

# Church of St. Francis

12 WEST SCHOOL ST. VILLA PARK, IL 60181

## AN EASTER SERMON

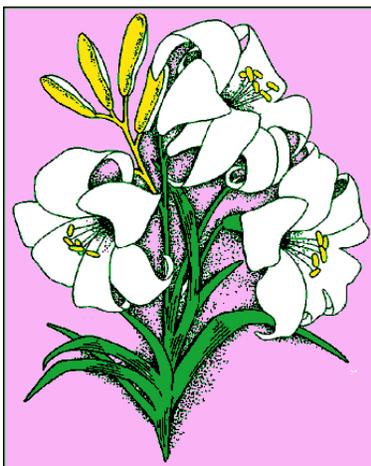
The Resurrection of Christ Our Lord, like his Crucifixion, according to our interpretation, was not a matter of a few hours or days, but was and still is an age-long operation, continuing from the very beginning of the creative process, till the last created being shall have attained to the perfection of the Divine life. Think of it in this way, in terms of the Prologue to the Fourth gospel: "In the beginning. (a long, long time ago) was the word (Logos), and the word was with God and the word was God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made." So it is definitely stated that the Logos, the Second Person, was the agent of the Holy Trinity in the vast process of creation.

In the Eucharistic Creed we express belief that God the Father was "Maker of Heaven and Earth and of all things visible and invisible"; and still later that the Holy Ghost is the "Giver of Life". There seems to be some confusion there. Which of the three Persons was and is the Creator? The best answer to that would seem to be that what one of these three Persons does, all do.

That is what is known in theology as the *Communicatio Idiomatum* - though that explanation is used primarily of the relationship between the two natures of Our Lord. However that may be, in this first chapter of the fourth

Gospel, commonly known as the Prologue, the author plainly regards the Logos or Second Person as pre-eminently the Creator.

And how did or does He create? The author proceeds to say that "in him was life and the life was the light of men". That is to say, that the light of men came from Him and remained His light and His life, though differentiated in myriads of distinct forms which enshrined the life. He proceeds to say that this divine life "shineth in darkness and the darkness overcame it not". The Greek word for "overcame" (*katelaben*) is sometimes translated "comprehended" or "apprehended" but "overcame" seems the most likely. Compare with this the very simple and very ordered process of nature where the seed of the parent plant is for a comparatively long period literally buried in the darkness of matter, but the darkness of the superincumbent soil overcomes it not. The life in the seed is so very living that it gradually forces its way up to the surface and is manifested as a seedling, then eventually as a perfect reproduction of the



parent plant. So it is with the real life, the continuing life, which is the light and the life of every created thing. The Darkness of the material covering which protects it in

its very earliest stages of existence overcomes it not. The light which lightens every man, was and forever is the true light which is the life of the Logos.

Now turn the thought reverently to the Lord Christ. In Him, as man, was that same true light, no longer just a divine seedling as we all are, but now full grown in ages past to the perfection of the parent Logos from Whom long, long ago He was sprung. It must be remembered that He was true or real (*versus*) man as well as true and real God. True God because true man full grown to Divinity. But He could not have grown to Divinity had it not been for the seed of Divinity, sown in Him, as in all created beings, in the beginning. In that sense the Logos or God the Son was, all the time of immaturity, in material forms confined, crucified on the Cross of matter, yet gradually rising from such a condition of

relative death to the full glory of Divinity. The darkness of the protecting material conditions never overcame the divinity within the seed and seedling. At long last the inner life and light shone forth in the full radiance of Divinity. Such was Christ Our Lord. And such too, owing largely to His help, are multitudes of His saints; and such shall all people eventually be, also by His help, even though they may stray widely from the true path into which and along which He will guide, but never force, us His younger brethren, "Christ rising glorious, rises not alone", as an Easter hymn has it. Such, it would seem, is the lesson for us of Good Friday and Easter. Crucifixion and Resurrection are in the long run one and the same process. Christ, our true light, is crucified in us, but all the time He is steadily rising.

So on the Sundays after Easter we say or pray "O Lord Christ by whose eternal sacrifice we exist" and on the fifth and last Sunday after Easter we pray that as the years roll on we may triumph over sin and following (the Lord's) glorious example may rise unto the fullness of our spiritual heritage, that is, to the complete manifestation of our own inherent divinity.

By the Rt. Rev. F. W. Pigott, M.A. (a sermon preached at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral church, London, in 1955) from The Liberal Catholic magazine, January 1956, Vol. XXX, No 1., pages 5-6.

## ORDER OF OUR LADY

Rt. Rev. William Downey, Regionary Bishop of the United States, Province of the USA, initiated five women of St. Francis to the first stage of the Order of Our Lady on Saturday, January 24, 2009. After the ceremony all were invited to a luncheon at Rev. T. and Lori Jo Metz's house in Gurnee, Illinois. Lori Jo did all the cooking for the luncheon.

The stages in the Order of Our Lady are Purity, Devotion, Knowledge, Love and Will. Each initiation separately supports the sequence from physical, to emotional, to mental, to intuitive, and then spiritual. Members are urged to widen the circle of those they love, with compassion for all beings.



Rt. Rev. William Downey, with Order of Our Lady initiates. From left to right: Laura Berrum, Deaconess Julie Hamilton, Norma Benford, (St. Raphael & All Angels, Milwaukee) Rebecca Collin and Vicky Fitzmaurice.

These steps lead to the greater office of Deaconess. There is much to be said to pursuing this path with others, as a collective. The group

approach is highly encouraged and each soul will help the others. Therefore, any and all ladies are encouraged to participate.

On Sunday, May 31, Bishop Downey will commence with the second initiation for Our Lady - Devotion. The five participants in the first initiation are welcome to participate. He is also willing to complete any Confirmations on that day.

Suggested reading material for initiates include "Mary Through the Centuries (Her place in History and Culture)" by Jaroslav Pelikan, "Queen of Angels: Mary's answer to Universal Questions" by Janice T Connell, "True Devotion to Mary" by St. Louise Marie Grignion de Motfort and "The Way of Mary: Following Her Footsteps" by Mary Ford abowsky and "The Kingdom of the Gods" by Geoffrey Hodson.

## THE INFLUENCE AND WORK OF THE WORLD MOTHER



*"In the Name of Him whom long ago I bore, I come to your aid. I have taken every woman into my heart, to hold there a part of her that through it I may help her in her time of need."*

"All nations have recognized, honored and worshipped this Maternal Principle in Nature. All their exoteric religions have personified it as a Goddess, an Archangel Mother of universes, races, nations and men. These personifications of the World Mother are amongst the very noblest concepts of the human mind, which in creating, reverencing and serving them reaches its highest degrees of idealism, devotion and religious self-expression. Such reverence, such devotion and such worship as are offered to World Mothers are therefore worthy of the deepest respect and may usefully be encouraged. For through human devotion, human beings may be reached from on high. The Madonna ideal, for example, has been and still is of in-

calculable value in consoling, purifying and ennobling humanity. Through it, a realization of the Mother-Love of God has been brought within reach of millions of suffering and aspiring people. The concepts of Kwan Yin, Isis, Ishtar, Parvati and other Goddesses are similarly founded upon the existence, nature and function of the same great Being. Perhaps, because I am a Christian and the cases I was examining were also Christian, the Madonna-like forms here pictured presented themselves to my mind.

"The planetary World Mother is conceived in certain schools of philosophy as a highly evolved, Archangel Representative and Embodiment on earth of the Feminine Aspect of the Deity. She is also thought of as one in whom all the highest

qualities of womanhood and motherhood shine forth in their fullest perfection."

Such are some of the thoughts and the ideals which have awakened in me, followed as they have been by others. Is it not worthwhile to be associated with such an ideal and with such a work as Hers? I feel strongly urged to appeal to those similarly moved, that they will participate and contribute to the best of their ability that this, Her Work, shall not only live on and prosper, but that it shall enter on a great era of activity in Her Name, which is the Name of Compassion, Wisdom and Universal Love.

*An excerpt from "The Spiritual Significance of Motherhood" by Geoffrey Hodson, from Theosophy in New Zealand, August, 1941.*

Our Spring Retreat theme for 2009 is "The Hands of God". The retreat will be held at the lovely Shalom Retreat Center in Dubuque, Iowa, nestled in the heart of our Province of the United States.

One or more of our bishops will be attending to bring their special sacramental channel of Christ energy so richly into our celebrations of Holy Eucharist and other services on the retreat.

In two of our previous retreats in 2006 and 2008, the themes were "The Faces of God" and "The Eye of God". We found faces of God in all of the world's religious traditions, and in those who Our Lord commanded us to love, our brothers and sisters.

We explored and opened ourselves to the experience of the eye of God, the Divine Singularity, the utter Unity of the

Godhead, which yet has a three-in-one nature as the Blessed Trinity.

This time we will look for meaning in the hands of God. Where are the hands of God? In Heaven only? In creation also?

Hands touch, comfort, give, receive. They build, they destroy. They greet and they bid goodbye (God be with you). Like the tongue, hands speak, they bless and they curse. How very expressive hands are, and what agents of our purposes and desires.

Does God have hands? Through Jesus, obviously. With His hands, Jesus broke bread and

offered wine, instituting the Eucharist. Are God's hands still alive in the world?

Worshippers want to touch and be touched by God. Does God also wish to touch and be touched?



Contemplating the various parts of God's body has been a rich and worthwhile

means of spiritual seeking on our retreats. If you spend some quiet time with these thoughts and others of your own, you may discover the awakening of a reciprocal inner dialog. That will be a most worthwhile preparation for the retreat! Please mark May 15 - 17th on your calendar. This is the weekend after Mother's Day

and before Memorial Day weekend. Shalom Retreat Center web site is at:

[www.shalomretreats.org/](http://www.shalomretreats.org/)

To help our early planning, please use the "Signup" feature at the bottom of this web site if you intend to come.

[www.stgabe.org/spring-retreat](http://www.stgabe.org/spring-retreat)

Registration for the retreat is \$170 if paid in full by April 30th, \$180 afterwards.

We are limited to 36 participants. Write checks to "St. Gabriel & All Angels". Our address is:

### St. Gabriel & All Angels Church

Attn: Hands of God Retreat  
PO Box 1591  
Fairfield, IA 52556

Yours in the service of Christ,  
Fr. Thomas Miller  
St. Gabriel and All Angels

## News & Announcements

### SUNDAY ADULT ED

There will be a discussion of **The Secret Book of John** on Sunday, May 24, from 12pm - 1pm. This book is one of the Gnostic texts from the NAG HAMMADI manuscripts discovered in Egypt in 1945. It presents a fascinating creation myth that provides insight into many of the most perplexing questions of Christianity.

"... I am with you always. I am the Father, I am the Mother, I am the Child.

*I am the incorruptible and the undefiled one. I have come to tell you about what is, what was, and what is to come, that you may understand what is invisible and what is visible; and to teach you*

*about perfect Humanity."*  
*Chapter 1: 15 - 17*

### 2009 Vegetarian Potluck Luncheon Schedule

The Ladies' Guild will be holding potluck luncheons on every first Sunday of the month after the 10 am service. Bring a dish and enjoy an afternoon of fellowship. Families can feast for only \$5.

- April 5 – Palm Sunday
- May 3
- June 7
- July 5 – 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend
- August 2
- Sept. 6 – Labor Day weekend
- October 4
- November 1
- December 6



*Sub-Deacon Daniel Provost was raised to the Diaconate by Bishop William Downey. The ordination was part of the January 25th service of Transfiguration Sunday.*



*Emily Berrum received First Holy Communion from Bishop William Downey on Saturday, January 24.*

The egg has been widely used as a symbol of the start of new life because new life emerges from an egg when the baby chick inside breaks the shell surrounding it and hatches out. Seen as symbolic of the grave and life renewed or resurrected, the egg itself is a symbol of resurrection: while being dormant it contains a new life sealed within it.

The Easter egg tradition may also have celebrated the end of the privations of Lent in the West, though this is speculation. Eggs were originally forbidden during Lent as well as on other traditional fast days in Western Christianity (this tradition still continues among the Eastern Christian Churches). Since chickens would not stop producing eggs during this time, a larger than usual store might be available at the end of the fast if the eggs had not been allowed to hatch. The surplus, if any, had to be eaten quickly

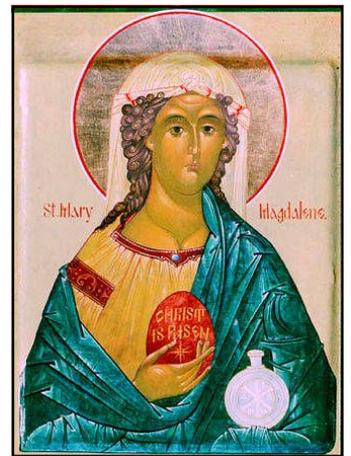
to prevent spoiling. Historically, it was traditional to use up all of the household's eggs before Lent begin, which established the tradition of Pancake Day being celebrated on Shrove Tuesday. This day, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday begins Lent, is also known as *Mardi Gras*, a French phrase which translates as "Fat Tuesday" to mark the last consumption of eggs and dairy before Lent begins.

Likewise, in Eastern Christianity, both meat and dairy are prohibited during the Lenten fast, and eggs are seen as "dairy" (a foodstuff that could be taken from an animal without shedding its blood). In the Orthodox Church, Great Lent begins on Clean Monday, rather than Wednesday, so the household's dairy products would be used up in the week preceding, called Cheesefare Week. Then, with the coming of Pascha (Easter), the eating of

eggs resumes. But, for Orthodox Christians, the Easter egg is much more than a celebration of the ending of the fast, it is a declaration of the Resurrection of Jesus. Traditionally, Orthodox Easter eggs are dyed red to represent the blood of Christ, shed on the Cross, and the hard shell of the egg symbolized the sealed Tomb of Christ—the cracking of which symbolized his resurrection from the dead.

In the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches, Easter eggs are blessed by the priest at the end of the Pascal Vigil, and distributed to the faithful. Each household also brings an Easter basket to church, filled not only with Easter eggs but also with other Paschal foods such as paskha, kulich or Easter breads, and these are blessed by the priest as well.

During Paschaltide, in some traditions the Paschal greeting with the Easter egg is even ex-



Icon of St. Mary Magdalene holding a red Easter egg with the words "Christ is Risen!" written on it.

tended to the deceased. On either the second Monday or Tuesday of Pascha, after a memorial service people bring blessed eggs to the cemetery and bring the joyous paschal greeting, "Christ has risen", to their beloved departed.

[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter\\_eggs\\_\(decorative\)](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easter_eggs_(decorative))



## EASTER SERVICES

### APRIL 5 - PALM SUNDAY

10 am Blessing and Distribution of Palms followed by Holy Eucharist. Rt. Rev. Ruben Cabigting presents Part III of his "Human Origins/Transformation" series after 10 am service. Vegetarian potluck luncheon.

### APRIL 10 - GOOD FRIDAY

6:30 pm Mass of the Presanctified and Healing Service

### APRIL 12 - EASTER SUNDAY

10 am Holy Eucharist with Procession of the Blessed Sacrament  
Easter Egg Hunt after service for children and teenagers.

## CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS

12 W SCHOOL ST, VILLA PARK, IL 60181 (630) 834-3320

[www.stfrancisvillapark.org](http://www.stfrancisvillapark.org) [www.liberalcatholic.com](http://www.liberalcatholic.com)