

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

This holy day is celebrated on the fortieth day after the Resurrection of Christ, on the Thursday of the sixth week of Pascha. The ascension of Christ into heaven is mentioned in the prophecies of the Scriptures. Christ Himself, upon His resurrection, said to Mary Magdalene: *"I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God"* (John 20:17).

This great event, with which Jesus' life on earth concludes, is briefly mentioned in the Gospels of Mark and Luke. But in the Acts of the apostles there is a fuller account. Gathering His disciples, Jesus commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to await what had been promised by the Father, that is the descent of the Holy Spirit. *"John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence . . . Ye shall receive power after the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:5, 8)..

. Saying this, He went with His disciples to Bethany and stopped on the Mount of Olives. "While they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud



received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven'" (Acts 1:9-11).

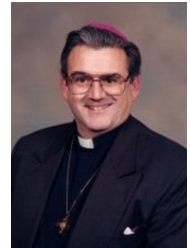
Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem to where the Theotokos and the myrrh-bearing women were in prayer. In the Gospel of Mark it is written that upon ascending to heaven, the Lord sat upon the right side of God the Father, that is, the human soul and body of Jesus Christ took on the same glory as His Divinity.

Ascending to heaven, Jesus Christ promised to always be invisibly on earth among those who believe in Him. †

From the Bishop's Desk

Can we Save the Catholic Church?

Father Xavier asked me to write for this column again. From September of 2013 to December of 2014, my wife was having very serious health issues. And I needed to be with her nearly every day during that time. But I have continued to read and reeducate my knowledge and beliefs. So for this column, I want to address a very important issue for the Catholic Church. It is summarized in Hans Kung's book entitled: *Can we save the Catholic Church?* I recommend the book to some of you. I think that Father Kung writes in a rather simple style and most people should be able to follow it.



We believe that Jesus taught the early disciples the way to follow the him and come to God. After the death and spiritual resurrection of Jesus, the Lord continued to teach and guide the disciples until Pentecost when we were given the Holy Spirit to guide us. At that point, the apostles and disciples of Jesus told us to follow the Holy Spirit and the commandment of Jesus to love one another as he loved us. We were told by Jesus to Baptize, to accept the Holy Spirit, to remember the Last Supper by receiving the Body and Blood of Christ in the form of blessed bread and wine, to confess and forgive sins, to

THE GOOD NEWS TIMES

VOL. 1506

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC CHURCH PUBLISHING

Price \$0.00 Free

anoint the sick, to bless marriages as Jesus blessed the couple in the bible and to appoint people to go out and convert the whole world. That is basically what the Church was supposed be and do! And in the early church, both men and women were sent out to convert, teach, and minister to the people! Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Deaconess could all be married!

Some people will say what about the 10 commandments from God? Well Jesus simplified that by saying: "Love God with your whole heart and you neighbor as yourself!" And later at the last supper he said, "I leave you only one commandment: Love others as I have loved you!" And when some questions about certain practices: do converts need to be circumcised like the Jews. The leaders of the community held a council to discuss it and they came to either a full consensus or a compromise about how to handle those kinds of issues or beliefs.

The Church in the East and the West stayed the same more or less until the Emperor Constantine made the Church the official Church of the Empire in 312. At that point a lot of changes came about. There had already been some changes that affected women. Women had lost some rights of ministry, but the changes accelerated over the years. Then the emperor called for a council of the church. The Emperor Constantine was afraid of some possible controversy regarding the Creed of faith. So the Council at Nicaea declared the Nicene Creed and the Emperor made it the law. So now political powers were making the



church laws. Also it seems that Constantine wanted an official list of the accepted books of the New Testament. This was at least directed by the Emperor and

decided after his death. But it cut out many books that in recent years show that there was still some struggle to retain some ministry rights and some roles in the church. Also the Western and Eastern parts of the Church began to have some differences, which in the ninth and tenth centuries produced a split in the Church.

So, the Western Church became dominated by One person, namely the Bishop of Rome! Now the Bishop of Rome starting as early as the fourth century thought that He could make new rules that all people had to obey! And from the earliest period of the Church people had to obey God over and above anyone or power! Now obedience to God equals obedience to the Church which equals obedience to the Pope!

According to the High Council in Jerusalem in the first century of the church, 'we must obey God

rather than any human authority' (Acts 5:29). So Roman Catholics have been taught that obedience to the Pope is a cardinal virtue; commanding and enforcing obedience—by whatever means—has become the Roman style.] This is from Han Kung pg 338 of 350 "Can we save the Catholic Church?"

The Roman Catholic Church and the universal Catholic Church has in the minds of most Catholics become the same thing. But that is false.

The universal catholic church disappeared from the face of the world. The splits are



many. The first major split was of course the break between the Western Church and the much older Orthodox or Eastern Church. The dogma is really not much different between the two. It was really caused by a power grab by Rome. The Roman Church added a lot of rules and laws that were mostly unnecessary. And the Roman Church managed to force Celibacy of bishops, priests, and deacons on the entire Roman Church. Celibacy simply means that priests and religious can't be married. For several hundred years most priests had a female lover and mother of his children. The religious had a vow of Chastity, meaning they were not supposed to have sex of any kind and religious priests had to promise Celibacy at the time of ordination. Which of course is silly since he already had a vow not to have sex!

In the Eastern Church deacons, priests and bishops were allowed to be married! And the laws of



the Roman Church had no effect on the Eastern clergy. Women deaconess' lasted much longer in the East because women converts were baptized in the nude and then dressed before being anointed by the priest or bishop! But eventually this practice disappeared also in the East.

The second big break in the Roman Catholic Church came with the Reformation. Luther made some demands on the Church that in nearly everyone's minds today should have been agreed to. Selling Indulgences, keeping Latin as the language of the Church, and many other failings of the Roman Church should have changed. Fortunately for Martin Luther, some kings and princes protected him from being arrested and tried by the Roman Church. In Europe at least the split was close to 50-50.

A side note is the Anglican Church. The Catholic Church in England was an independent



church. It worked more or less like the Catholic Church, expect that the clergy did not owe allegiance to Rome! King Henry the Eighth decided to make a deal with the Roman Church and that lasted until the pope refused to let him have a divorce or annulment. So he brought the church back and put it under the king. In those days most people never really thought about divorce as men died young mainly at work and women often died in child birth quite often so divorce was rare!

The next big split came at the First Vatican Council. The pope was losing the Papal States and thus losing absolute power and he wanted some kind of absolute power over all of the laity and clergy. So in the midst of the war for the Papal States, which was a large area of northern Italy, the pope called for the Council mainly to have the Council approve a rule that the Pope was infallible, later edited as Infallible in matters of faith and morals! That was then interpreted in the most general way! Logic would dictate that no man or group of people can be infallible! So it is really not logical. A large number of bishops and cardinals walked away from the vote and many planned and did create Independent Catholic Churches!

We are one of those churches. And because of my consecration by Russian and Greek and Independent Catholic bishops we share in that group of Churches! Independent Catholic means that the bishop was elected by the people of a church and consecrated by at least three bishops who all lay hands on the new bishop! That happened for

me in Ft. Collins on June 6, 1996. I answer to God and to the people that I minister to!

The Roman Catholic Church has a Code of Canon Law it has seven books with a total of 1752 canons!

And everyone in the Roman Catholic is bound by those laws, even if you do not know what they are! Some of us priests and bishops have read some or all of it. But I doubt that any lay person has read much of it! All I know is that prior to John Paul II writing the Code, that the Code had been drafted and sent out to all of the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. I know that about 33% was rejected, 33% was accepted and 33% was to be changed. Then nothing happened except Pope Paul VI died, Pope John Paul I was elected and was murdered. Then Pope John Paul II was elected and suddenly the new Code of Canon Law came out without any review that I am aware of. So the message was clear. John Paul II was the only law maker, and he clearly was going against the intent of Vatican II.

Hans Kung believes that at some point either Pope Francis will stand up to the Vatican Curia or some other pope in the future will use the Vatican II documents and renew the Roman Catholic Church under the intent of Vatican II to change the reality of the Church.

I will point out why that may not ever be possible. When John XXIII called for a new council in 1959, many people were hoping that the Roman Catholic Church would change drastically. I was a

THE GOOD NEWS TIMES

VOL. 1506

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC CHURCH PUBLISHING

Price \$0.00 Free

freshman in high school, and I knew that a lot of things had to change. Just the issue of use of english in the Mass and other sacraments was a big one. Also my parents were always fighting over to use of birth control, but all that happened was mom got pregnant again and again. They could not afford the seven children they had. And mom had miscarried six other times when she was pregnant. Priests should be married so they knew what family life was all about. It went on and on. I was about to turn 15 and I knew all of that.

Well the Council went well, but no where near what many people hoped for. But it did change enough for me to eventually join the Jesuits and become a priest. And knowing what I know now, it was a miracle that the Council did as much as it did. We now know that both Karol Wojtyla (the future JP II) and Joseph Ratzinger (the future Benedict XVI) were at Vatican II and were dead set against all of the changes! They and a few other conservative theologians, and all of the Vatican Curia were against most of the changes!



So from 1978 to about 2013, these two Popes have given the world some of the most conservative bishops and Cardinals ever! They have been against any change in the way the Roman Catholic Church functions! This latest edition of a pope was one of the most conservative bishops and cardinal in South America. He will not allow any mention of

women priests or even women in any powerful position in the Church, he will not allow priests to get married, he will not allow gay and lesbian couples to even have a marriage blessing, he will not allow any kind of birth control, he has not addressed the pedophile issue, he is still the same conservative that we was for many years. He has even been discussing when he too will retire!

When Pope John Paul I was elected he found out about two days later that most of the Curia were part of the super secret group within the masonic lodge called the P-2. Italy does not allow any secret society to be secret and the Masonic Lodge had to reveal the names. About 121 Cardinals, Archbishops, and bishops were members. After checking out the newspapers information, John Paul I on September 28th told Cardinal Villot (the secretary of state) that Bishop Marcinkus, Cardinal Baggio, Cardinal Villot would all have to go within 24 hours! Actually, his plan was to quietly retire all of the men on the 121 list. In the morning, John Paul I was dead.

In the book, "The Vatican Exposed: Money, Murder, and the Mafia" Paul L. Williams, a consultant for the FBI, using FBI and CIA and other sources has shown the following story. When Cardinal Villot heard the Pope tell him that he and others were going to be quietly retired, he went to the Pope's room and altered the blood pressure meds with Morphine so when the Pope took a few drops of morphine instead of his medicine his blood pressure would drop even lower and cause his death. On the next

morning when the Sister called to tell him the pope was dead, he came down to the pope's room fully dressed shaved and prepared to take the medicine bottle and certain papers and the pope's will, etc, etc.

Then he called the pope's doctor who said that the pope was dead. And a reason for his death. Then Cardinal Villot anointed the pope (the Second Vatican Council considers the Sacrament of the Sick is for the living, not the clearly dead!). Villot sent the nun, Sister Vincenza to the Motherhouse and told her not to communicate with the press. Then he pulled out the silver mallet and hit the pope's forehead while asking "Albino Luciani, are you dead?" He did this three times. Once the doctor left, two morticians came out of no where. It was about 6 AM and Villot had to call them at 5 AM before he called the doctor. Even though pope's were not usually embalmed, the morticians had the embalming fluid and needles to embalm the pope's body immediately without draining the bodily fluids first! This was to prevent a possible full autopsy. The morticians also changed the horrible grimace and closed the bulging eyes of the pope's body. Then Villot told the priest who was present to tell a fabricated story leaving out the fact of who found the body (Sister Vincenza).

While no one believed any of the stories, Cardinal Villot had made it impossible for anyone to do anything about it. Since the Vatican is a sovereign state and the Curia who had just gotten saved by Cardinal Villot were not about to do anything, except to make sure that the next Pope insures their business as usual

actions. The cardinals of the Curia knew just who to elect!

As soon as possible the next conclave elected Cardinal Karol Wojtyla. Who was just the man that the murderer Villot and his other members of the Masonic Lodge P-2 members and the Mafia people wanted. The Vatican bank which had laundered Mafia money for many years was busy with all kinds of fraudulent investments and 'borrowing' money from other banks using dummy companies. Pope John Paul II refused to correct these issues and in fact gave Bishop Marcinkus an additional job as governor of the Vatican. Other sources indicate that Pope John Paul II took \$100 million and sent it via the Mafia to Poland to clean up his hidden issues.

And of course John Paul II rolled back the Church by at least a century and mostly ignored the documents of Vatican II. Pedophiles were hidden and protected, women's orders have been investigated and controled, Priests cannot be married unless they were protestant ministers first and married and came into the church wanting to become priests. Women's ordination cannot even be discussed. Theologians have been silenced. Bishops have private vows to the pope. It goes on forever. The current Pope Francis does not even mention any changes in the Church. The hope that Father Hans Kung has expressed is disappearing as quickly as people my age and older are disappearing!

My hope for the future of the Catholic Church is that the

hierarchy of the Roman Church dissolves as the church closes more churches and the people refuse to let the bishops claim and sell the churches. Really the people have paid for the churches, if the bishop closes one of them the people have a right and duty to claim it and either convince the pastor to stay and connect with Independent Catholic Bishops and then the priest can also get married if he wants and run the church for the people. And I hope that there is more open opposition to the rules of the Church that have not come from Jesus! Jesus had women disciples and even apostles. Mary Magdalene and the Samaritan women that Jesus talked to at the well became apostles! The early Church had women serving in the church in many ways. There is no good reason to prevent women from becoming Deacons, Priests, and Bishops! There has never been a good reason to stop birth control, even Benedict XVI implied that couples have the right and duty to limit the number of children they have. All of the ministers of the Early Church were allowed to be married. There is no reason why when marriages fail that the people cannot get a divorce and marry again and still go to communion! Obey God not the pope or pastor or any other human law if you believe that God would allow it! The only commandment that Jesus left us was to: "love other people as I have loved you!"

I have hope for the Catholic Church simply because that is part of what Jesus started. And I believe that the People of God will make it happen
Love in Christ,

Bishop Frank S. Adams †

Persecution of Christians: What You Should Know

By Suzy Hanna
Aug 14, 2014



The systematic persecution of Christians in Iraq is indicative of the persecution of Christians in the Middle East; cruel and barbaric. Like many minorities, these Indigenous inhabitants of Iraq have suffered under various regimes; however, the situation worsened in the last few weeks when the militant extremists ISIS (or DAESH as per their Arabic acronym) started a genocide, "cleansing" the Christians from Iraq, in order to establish an Islamic Caliphate State.

ISIS had been fighting in Syria, but having been somewhat contained by Syrian President Bashar Al Assad, they moved on to Iraq, which, due to its vulnerability, was an easy target to attack. Iraq had its political system and army systematically broken since the removal of dictator Saddam Hussein and the resulting political vacuum that ensued. Due to the breakdown in Iraq, it did not take ISIS long to capture several cities and key landmarks such as dams and oil

fields. Christians have suffered unspeakable atrocities specifically over the last few weeks under ISIS. Christian homes were graffitied with the Arabic letter for N (Noon), to identify the so-called 'Nazarenes' (a semi-derogatory term for Christian.) The houses and shops which were identified became targets for looting, and the people inside were to be killed. Christians were threatened with death; images of public beheadings and crucifixions of Christians became rampant. Graphic images have become the norm. Killers proudly pose holding decapitated heads, smiling into the camera, while several heads are lodged onto poles in the background. A recent photograph shows a man looking confused holding the body of a 4 or 5-year-old girl wearing a pretty dress- with no head. A man breaking down in the background seems to be in less shock than the probable father of the girl, who does not seem to comprehend the situation- he is holding his daughter's mutilated body. Women are raped and/or killed. Mass graves of decapitated men with their heads lying on or near their stomachs are regularly shared on Facebook pages. One of the most notorious stories that has embodied the atrocities in Iraq is the story of an Iraqi father who committed suicide after he was forced to watch his wife and daughter being raped by ISIS. These are someone's children. Someone's father, son, brother.

Someone's daughter, mother, sister...

One of the most heart-wrenching facts is that Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, is emptied of Christians. Think of the second largest city in your country. Now imagine it being emptied of Christians.

Christians who were 'lucky' in not being beheaded walked away from the city empty handed, prohibited by ISIS from taking any of their possessions with them. A heart-wrenching interview with Syrian Orthodox Archbishop Nikodemos Dauod, head of the Diocese of Mosul, Iraq and Kurdistan region, showed a passionate and frustrated despair, felt by Christians around the world who watched the tragic interview. His Grace talked about a baby girl having her gold earrings- no more than a few grams of gold- being confiscated off her. Christians were sent away with literally nothing. Church bells were silenced and crosses were taken down, replaced with Islamic flags. For the first time in its history, the city was empty of Christians in preparation for the Islamic state to come.

ISIS also went on to destroy Christian places of historical worship, such as the tomb of the prophet Jonah.

But as we know, "All things work for the good for those who love God." (Romans 8:28.) Christians around the world have congregated as one in prayer, knowing that as the members of one body, when one member hurts, all hurt. Some churches have consecrated fasts for the Iraqi

Christians.

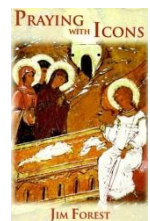
Simultaneous to Prayer and fasting, several appeals have been set up by various churches and church groups, particularly Assyrian Orthodox Churches. There have been several demonstrations of solidarity in major cities around the world to show our brothers and sisters in Iraq that they are not forgotten. Several petitions are circulating, encouraging Western countries to offer asylum and humanitarian aid to the Christians in Iraq. We encourage people to write to their MPs or legislative representatives doing the same. Many people have also changed their Facebook and Twitter pictures to what resembles a one-eyed smiley face – the Arabic letter N (noon) in an effort to highlight the plight of the Iraqi Christians and to show solidarity.

There is plenty to be done, so please volunteer your time and prayer in an attempt to alleviate the suffering of our Iraqi Christian brothers and sisters. †

Praying with Icons

By Jim Forest

First published ten years ago, *Praying with Icons* has been widely recognized as a modern spiritual classic. Both for Orthodox readers familiar with this tradition as well as newcomers, Forest describes the history and theology behind icons, how they are made, and how they are used as a guide to prayer.



The Good News Times is a monthly publication of *The Community of the Good Samaritan Mission* and is distributed upon request:

www.ctgs.net