-23)],
  17. **Earrings** [As a sign of having listening ears, in the sense of hearing and understanding, to God’s Word], and
  18. **Diadem** [As a sign of: (1) Fear of God and its wearer is filled with wisdom (Ecclesiasticus 1:11-20), and (2) Jesus Christ, where as the bridegroom is the crown/veil on the bride’s head, so the crown is an indicative of the bridegroom: Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:4-16)]

This dress cannot be worn [i.e., completed] without the **necklace for the throat** that indicates to complete submission of one’s self to God and placing full confidence in Him, and surrendering to His Will saying "Here I am. Use me." [i.e., be born of the Living Water and Spirit: A feather in God’s Mind (John 3:4-8)].

We put on this dress, with the power of the Holy Spirit, when we feed on the Word of God: Heard and Eaten [*the finest flour, honey and oil*]. In the Divine Liturgy, where two or more people come together in the Name of Jesus Christ knowing ‘who He is’, and God would pass by them and cut their connection to sin, wash their sins away, perfume them with incense, empower them and affirm them with His Love, and put on them a shining whiteness robe and jewelry that astonishes the eyes [i.e., with the Grace of Lord Jesus Christ the Son, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:11-13)], in order to become eligible for the Father's Lap, qualified to enter into the Kingdom and stand before Jesus The Bridegroom; qualified to take part of the service work that will reflect God's Love to others who did not attend the Divine Liturgy. The Father has chosen the Bride for his beloved Son and He has prepared her for Him, as He had given children to the barren in the old days.

*My Lord and my God, I don't have words more beautiful than what Your prophet Isaiah said as a thanksgiving to You: "I exult for joy in Yahweh, my soul rejoices in my God, for He has clothed me in garments of salvation, He has wrapped me in a cloak of saving justice, like a bridegroom wearing his garland, like a bride adorned in her jewels. For as the earth sends up its shoots and a garden makes seeds sprout, so Lord Yahweh makes saving justice and praise spring up in the sight of all nations." (Isaiah 61:10-11).*

*Thank you Lord for all the graces You’ve given us. You have prepared our first and last clothes while we are unworthy, and accepted us as sons and bride while You are God Almighty, the glorious King. Amen.*

# The Son of The Carpenter

In Deuteronomy 22:8, God advised anyone, who want to build a house, to surround its roof with a parapet to protect it from any harm of any kind, and it is obvious that the higher this parapet is, the better the protection will be. This advice was also applied by the Jews when they wanted to re-build the House of God in Jerusalem, and they started with the parapet which is the Wall of Jerusalem to protect the city and God's Temple from any external effect. In the Old Testament (The Book of Nehemiah), people required timber to re-build the wall around Jerusalem and its gates, which they got from the keeper of the king's forest, money and an effort to do so [i.e., builders] which they got from the Jews who were God's servants. Now, that we understand that our heart is a Temple for God that needs to be built so that God can come to it, we need to have: (1) timber, (2) money/richness and (3) willingness and commitment to do so. God Himself provided the timber to build the wall surrounding our heart: **The Crucifix** (Isaiah 26:1, Zechariah 2:5-9), as it is written in Psalm 127: "*If Yahweh do not build a house, in vain do its builders toil*", as He is the "Saviour" and no one can purify man other than Him, in addition He is the "Teacher" to His Commandments. The more is our faith in Jesus Christ [i.e., knowing who He is and not thought of to be someone else (Luke 9:7-9, 28-36)], the higher is the wall that will make us stand in front of any hardship to stay faithful to God. As for the money/richness, it is through "**Prayer in The Name of Lord Jesus**", i.e. the gold and silver that the Apostles Peter and John had (Acts 3:6), and through **fasting throughout the trials and temptations** that we face in our life that **we grow in Faith and become richer with the graces of the Holy Spirit to build a better house to be workers in God's Kingdom**, i.e. to be trustworthy and have a strong will, perseverance, self-denial to renounce personal needs and others' needs if it is not according to God's Will, and faithfulness to God till death (Luke 9:23-26, 57-62).

As followers of Jesus Christ, we either inherit our parents' house or build our own. That is, we either know Jesus Christ because we were born in a Christian family, and with time we add to it or repair what is old or broken to make it as new so that it can be inherited later on by our children, or we come to know Him converted from other religion or from atheism, and then our children will inherit us. In any case, it is important to keep on working to keep the house tidy and clean, has a good reputation, in good shape and not deserted otherwise it will fall on its occupiers (Hebrews 6). We need always to remember that there is a King who have a permanent place in our house. Among the first thing we need to do is to reflect on our relationship with God and have the

courage to admit our failures and ask ‘The Carpenter’ to help us to honour God and be obedient to His Word; to make us understand His Word and His Will in our lives and act accordingly, as He said that He came to save us (John 12:46-47).

In the Old Testament, God asked Haggai to remind the governor of Judah and the high priest about their responsibility in building the House of God, His Temple (Haggai 1:1-8); in the New Testament, The King Himself, an eternal High Priest of the order of The High Priest Melchizedek (Hebrews 7), came as a carpenter (Mark 6:3) and the carpenter’s son (Matthew 13:55) to build our temple, our house, our heart.

On earth, who would build our heart better than The Master in building, better than The One who created it; who have drawn its plan and know exactly how and from what material it need to be built to be an impressive mansion to the viewer, and a warm home to the one living in it? One thing He asked us to do: ‘Not to occupy our hearts with material things especially money’.

In Heaven, He built for us a house on a land of His own assuring us an eternal stay where no one can force us to leave if we didn’t want to with our own will, for we are in His Sacred Big Tender Merciful Compassionate Heart. He built our house before we were born as any rich father who prepares the inheritance for his children beforehand.

Jesus Christ is not only a carpenter who creates new things but also fix what is broken. He created and gave birth to our soul, and healed it when it broke. A soul that Saint Teresa of Jesus (March 28, 1515 – October 4, 1582) wrote about in her writing, “The Interior Castle”:

*“Consider your soul to be like a castle made entirely out of a diamond of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms, just as in Heaven there are many dwelling places. For reflecting upon it carefully, we realize that the soul of the just person is nothing else but a paradise where The Lord says ‘He finds His Delight’. So then, what do you think that abode will be like where a King so powerful, so wise, so pure, so full of all good things takes His delight? I don’t find anything comparable to the magnificent beauty of a soul and its marvellous capacity. Indeed, our intellects, however keen, can hardly comprehend it, just as they cannot comprehend God; but He Himself says that He created us in His own image and likeness”.*

*O Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your Creation, may every soul cry to You and say: “In You we find our delight”. Amen.*

# The Healer



Jesus' parable that was given as an answer to the lawyer's question: "*Who is my neighbour?*" (Luke 10:25-37) shows us that a neighbour is the person who feels compassionate towards others who are weak and in need, and help with all his might and capabilities regardless of who the person in need is. We often limit ourselves to that, i.e. we try to **be compassionate towards others and treat them with compassion and mercy** to be as the "Good Samaritan", and we forget to read every detail within the parable in particular to know other specifications about this Samaritan to discover that he might be a rich doctor carrying with him money and first aid materials such as bandage for dressing the wounds, oil to soften bruises and soothe pain (Isaiah 1:6), and wine to cleanse wounds [as it was medically recognized in those days], otherwise he couldn't do what he did. The man who fell into the hands of bandits didn't need a spiritual man [a priest or a Levite experienced in Law] to heal his wounds, but at least he needed someone to feel sorry for him and take him to a doctor; while a person who is under the control of Satan and Sin [i.e., thieves of souls] must have a spiritual doctor for treatment. This doctor should have the characteristics of the Good Samaritan equipped always with everything he needs to help others: Kind heart, wealth, oil, and wine; and all these symbolizes the treasures of God "The Word" and His power that expel demons and soften the hearts of stone bringing life into it; and after the initial healing he would entrust him to someone who can continue treatment/care until fully healed and become self-reliant.

Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, Lord Jesus remind us of the care that God want His Flock's shepherds to practice to be like Him, as He declared: "*I myself shall pasture my sheep, I myself shall give them rest. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the injured and make the sick strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them... I shall come and save my sheep and stop them from being victimised...*" (Ezekiel 34). Yes, He is, as Lord Jesus said, referring to Himself as "Son of God": "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, I have*

*come so that they may have life and have it to the full. I am the good Shepherd"* (John 10:10-11); He was sent carrying in His Heart **God's lavish gifts: wheat, wine and oil** (Jeremiah 31:10-12) thus fulfilling in Himself "The Word Incarnated" and in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist [i.e., His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity] God's promise to send wheat, wine and oil for His people to eat and never be humiliated again [i.e., the forgiveness of sins, and spiritual satiation and healing] as God is in their midst (Joel 2:18-27). He is a physician who healed and heal the overburdened and weary with His Yoke and light burden (Matthew 11:28).

As sons of God and followers of Jesus Christ, are we spiritual healers ready to treat patients? Or, we see patients and leave them on the side of the road? **"Love is of the basics of the medicine for every disease"**, this is what God teach us in the entire Gospel as "God is love"; so is our heart filled with love and know "The Word"??

*My Lord and my God, the giver of life, fill our hearts with true love of body and soul, to sanctify ourselves and be compassionate towards others with what You've granted us of gifts and graces to live all together with You forever, and thank You always, Amen.*

## Chaplet of "Love"

### Opening Prayer:

I recourse to You, my God, at all times, in joy and hardship, and seek the wealth of Your Sacred Heart's treasure. I offer this Chaplet, for myself and for my family and the whole world.

- Sign of the Cross: In the Name of The Father, The Son and
- The Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.
- The Creed
- The Lord's Prayer: Our Father Who are in Heaven...
- Hail Mary ...
- Glory be ...



### On each Decade, we pray:

- O God "The Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit", one God glorified and hallowed by "Love", have mercy on us. (x1)
- O Giver of Life, fill our hearts with "Love" to live with you forever. (x10)
- O Mary full of grace, the grace of loving God above all things, and loving others as yourself, pray for us. (x1)

**Concluding Prayer:** All thanksgiving is always to You O God, Amen.

# God's Holiness (1)

"God is Holy" is a statement that has many meanings, one of which is: "**God fulfil His promise**", so while we pray and say, "**Holy God, Holy Almighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us**", we turn to God and tell him that we believe in Him and trust in His Word and Promise, and according to this faith and trust we act. This explanation was told by God to Moses when he didn't trust what God promised him and couldn't face the blame of the Israelites, who were wandering in the desert, for leaving Egypt, and questioning God's promise to reach the promised land with running water, fig trees, pomegranates, and grape vines (Numbers 20:1-13). Saint Paul the Apostle also lived this interpretation and worked by it during the time in distress, where he said to his companions on the ship before the storm subsides: "*So take courage, friends; I trust in God that things will turn out just as I was told*" (Acts 27:21-26).

As for the Followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's promise for salvation, they are represented by the Virgin Mary [representative of the Church] in her faith and confidence in God who fulfil His promise (The Magnificat in the Gospel of Luke 1:46-55), and this was emphasized by her cousin Elizabeth, whom filled of the Holy Spirit said: "*Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled*" (Luke 1:45). Yes, Virgin Mary believed that her child is "The Lord" (Luke 1:26-45); He is the King whom God promised to send, as prophesied by the Prophets of the Old Testament, to save His People.

This interpretation came into reality to all creation, before the representatives of the Old Testament and the New Testament disciples, on the day Lord Jesus transfigured on a high mountain, when God showed them "The Saviour, The Chosen One" as He promised (Luke 9:28-35); therefore the Transfiguration is the feast where God shows that He is Holy, i.e. "God fulfil His Promise".

*O Holy God, whose Word is Truth, and mistrusting You is sin where all immoral actions would indicate that, including disobedience to Your Word, we thank You for Jesus Christ, Son-of-Man, total goodness, Who wanted to make up for all the insults done towards You by man, where at the beginning of His Passion's journey on the Mount of Olives, have authenticated with His Blood the New Covenant between human beings and You saying, "Let Your Will be done, not mine" (Luke 22:42-44), and at the end of the journey, He said, "Father, into Your Hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). We ask You to have mercy on us all, and give us through the Holy Spirit patience and perseverance so that our trust in You would grow and not fall, we ask this in Jesus' Holy Name, Amen.*

# God's Holiness (2)

Perhaps the other meaning of the statement "God is Holy" is that God is all light with no bit of darkness, and He is "Lord Jesus, The Light of the world" which illuminates for us, and we, through our faith, do reflect His Light to others. He is to us as the Sun to the Moon. The Sun, its light does not blow out, on the other hand, man's light, similar to the Moon, goes into a cycle, i.e. "Waxing Cycle", that starts with "New Moon" that is totally darkness, i.e. disbelief, then the illuminated area increases gradually to become "Crescent" and keep on increasing until it becomes a "Full Moon" that is totally illuminated, i.e. a real follower of Jesus Christ. The moon is a dull place by itself, and what people see is the side of the Moon facing the Sun where sunlight will illuminate the side of an object that faces it. Man can also go into the "Waning Cycle" that starts with the "Full Moon" then the illuminated area decreases and fades until it becomes a "New Moon"; this cycle happens when man becomes lazy and neglects his duties towards God until his actions stop reflecting the Face of God, i.e. Love, to others. What applies to the individual applies to "The Body of Christ: The Community of Believers on Earth", while brewing this community with good yeast, i.e. the Word of God, the light radiates to others, on the other hand, when the yeast of Satan start working the light dims:

Waxing Cycle happens when brewing this community with good yeast, i.e. the Word of God, while the Waning Cycle happens when there is bad yeast, i.e. Satan's work, e.g. hypocrisy (Luke 12:1), fear of admitting and showing our faith to others, laziness, lying, injustice, etc.:

<u>Good Yeast</u>	<u>Bad Yeast</u>
* Appreciation of God's Love and reflecting it to others	* Hatred, Malice, Iniquity ...
* Meekness and Humbleness	* Arrogance, egotism and selfishness
* Giving thanks to God, and trust in Him	* Self-reliance and glorification
* Prayer and be alert; Commitment and Perseverance	* Laziness and lukewarm faith
* Right examination of conscience and the will to change	* Justify of oneself without admitting mistakes
* Integrity	* Hypocrisy, flattery, lying, injustice
* Courage and Fortitude	* Fear of admitting faith

Through the Waxing Cycle, the glory of Jesus Christ increases and His followers decreases, as what happened with St. John the Baptist, while through the Waning Cycle, people, i.e. "I", becomes more important than "God".

This "Moon Cycle" can happen to each heart individually, and it can go from one phase to another depending on "Faith". If we have "Faith" then we can individually be as the "Woman wrapped with the Sun standing on the Moon" (Revelation 12:1) conquering its darkness, and collectively that Woman is "The Church".

*My Lord and my God, if blocked my ears from everything that Lord Jesus had said and opened them only at that moment that You told me: "Listen to Him" when Lord Jesus was transfigured and His Clothing became sparkling white between Prophet Moses and Prophet Elijah on Mount Tabor (Mark 9:1-7, Luke 9:28-36), then I would hear Him speaking of Your Love and Mercy for me with those whom You encountered earlier but then their faces were covered from seeing Your Glory (Exodus 33:18-23, 1 Kings 19:9-14), but now they see clearly; He is speaking with who provided water to the people through a miracle from You to prove to them that You are with them (Exodus 17:1-7, 1 Kings 18:41-46), and now they both see the "God is with us", the Fount of Life, and He is speaking to me also as His disciple and making me hear that His death on the cross was for me, a sinner, because You loved me ["For this is how God loved the world: He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have eternal life" (John 3:16)]. All thanks be to You Lord for my salvation and my life, Amen.*

## **The Sun & The Moon**



*My Lord, My God, on the day of Your Beloved Son's transfiguration, You showed me that He is the Sun of the World, and now I tell you that I am a Dark Moon in itself that enlightens to others according to the faith I have within me, according to the rays of the love of Your Son that I reflect to others. I thank you always, and ask You to let my light be as the light of a Full Moon not Crescent, I ask this in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.*

# Our Relationship With God



"Where is the problem in our relationship with God?", a question asked by many, especially by priests when seeing some [or a lot I don't know!!] of the parishioners don't walk the way of the Lord, i.e. according to the Word of God. Such question is answered by the Lord Jesus in the parable of The Sower (Luke 8:5-15), which He explained to His Disciples to be an adequate answer to anyone who ask himself about his relationship with God, what is it? And how should it be?

God's Word, "The Seed", don't change, it is the same for everyone, but understanding, absorbing and working by it varies from person to another according to one's relationship with God, and this relationship with God is based on his heart. One might think that he/she has a close relationship with God [i.e., the seed is merged in the soil with strong roots] but in time of trials he/she would fall whether he/she knows and admits that or not but God would know, for example, a woman may go to church every Sunday but gossips and talks about people throughout the week, or someone may spend a lot of money on himself but when seeing a poor man he/she can hardly give the coins in his/her pocket if any [trials that show the goodness of the heart and its compassion and love for others, e.g. The way people welcomed Jesus' Disciples when He sent them two by two; the way the rich man treated Lazarus the poor ...; trials that show meekness and humility; ...].

A "kind heart" is the one who drank 'the Love of God and others' through his community, his family and those around him, i.e. they made his soil [i.e., heart] moist and good, and saturated with the Living Water: "Love", thus ready for the Word of God to be sown in the deep, not on the surface, to grow and produce good work in obedience to the Word [where 'Obedience' is a mirror that reflects 'Love to God'], as seeds don't grow in rocky soil that has no moistness.

These loving and merciful hearts become ready for God's Word, i.e. to hear The Word and transform what they hear into action, as the seed is changed to become a fruitful plant. First the seed germinates under the right temperature and moisture conditions and develops into a seedling having (1) fine roots [underneath the surface] that would absorb water from the soil, allowing the

seedling to grow, as a sign of simple relationship with God, and (2) a shoot with leaves [above the surface] as a sign for simple actions due to faith; these leaves photosynthesize light into energy, allowing the plant to grow and develop. Both, the roots and the leaves, are the reason behind the growth of the plant. As the roots go deeper into the soil, the plant becomes stronger and more mature with bigger and more leaves, and this is exactly the case with our relationship with God: We allow the Word of God to grow into our hearts and minds when we offer ourselves to God and to His Will, putting all our confidence in Him by saying "Thy Will be done", thus allowing 'Love' to penetrate deep to the depths of our heart forming an intimate and strong relationship with Him based on knowledge and understanding. The more our love for God grows, through the obedience to His Word and not just verbally, persevering with patience despite the persecution of the world that lives in contradiction to the teachings of God, the more God would provide us with grace so that our actions become like a fruitful tree: An enjoyment for other peoples' eyes, fulfilling for the hungry, and rest for the weary; knowing that fruits are of different types, some for the body and others for soul, to satisfy the hungry and thirsty for the Word of God, to heal the sick, and to give freedom to prisoners. Working by the Word of God makes the Word/Gift/Grace given by God to man yield 30, 60 and 100 times (Mark 4:8).

When a tree grow and is fruitless [i.e., a lukewarm faith, only on the surface not from the heart], the soil needs someone to turn it over and fertilize it with good food, and the tree may also need to be trimmed and cut its sick or dead branches. In the same manner, the flipping and pruning in the heart is the process of "repentance" and "drawing closer with intimacy and avidly to God to hear His Word", a process which Jesus called for and emphasized on in more than one occasion, saying: "*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*". As for the compost and fertilizer, it is "the prayer to God asking for Divine Providence", and "working the good deeds", and "fasting from sin". Our heart needs to be similar to God's Heart.

Man's relationship with God!!! "He who loved anything over God will not bear fruit, and he who loved God and gave himself totally to Him will bear great fruits" ... This is what Lord Jesus is saying in the Parable of the Sower who came out looking for the good soil and comes out every day, so have we prepared it for Him? He is standing at the door, knocks and awaits there, do we open the door for Him and let Him in?

*My Lord and my God, I love you and concede You to do as you wish with me for Your Glory, thanking You always. Come into my heart and through Your Holy Spirit change me to be a true child of Yours, meek and humble to accept to be changed, and loving and compassionate towards others where my actions reflect Your Love and Mercy to them. Amen.*

# The Loving Son

When someone wonders about how much God love him, then a faithful follower of Jesus Christ would tell him: "Look at the Cross, and you will see God's love to us, the love that Jesus Christ said about it in Saint John's Gospel chapter 3 verse 16: *{For this is how God loved the world: He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life}*".

Now, if this man re-questioned this Christian, and said: "What about the love of you, the son of man, to God, so how can it be?" What would be the answer?

Perhaps the most beautiful scene to demonstrate the love of any human to God can be taken from the life of Jesus the Nazarene, i.e. Son-of-Man, when He knelt in prayer to His Heavenly Father on the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39-46), and He sweated blood to authenticate His Covenant with God at that moment and say: "***Let Your Will be done, not mine***". At that moment, His Soul was filled with sorrow to the point of death (Matthew 26:38), like the sorrow of a faithful man who committed sin and thought that he would be cut-off from the tree of life. This sorrow was not because He was going to die, as He knew this, and He had told His disciples three times earlier about what would happen to Him and that He is the Messiah (Matthew 16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19), but because He became weak, and His weakness would sadden His Father when all His aim of His life is '**to please His Father by doing His Will, i.e. obeying His Word**' (Psalm 40:8-9, Luke 2:41-49). By asking God to let the cup of pain and awful death to pass by, He would dishonor God's Holy Name "**The One who keep His Promise**" (Numbers 20:1-13) before others and question the credibility of His Word as He is "The Redeemer of Israel, The Holy One of Israel".

As humans, we fall a lot in this kind of trial, a trial that Jesus Christ asked us to stay awake and pray in order not to be put to it; a trial that makes us act in a way that differs from what we preach, e.g. our preaching about forgiveness, sacrifice, generosity, ... etc.; a trial that will make us run away from fulfilling God's Will in our lives especially if we know what God want from us to do, and this will shake the credibility of God's Word in the hearts of the people surrounding us especially if we were connected to God through a strong relationship and are found always in prayer. In such situations, we are actually doing a disservice to God more than harming ourselves. This kind of trial requires from us a great love to God and deep steadfast faith with live

conscience [i.e., watchfulness to all actions to keep it holy] to say “let Your Will be done”. For example, when love dies in our heart because of much abuse or when being persecuted or humiliated, and knowing that God’s Will for people is to love each other as He loved us, then we would forgive and pray for the increase of love and faith in the heart of our abuser, in order to be a mirror of God’s love and to show His Glory to others by being obedient to His Will with complete trust.

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus Christ fell on His knees as if submitting Himself to God, and we can imagine hearing Him saying: “*Let Your Will be done, not mine*. Here I am, kneeling with my hands behind my back so that You can tie them with Your Will and take me wherever you want. I surrender totally to You, and I do this because I love you and the credibility of Your Love for the world is all what I wanted”. So, we too can show our affection for God in all situations we are experiencing: death, poverty, disease, disagreement between married couple, persecution, ... etc, and surrender to what God allowed to happen in our lives and obey His Word, and say “let Your will be done” without contempt. Such love can be felt with the words of Saint Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus, saying that he has surrendered his life to God and has become compelled by the Spirit doing God’s Will with joy, i.e. proclaiming to all nations the entire plan of God (Acts 20:17-27) for God’s Glory.

Lord Jesus Christ was born by more than two thousand years ago, and was laid in a manger to be food for the hungry that supports and strengthens. Jesus, Son-of-Man, grow and was faithful to His mission and duty, wandering all over the land, going to the hungry and needy people to give them part of Himself to be healed and empowered and support their hunger for God. The Son-of-Man did not stop for one minute about the performance of His duty; He became a servant, and at the same time the vital food for all; and He continues to this day, providing His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity a “Living Bread” for the needy and poor. He's alive and won't die. Our love for God invites us to be an example of "Son-of-Man" to become "Children of God", so have we resembled this conscientious steward with what God have entrusted us in order to attain eternal life with Him (Matthew 24:45-51)?

In the Old Testament, all believers loved God and were scared that they will not be united with God because of sin [i.e., the enemy], their hearts were filled with sorrow and their tears wet their pillows; so they confessed their sin and repented (Psalms 6, 31 and 32). After the New Testament, the true believer who loves God grieves at his sin not because he is scared that sin will separate him from God as he knows that he is in the heart of God, and that God had

forgiven him through His Beloved Son if he felt remorse in his heart and truly repented; and for sure he will have eternal life in God's Kingdom as he has great hope in the resurrection. Accordingly, the true believer's sorrow within the soul comes for the following reasons, where like His Teacher Lord Jesus, his intimate wish and goal is **"to please God and glorify Him"**:

- (1) Because of his sin, he saddened his Heavenly Father and tarnished the Name of Almighty God in front of others,
- (2) Because of his sin, Jesus Christ suffered the pain of scourging (Luke 12:47), and crucifixion, and
- (3) Because he sinned; and since believers believe that they have strong faith and can stay away from sinning, so they grieve their weakness if they sin.

The people of Corinth were sad when Saint Paul deplored their actions in his first letter to them, and showed them what kind of sin they've committed, and accordingly they understood it and did not insist that what they were doing was not wrong, but listened to him and rectified their wrong behavior; how blessed they were. Nowadays, there are people who do not feel that they are sinning, nor grieve and be sorry, but cling to what they are doing, and say that they are close to God and in union with Him!! Is this how we love God? What behavior makes God happy: A behavior out of stubborn arrogant heart (Psalm 36:1-3), or a behavior out of humble heart? When we read in the Holy Bible that there is joy in Heaven when sinners repent (Luke 15:7) and God is not pleased when man sins and does not repent (Ezekiel 18:23), this indicates a sadness in heaven while sinning; and accordingly we can understand the reason why Our Heavenly Father declared about Jesus Christ, saying: *"This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am pleased"* (Matthew 3:17), as Jesus Christ was sent to us for the purpose of restoring the lost sheep, and He did this as of love for God and His Glory, where God's Will is that all souls are to be saved.

*Our Father in Heaven, please fill our hearts with a steadfast love to You so that we can say as what is written in the scroll of the book about Your Son/Children: "My delight is to do Your Will; Your Law, my God, is deep in my heart". Amen.*

**Did you know that the worst enemy to God is:**

**"Selfishness, i.e. Loving oneself only"**

**as He is The Father of all, and He wanted to change this enemy to a friend by changing this love to be:**

**"Loving the Spirit/Soul of that self"**



**where the first kind of love is Arrogance, while the other is Loving God.**

# Prayers of Thanks

*O Jesus Christ, when I sinned and became prisoner to Satan and stood in shame [without clothes] in front of God as Adam did, You visited me and washed my sins away, granted me forgiveness, and dressed me with the gown of holiness; thank You. O Jesus Christ, when I was hungry, You came and fed me with the Bread of Life: Yourself; thank You. O Jesus Christ, when I was thirsty, You came and gave me the Living Water: God's Graces, Love and Mercy through The Holy Spirit; thank You. O Jesus Christ, when I became blind and strayed away, when I was burdened with sin, You came and opened my eyes and took me by the hand to the shelter that You prepared for me in Your Father's House; thank You. O Jesus Christ, use me to lead others to Your Heart; to take God's Word to the sick to be cured; to give them from the Living Water that You gave me for God's Glory; to do for them what they cannot do for themselves. Amen.*

*O God, Heavenly Father, from whom every fatherhood, in heaven or on earth, takes its name, I kneel before You as Saint Paul did and pray to You as Saint Paul prayed for the Ephesians: "In the abundance of Your Glory may You, through Your Holy Spirit, enable us to grow firm in power with regard to our inner self, so that Jesus Christ may live in our hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, we will have the strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; so that, knowing the love of Jesus Christ, which is beyond knowledge, we may be filled with the utter fullness of You. Glory be to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to God from generation to generation in the church and in Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen."*

*Our Heavenly Father, thank You for the everlasting precious gift that You have provided: "Your Love"; the source of my life and the reason for my being. Thank You Father for creating me with freedom of choice; and I ask You O Sacred Heart of Jesus, as followers of Yours, to imprison my freedom of speech, thoughts and deeds with this love and fill our hearts with the love that You have for Your Father and His Children, and grant that we may please Him as You did. Amen.*

*O God, thank You for Your free Precious Gift to us. Please, give us the courage to build our temple, to clean our hearts and the actions that come out of it by following Your Beloved Son Jesus Christ. Amen.*

*Thank You Father for in Your Mercy and Clemency You didn't let us die. You took our hand and led us through the narrow gate since no one can be holy, but by admitting our mistakes and weaknesses You strengthen us with Your Providence in what Jesus Christ did for us throughout His life, and with the guidance of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.*

*O Lord, turn our hearts towards Your love and make us surrender to You as it is through Your Sacred Heart we will go into Heaven. All praise and thanks is Yours now and forever. Amen.*

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the Precious Gift You gave us on Christmas Day. A Gift that we have started unwrapping when Your Beloved Son was born, and day after day we come to see its beauty and enjoy the unending springs of Living Water that came out of it; day after day we are amazed and delighted by receiving the promise You gave to Isaiah (41:13-20). As, with faith, we can see in the Holy Eucharist the Transfigured Jesus Christ standing with a bowl of Living Water in His Hands, giving His Spirit: "Holiness and Love", "Wisdom, Mercy and Divine Providence", "Forgiveness, Counsel and Peace", and "Power over Satan and evil spirits" to each one of us and asking us to give it to others (John 7:37-39, Revelation 22:17). With these Gifts/Wealth that You've promised the Sons of Jacob [Israel], have made the entire world spiritually as "Sons of Israel" who look at the Holy City of Jerusalem, on earth and in heaven, and say "All shall make their home in you" (Psalm 87:7). Amen.*



*“May God bless all Nations, and may in Jesus’ Holy Name give every soul to be fed on curds and honey until he knows how to refuse the bad and choose the good (Isaiah 7:15); the curds and honey that are produced from the richness of the fruit of the Promised Land, i.e. the richness of His Sacred Heart.”*

*Amen and Amen* 



“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit  
I will put within you. And I will remove the heart  
of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.  
And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you  
to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”  
God's Word (Ezekiel 36:26-27)