

## Maronite Monks of Adoration

### *“What You Did to the Least of My Brethren, You Did To Me”*

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18).

If one reads the Bible, even and especially the Holy Gospels, one soon learns that one day we shall be judged. And so only a few verses down from today’s Gospel selection, we hear our Lord’s words: “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay every man for what he has done” (Mt. 16:27).

By these words our Lord reminds us that one day we must render an account before him of all our deeds—each and every one of us. He himself will judge us and repay: reward for the good and punishment for the wicked. And so we must live with a great sense of responsibility, for one day we shall be judged.

When we celebrate the Feast of All Saints—those who were judged by Christ to have done well with their lives: “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Mt. 25:23)—and on the Feast of the Consecration of the Church, we are reminded that we too are called to holiness and that the Church, with her teachings and liturgy and sacraments, is given to us for our sanctification, to make us holy, pleasing to God. As the altar is adorned, so must our souls be adorned by God’s grace with every good thing, so that one day we too may hear those happy words: “Come, O blessed of my



*Keeping Watch with Jesus*

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Maronite Monks

An important aspect of monastic spirituality is praying for both the prayer requests we receive and the world. While our *Safro* (Morning Prayer) starts at 5:20am, monks are in the chapel much earlier in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. In monastic terminology, this is referred to as “watching”. The monk rises long before most people (before dawn) and spends time in prayer. He prays for those who suffer and struggle with sin, symbolized by the darkness before dawn. The monk awaiting the dawn symbolizes waiting for Christ’s return in glory. With this in mind, let us not forget as we begin this new year, that throughout the world Christians suffer daily for their faith in Christ. Because of the media hatred for Christianity, you do not hear about much of this. But Christians are fast dwindling in the Near East, Iraq and suffer violence in parts of Africa and India. We should have remembrance of them in our prayers and know that their sacrifice in turn strengthens us in our battle to remain faithful. Remember that as you pray, you join your prayers with those of the monks on behalf of our suffering brothers and sisters. So we enjoin you to remember them in your prayers along with the promise of Our Lord Himself: “Take courage! I have overcome the world.”✠

Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mt. 25:34). We must live with a great sense of responsibility. One day we shall be judged; we shall be held accountable. Heaven is not a given; it is not a sure thing. As St. Paul says, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). But there is Hope. We have the help and promises of Christ. As we heard in today’s Gospel: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18).

Do we thank God for the Church? For Peter and his successors? Do we thank God for the Pope?

Do we listen to the Pope, as Christ’s vicar on earth?

So for instance when Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States, he warned us not “[to separate] faith from life: living as if God did not exist.” “This is aggravated,” he said, “by an individualistic and eclectic approach to faith and religion: far from a Catholic approach to ‘thinking with the Church,’ each person believes he or she has a right to pick and choose, maintaining external social bonds but without an integral, interior conversion to the law of Christ.” The Pope continued: “Consequently, rather than being transformed and renewed in mind, Christians are easily tempted to conform themselves to the spirit of this age (cf. Rom. 12:3).” He concluded: “*We have seen this emerge in an acute way in the scandal given by Catholics who promote an alleged right to abortion*” [emphasis added]. [Citation: Response to Questions Posed by the U.S. Bishops, #1, April 16, 2008]

Again, at World Youth Day in Australia, Pope Benedict warned of the consequences of “[leaving] God on the sidelines” and trying “to explain human life and shape society with little or no reference to the Creator” and “turning our back on the Creator’s plan.” He said: “When God is eclipsed, our ability to recognize the natural

order, purpose, and the ‘good’ begins to wane.” Again, he posed the question: “Do we recognize that the innate dignity of every individual rests on his or her deepest identity—as image of the Creator—and therefore that human rights are universal, based on natural law, and not on something dependent upon negotiation or patronage, let alone compromise?” He concluded: “And so we are led to reflect on what place the poor and the elderly, immigrants and the voiceless have in our societies. How can it be that domestic violence torments so many mothers and children? *How can it be that the most wondrous and sacred human space—the womb—has become a place of unutterable violence?*” [emphasis added] [Citation: Welcoming Celebration by the Young People at Barangaroo, East Darling Harbour, July 17, 2008]

We might add: How can it be that so many people, even Catholics, who of all people have every available means to know better, cannot or will not see the great evil that is abortion—that it is a grave offense to God and a crime against humanity, in which we may not cooperate in any way?

Bl. Mother Teresa of Calcutta used to remind us that the first person after the Blessed Virgin Mary to welcome our Savior into the world was the unborn child, John the Baptist, who recognized Christ, also in the womb, and leapt for joy. We must protect the child—inside or outside the womb.

We must live with a sense of responsibility. We need to remember that one day we shall be judged. We shall stand before Christ on the day of reckoning. All will be laid bare; we shall neither be able to hide anything nor offer any excuse. Christ will know the truth and so shall we. How shall we fare? We who have been given so much. We who have the Church of Christ and the successor of Peter, the rock? We have been given so much. How shall we fare? Eternal damnation or everlasting peace?

### Addendum:

We recommend the book, *The Hand of God: A Journey from Death to Life by the Abortion Doctor who Changed his Mind*, by Bernard N. Nathanson, M.D. (Regnery, 1996). Dr. Nathanson was a principle player in establishing the Abortion industry in the United States and a practicing abortionist. Ultrasound technology helped him to see the reality of what he was doing, and he stopped performing abortions by

1979. He has been very active in the Pro-Life Movement ever since. As he grew older, he found himself in terror of the judgement he would one day face before God. He entered the Catholic Church in recent years, convinced that “through the ministry of the Church” he could find peace and forgiveness.✠