

Men, Ketchup, and the Resurrection

Fr. Joseph Huneycutt

Men and women are different. By *different*, I don't mean just physically, nor am I here referring only to ketchup. You married men know about the ketchup, right?

"Honey, where's the ketchup?"

"Top shelf in the fridge," she says.

"I looked there – in fact, I've looked everywhere. It's not in the fridge! Are we out?"

At this point the wife walks right up to the stunningly apparent Ketchup bottle, sitting on the top shelf in the fridge and hands it to the man. It's like magic. This also works for socks, ties, and – though he'll never learn – directions and road maps.

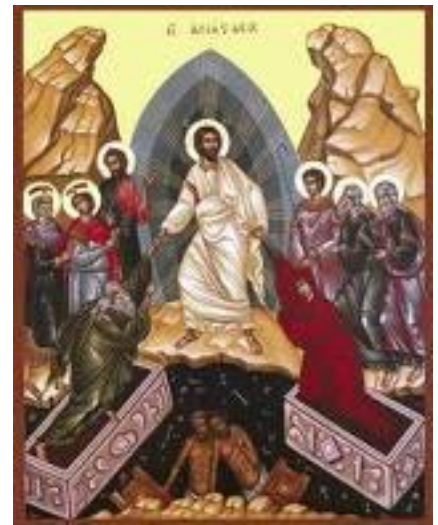
As I told someone recently – a man whose wife had just found the missing baptismal cross in his jacket pocket – "You know, Adam would never have been able to find that Tree all by himself if his life had depended on it!"

In the Gospel for the second Sunday after Pascha, we read about the women who went to the Tomb early in the morning to anoint the body of our Lord. Remember, Jesus had been hastily buried in a tomb owned by Joseph of Arimathea with the help of the other secret disciple, Nicodemus. These two men, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, are included in the full list of Myrrhbearers, but generally this day is understood as the Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women.

Of the remaining 11 disciples – all men – not one of them is listed as a Myrrhbearer. The men who had followed him when He'd said, "Come follow me;" the men who appear throughout the Gospel narratives; those men? They abandoned him after the Crucifixion.

Now here we see a band of women disciples making their way toward the Tomb with only God knew what awaiting them. This is important because, and the more astute among you are already aware of this: There is a big difference between Men and Women.

Take, for instance, men. Men are all about doing. Do this, did this, accomplished that; what next? Women (you all know this) are about relationships: this person, that child, my sister, mother-in-law, friend, etc. *continued...*



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Have ideas for the next edition of the St. Joseph Epistle? Contact Kristina roth@Yahoo.com!

There was even a popular book some years ago entitled *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. Many of you, no doubt, are familiar with some of this. For instance, I paraphrase:

“When a Man gets upset he doesn’t talk about what’s bothering him. He never burdens another Man with his problem unless his friend’s assistance is

necessary to solve the problem. Instead he becomes very quiet and goes to his private cave to think about his problem, mulling it over to find a solution.

If he can’t find a solution then he does something to forget his problems, like reading the news or playing a game.” (p.30)

Or, as was the case with Peter and the disciples, he goes fishing.

“When a Woman becomes upset or is stressed ... to find relief, she seeks out someone she trusts and then talks in great detail about the problems of her day. When Women share feelings of being overwhelmed, they suddenly feel better.

Women are not ashamed of having problems. Their egos are dependent not on looking ‘competent’ but rather on being in loving relationships. They openly share feelings of being overwhelmed, confused, hopeless, and exhausted.” (p.31)

To feel better, women talk about past problems, future problems, potential problems, even problems that have no solutions. We see this represented in the Gospel story. The women are on their way to the Tomb and talking. "And they were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?’”

Men are different. “A man under stress tends to focus on one problem and forget others ...” (p.36)

Compare the beautiful story of the women at the Tomb to that of Peter and John approaching the Tomb. They raced each other! They were men. It is not recorded that John and Peter, true to their nature, discussed anything on the way; they just tried to get there first! (But, you see, they’d already heard the Tomb was empty.)

In choosing to announce the Resurrection through the daughters of Eve, the Holy Myrrhbearers, we see the Annunciation in another light. Whereas earlier, a young Maiden had heard the words of the Archangel Gabriel in private; here, an Angel announces to the Mother of God and the faithful women disciples the Resurrection. The way to Paradise has been re-opened, for our Lord has destroyed death by Death. Go! Announce to the sons of Adam the New Day, the Resurrection.

And, they did. ***They still do!***

Today the New Eve hears that her son, the New Adam, has conquered death and, by His glorious Resurrection, has paved the way for the sons and daughters of the Church – you, me, yours and mine – to Paradise!

Oh we’re still plenty different, no doubt; and there’s plenty of women still having to nudge the men they love toward that Empty Tomb.

Grandmothers and sisters, moms and cousins, widows and daughters – and, yes, even MEN! – Let us all, with that same zeal; that same conviction and joy; through our word and example, announce to others that Paradise is again available to us all!

“Male and female – He created them ...”

By the Empty Tomb and His glorious Resurrection, He RE-CREATED them! Adam, Eve – you and me. Encouraged by the courage of the Holy Myrrhbearers let us say:

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Christ,

What's in a name? Easter or Pascha

Many in our contemporary Western society are now preparing for the annual holiday of Easter, with chicks, eggs, bunnies and other symbols marking the celebration of the fertility-earth goddess Easter (Oestre / Eostre / Eastre) at the Spring Equinox. The goddess' name is the word from which the name of the female reproductive hormone estrogen is derived. How strange that even Christians would use this name for the most holy feast of the year.

For over 2000 years the Feast of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has been known as Pascha. The word Pascha (Πάσχα) is a transliteration of the Greek word meaning Passover. For Orthodox Christians, it is the only appropriate term. Okay, some Orthodox will argue incorrectly that many others won't know what we mean when we use the word "Pascha", so we should acquiesce by using a western and pagan name, honoring the goddess and celebrating fertility.

Determining the date of Pascha: why do the Orthodox often observe the Feast of the Resurrection on a different day than others? A little history -- Pascha is a *moveable feast*, meaning it is not fixed in relation to the civil calendar. The First Council of Nicaea (325) established the date of Pascha (the celebration of Christ's Resurrection) according to the ancient Julian calendar to be the 1st Sunday, after the 1st full moon, after the Spring Equinox, *providing Jewish Passover has occurred*. This dating of Pascha is based on the lunar calendar of the Hebrew people used to identify Passover. For the Orthodox Christian Church, Pascha will vary between April 4th and May 8th. In an unsuccessful attempt to have greater astrological accuracy, Pope Gregory XIII of Rome instituted a new calendar in 1582, which has since served as both a civil calendar and the religious calendar for all western Christians. With the adoption of this Gregorian calendar, the Passover provision in the formula for calculating the date of Pascha was abandoned. In western Christianity the date of Easter may fall between March 22nd and April 25th without consideration of the date of Passover. Since historically, before his Passion, Death and Resurrection, our Lord celebrated the Passover with his disciples, it makes little sense to celebrate the Christian Passover/Pascha prior to the Jewish Passover. Orthodox Christianity adheres to the decision of the Ecumenical Council, and understands that our calendar is of religious

significance, rather than an inordinate concern with astronomy.

Secular customs, such as the Easter Bunny and Easter egg hunts, have become central to the holiday's modern celebration, often observed by Christians and non-Christians alike. The Catholic Encyclopedia says: "The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility." Eggs, like rabbits and hares, are fertility symbols of antiquity. Since birds lay eggs and rabbits and hares give birth to large litters in the early spring, these became symbols of the rising fertility of the earth at the Vernal Equinox.

The precise origin of the ancient custom of coloring eggs is not known, although evidently the blooming of many flowers in spring coincides with the use of the fertility symbol of eggs—and eggs boiled with some flowers change their color, bringing the spring into the homes. According to Orthodox tradition, during a dinner with the emperor Tiberius Caesar, Mary Magdalene was speaking about Christ's Resurrection. Caesar scoffed at her, saying that a man could rise from the dead no more than the egg in her hand could turn red. Immediately, the egg turned red. Because of this, icons of Mary Magdalene sometimes depict her holding a red egg. Also, this is believed to be an explanation for dyeing eggs red at Pascha. To this day eggs are dyed red, serving to remind us of the color of blood, in recognition of the blood of the sacrificed Christ. Some also use the color green, in honor of the new foliage emerging after the long dead time of winter.

Early German Protestants wished to retain the Latin Christian custom of eating colored eggs for Easter. However, they did not want to introduce their children to the Roman Catholic practice of fasting. At that time in history Roman Catholics fasted from eggs during Lent. As a result, there was an abundance and surplus of eggs at Easter time. The idea of an egg-laying bunny came to the U.S. in the 18th century. German immigrants in the *Pennsylvania Dutch* area told their children about the "Osterhas", sometimes spelled "Oschter Haws". "Hase" means "hare", not rabbit, and in Northwest European folklore the "Easter Bunny" is a hare, not a rabbit. According to the legend, only good children received gifts of colored eggs in *the nests* that were made in their caps and bonnets before Easter.

All these springtime pagan customs and practices, associated with Easter, have become deeply embedded in western society. Without a doubt they are interesting and, on the surface, seem harmless and fun.

The adoption of some has even proven useful, when transfigured and infused with Christian meaning. Sadly, however, the non-Orthodox world will never know the name and true meaning of Pascha if we do not teach them. The generally accepted and practiced *rites of spring* will continue to eclipse the reality of the Resurrection and *new birth* in Jesus Christ. Part of being evangelical is to speak the truth in love, and not to surrender to the incorrect assumptions of a post Christian secular society. If we aren't going to be witnesses to our holy Orthodox Christian Faith, then I suppose the trappings of veneration for a pagan earth goddess will continue as the central focus of *Easter* - bunnies, chicks, eggs and all. If we fail to share the truth of Pascha, *for the life of the world and its salvation*, then we are in for a very long and joyless ride on the cultural bandwagon.

As we draw near to the close of our Lenten journey to the Empty Tomb, let our attention be on those things that we hold to be at the center of our very lives and behold the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life.

May the joy of the Resurrection be yours.

Your Sister is Christ,

Helen (Eleni) Norton

Parish Council Chair

St. Joseph Website

Eddie B.

Did you know that the St. Joseph website has more than just information for church seekers? It also has a calendar of upcoming services and events, a photo gallery, and the announcements from the most recent Sunday bulletin. If you log into the secure, members-only area, you can download the latest version of the member directory (in color!), view the current coffee hour schedule, as well as read updates from the parish council. What are you waiting for? Log on today at www.SaintJosephOrthodox.org. If you have any ideas or suggestions, email them to webmaster@saintjosephorthodox.org.

2011 Parish Life Conference

Russell B.

NEWS FLASH: Orthodox Christians Poised to Set Guinness World Record *The Guinness Book of World Records has promised to be on hand for the next Parish Life Conference (PLC) in Shreveport, Louisiana. They will determine whether the Antiochian Orthodox Church can succeed in gathering the highest number of Orthodox Christians ever to assemble in Shreveport.*

Seriously, even if we don't make the world record, attending this year's PLC is a great opportunity you don't want to miss! It is the one time of the year when the entire diocese gets together for official business, learning, fellowship, and fun. Meetings, workshops, banquets, and dances provide multiple opportunities to meet friends and fellowship with other Orthodox Christians. There is friendly competition between parishes in the teen and adult bible bowls, where Orthodox Christians can demonstrate their knowledge of the Bible. Joining together with the clergy and His Grace Bishop Basil to worship, as the sound of a beautiful multi-parish choir raises their voices to the Lord, is an emotional and spiritual experience. When old-timer attendees like Mary Ann and Margaret Vranesevich were asked what they think about the PLC, they said, "We look forward to the conference every year because it's like a family reunion of all Church friends." Bob Born, who attended his first PLC in Dallas, really enjoyed the workshops. He especially liked one where an Abbess spoke about spiritual struggles where he "couldn't believe some of the things she said." Come experience the PLC for yourself.

Register now and attend the 2011 Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America Parish Life Conference, June 15-18, 2011, in Shreveport, LA, <http://stnicholasorthodox.org/plc.html>.

Let's at least set the record for the most attendees from St Joseph ever. I'll see you there!

The 40 Days for Life Campaign has been in existence since 2007. Essentially, it is a community-outreach program wherein people of faith gather to hold prayer vigils outside local abortion facilities. Since its inception, 40 Days for Life now routinely holds vigil in 337 cities across all 50 of the United States, seven Canadian provinces, four Australian states, England, Northern Ireland and Denmark. According to their website, their reports document “3,599 lives that have been spared from abortion” (and those are just the ones that have been reported), “43 abortion workers have quit their jobs and walked away from the abortion industry, and nine abortion facilities completely shut down following local 40 Days for Life campaigns.”

After being encouraged by my brother (who lives in Kalispell, MT – one of the nine cities whose clinics closed their doors), I decided to join the Houston Coalition and hold vigil at the Local Planned Parenthood. Upon arriving, I was greeted by two volunteers who were handing out informational pamphlets to people entering and exiting the property. The first gentleman introduced himself and provided somewhat of a warning that it can be difficult to “reach people” and that he had only successfully distributed one pamphlet that day.

Heeding his warning, I kept my hopes low and headed to the opposite driveway to begin praying. I lit my candle, set up my icons of the Annunciation and the Theotokos “Directress,” and began to pray various Orthodox prayers specifically geared toward the ending of abortion. Not five minutes passed, and a car paused

in the driveway, allowing one of the volunteers to distribute information about another facility that provides affordable women’s healthcare without performing abortions. Some fifteen minutes later, another car stopped in the driveway for some time. I wasn’t able to hear the words that were exchanged between the driver and the volunteer, but they spoke for a while, and as the car finally drove away, I could then hear the volunteer proclaiming, “Praise be to God!” Apparently, the young woman tearfully confessed that she was not able to go through with her abortion, and she accepted information about a local facility that helps young mothers carry their unborn babies to term.

This immediate answer to our prayers was both overwhelming and humbling. Although that moment marked the most dramatic point of the day, our group celebrated other “victories” as well. One volunteer was able to persuade a young man to prayerfully consider the impact of his wife’s employment at the Planned Parenthood (both the young man and his wife are Catholic), and another volunteer physically drove a woman to an alternate clinic to receive general healthcare. And these were only the visible changes being made from the campaign – I am certain that others’ hearts and minds were transformed without our direct witnessing.

Although I spent only three hours at the vigil that day, its impact will stay with me throughout my life. I look forward to becoming involved again next year during Lent and hope that many of my St. Joseph’s brothers and sisters will be able to join me.

On Bible Interpretation

Fr. James Early

I have a dear friend who is an agnostic with very little interest in the Bible or Christianity. Recently, he was visited by some Jehovah’s Witnesses. During the visit, they urged him to read 2 Timothy 3:1-5, which reads as follows:

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

My friend was puzzled by the passage and wrote me to ask what it meant. I told him it referred to the state of humanity in the days leading up to the Second Coming of Christ, when Antichrist will rule on the earth. He wrote back and said that he didn’t see how this interpretation is possible, especially since neither Christ nor Antichrist are mentioned in the passage. This was my reply to him. I hope you find it helpful.

Suppose that I wrote a letter to my brother and sister early one December and that my letter contained the following

passage:

“I look forward to seeing both of you this Christmas Eve and sharing dinner with you. I also look forward to blessing you with that delightful saying that Mom always shared with us every Christmas Eve.”

Now suppose that two thousand years later an archaeologist discovers a copy of my letter and reads the above passage. Part of the passage is easy to understand. The interpreter would instantly know that I was looking forward to seeing my brother and sister and dining with them. He would also understand that I wanted to tell my siblings something, and this “something” was a saying that our mother used to say to us. With a little historical research, he could even determine the date I was planning to have my siblings for dinner (December 24). But then the interpreter would run into a difficulty. What exactly was the saying of our mother that I mentioned?

One way the archeologist could solve this problem would be to read other letters that I had written (assuming any were still extant) and see if I made any other reference to this saying. Perhaps I gave the exact text of the saying in another letter. If not, perhaps I left other clues as to the meaning of the mysterious saying.

If he could not find any other references to this saying in my other writings, then the next thing he might do is try to find some writings of my brother or sister. Failing this, he would then scour the writings of my children, since it is almost certain that my children heard this saying, and it is entirely possible that one of them wrote it down.

Failing all this, the next best thing to do would be for the researcher to try to find any living descendants of mine to see if perhaps the mysterious saying had been preserved throughout the years through the family line.

If none of these efforts were to bear fruit, the interpreter would have to just make his best educated guess, based on his historical research and/or knowledge of me, my life story, and my writings. If he were honest, he would have to admit that his interpretation was merely a conjecture. He could even just say, “I have no idea what the writer means”...but of course, doing this doesn’t pay very well.

Interpreting the Bible is much the same. Some passages are totally clear, but others are obscure. When we come upon an obscure passage, there are a number of things we can do to try to interpret it. First, we should check the other writings of the author of the passage. In which other passages did St. Paul refer to the “last days,” and how do these other passages shed light upon the passage we are trying to figure out?

Second, we should examine the other books of the New Testament, which were written by other Apostles (the “brothers” of St. Paul). Did Ss. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, or Jude have anything to say about the “last days?” If so, how do they help us interpret the passage in question?

Next, it is important to see how the earliest Christians (the “children” of the Apostles) understood the troublesome passage. For they learned everything they knew about the Scriptures from the Apostles themselves. How did they understand the phrase “the last days?”

Finally, we see how today’s living “descendants” of St. Paul interpret the passage. Who are these descendants? Collectively, the spiritual descendants of St. Paul and the other apostles are the Orthodox Church, the only Christian tradition that can trace an unbroken connection back two thousand years to the first century Church without major changes to doctrine and practice.

When we do all this, we learn that the phrase “the last days” means the new era that began with the first coming of Christ, a period which lasts until his second coming. Often, however, the phrase “last days” is used in a narrower sense, indicating the period of time immediately prior to the second coming. This period of time includes the advent and reign of Antichrist. It is certainly true that in 2 Tim 3:1-5, St. Paul doesn’t explicitly mention Christ or Antichrist. He didn’t mention them explicitly because he didn’t need to. Timothy (to whom he wrote the epistle with this passage) and all of the early Christians would have instantly known that St. Paul was referring to the time of Antichrist, the time leading up to Christ’s return, just as my brother and sister would know that the saying of Mom’s that I referred to was “I can’t believe it’s Christmas Eve!”

The Brotherhood of Saint James (aka the Men's Group)

Michael K.

After a brief hiatus, the Men's Group at St. Joseph was restarted with an election of officers and a new name. Officers elected last November are:

- Michael Kendall, President
- Russell Boyer, Vice President
- Hoyt DeVries, Secretary
- Casey Keutzer, Treasurer

The name, The Brotherhood of Saint James, was selected since Saint James is the son of St. Joseph, our patron saint. The group exists for the purposes of fellowship (in the truest sense) encouraging each other in Christian growth, service, mission (both supporting and going) and social.

Since starting back up, the group has held several events including:

- Volunteering at the Star of Hope Men's Development Center on December 12th, serving dinner to those in need.
- Meeting on January 29th for a time of food, fellowship, and a talk by Fr. Joseph on the life of Saint James, brother of the Lord. Also, Father Joseph then shared about his vision for the men's group. It was agreed that a major area of ministry that the group will take up is

support and care of the altar, including new furnishings and liturgical items.

- Holding a movie afternoon Saturday, March 5th. We watched and discussed 'The Island'. The credits describe the film as "The best representation of Orthodox monastic life ever portrayed on film."

And for Palm Sunday the Men's Group sponsored a Fish Fry after Liturgy as a fund raiser for the men's group altar ministry that includes purchasing items needed in the altar area.

We are planning soon to have another time of food, fellowship and a talk by Father Joseph on establishing a rule of prayer. So watch for the announcement on this event.

So who can be a member of The Brotherhood of Saint James? Any man who regularly attends St. Joseph, so catechumens are welcome. **How can you find out what is happening with the men's group? Several ways:**

1. Check the church web site under Ministries
2. Read the weekly email announcements (always a good source of information)
3. The church bulletin
4. Or talk to any of the officers

We look forward to seeing more of you at our meetings!

Gabriel, the Virgin, and the Strength of God: A Reflection on the Annunciation

Gabriela F.

*The Lord is my strength and my song;
He has become my salvation.ⁱ
(Ps 118:14; Exod 15:2)*

The Annunciation is truly an incredible event. We all know the tradition: the Archangel Gabriel—one of the mighty, heavenly powers—descended to meet a poor, orphaned, teenage girl, the Theotokos-to-be. By all outward indicators, the Virgin Mary was weak, powerless. But it was she who would, by accepting the will of God, bear the God-man, Jesus Christ. Thus she has become the greatest saint to ever walk the earth; she is the *Panagia* (the “All-holy”), the “champion leader” whom the Church reveres as “more honorable than the Cherubim.”

God's choice of the Theotokos and Gabriel as representatives of the spiritual beings and of all humanity, respectively, was no accident. To see the common thread that enabled both figures to fulfill their salvific roles, we first must turn to the words of St. Paul: “[The Lord] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (2 Cor 8:9). The paradox of which Paul speaks—that God's “power is made perfect in weakness”—is nothing other than the *kenosis* (or “self-emptying”) of the incarnate Jesus Christ.ⁱⁱ Although He was the pre-eternal Son of God, “robed in majesty . . . girded with strength” (Ps 93:1), Christ deigned to suffer all the afflictions, both bodily and spiritual, of fallen humanity.

Moreover, He chose to suffer death at our hands out of His overwhelming love and His desire for our salvation. This is the *kenosis* of Christ.ⁱⁱⁱ

Returning to the Theotokos, we see clearly the sacrifice that the Virgin made in accepting God’s will: were it not for the godly Joseph, Mary very well could have been put to death for her premarital pregnancy. Knowing this, she chose to empty herself, to “seek the LORD and his strength” (Ps 105:4) above all else, and so she was filled (both physically and spiritually) with the living God.

But what of the second party I mentioned, the Archangel Gabriel? In what sense could a bodiless power possibly be weak or self-emptying? After all, the name “Gabriel” itself means “God is my strength” (or, alternatively, “God is my might”),^{iv} and certainly, the angels are “strong” by human standards. St. John of Damascus, for one, tells us that the angels “are *mighty*. . . . They are the guardians of the divisions of the earth: they are set over nations and regions.”^v Still, we must realize that even angels, as created beings, ultimately receive all their strength and power from God. Consider this verse from Psalm 103: “Bless the Lord, O you His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, hearkening to the voice of His word!” (v. 20). The angels are “mighty” because they “hearken to” (or obey) God. Furthermore, the word “angel” itself—from the Greek for “messenger”—indicates that their God-given role is to bring divine tidings to humanity. According to Fr. Dumitru Staniloae, a twentieth-century Romanian theologian, “Though angels are superior to humans from one point of view, they nevertheless *make themselves servants* of our salvation. . . .”^{vi} Gabriel, then, mirrors the *kenosis* of Christ through his willful obedience to God in all things. Even before the world was made, long before the Annunciation and Incarnation, Gabriel stood fast against the self-love of Satan: “Gabriel was an angel and remained near God for eternity. Satan was an angel and has fallen wholly from his state. . . . The former was saved by his insatiability for the love of God.”^{vii} Although I’m not able to see into the angelic mind, I will be bold enough to conclude that this “insatiability” of Gabriel was what motivated him to remain open to God and strong in his position against evil—and he was supported by the love of God.

As the fast continues, it’s easy to feel that “He has broken my strength in mid-course” (Ps 102:23), that is, to feel worn down from the effort of the fast and extra services. But let us remember—as much as our weakness permits us—to turn to Jesus Christ, the “strong man” (19:5; 78:65; cf. 80:17), with all our cares. In this way, like Gabriel and the Theotokos, we may become spiritually transparent enough to “seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually!” (105:4). I wish all my (patient) fellow Psalter readers “*Kali dynamis!*” (literally, “Good strength!”) on the road to Pascha, that we all may joyfully proclaim that “the King of glory” is “the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle! The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory!” (24:8, 10).

ⁱ Bible verses taken from the Revised Standard Version; “LORD” has been modified as “Lord,” and pronouns referring to God have been capitalized.

ⁱⁱ The classic Pauline passage regarding *kenosis* is Philippians 2:6–11, sometimes called “the Christ hymn (of Philippians 2)” or “the *kenosis* hymn.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Or so I’ve been told. I’m too familiar with *kenosis* myself.

^{iv} Etymology courtesy of Fr. Eugen Pentiu, Old Testament scholar at Holy Cross.

^v John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 2.3, trans. E.W. Watson and L. Pullan, in vol. 9 of NPNF, Second Series, online at Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf209.toc.html>. Italics added.

^{vi} *The World: Creation and Deification*, vol. 2 of *The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, trans. and ed. Ion Ionita and Robert Barringer (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2000), 120, emphasis added. See all of chap. 4 of this volume for an excellent dogmatic summary of the Church’s teaching on the angels and humanity, and on the ultimate interrelation of the two.

^{vii} Basil the Great, *God Is Not the Author of Evil* 8 (PG 31:345d–48d), in Staniloae, *The World: Creation and Deification*, 147.

Of Baseball and Paradise

By a member of St. Joseph

With Lent at an end and our celebration of Pascha in full swing, many of us might find ourselves taking part in another, uniquely American, tradition; baseball. On the surface, taking in a ballgame at Minute Maid Park might seem incongruous with the celebration of Christ’s victory over death, but I think it is a fitting way for an Orthodox Christian to wind down after Lent.

In his classic book about baseball, *Men at Work*, George Will says that, “A. Bartlett Giamatti was fond of noting the etymological fact that the root of the word ‘paradise’ is an ancient Persian word meaning ‘enclosed park or green.’ Ballparks exist, he said, because there is in humanity a ‘vestigial memory of an enclosed green space as a place of freedom or play.’”

It’s an interesting thought, that a love of baseball or any field sport can be traced to our innate longing to return to paradise, to Eden. As humans we are definitely born with a memory of paradise and we try in so many wrong ways to make it back. That is what our struggle during Lent was about; returning to that passionless state of Paradise. Our celebration of Pascha marks the reopening of the way to Paradise by Christ. Of course, Minute Maid Park is certainly not the Garden of Eden and playing Baseball is not Lenten asceticism. However, in the seemingly innocuous activity of baseball there is a signpost pointing back to our original, holy state.