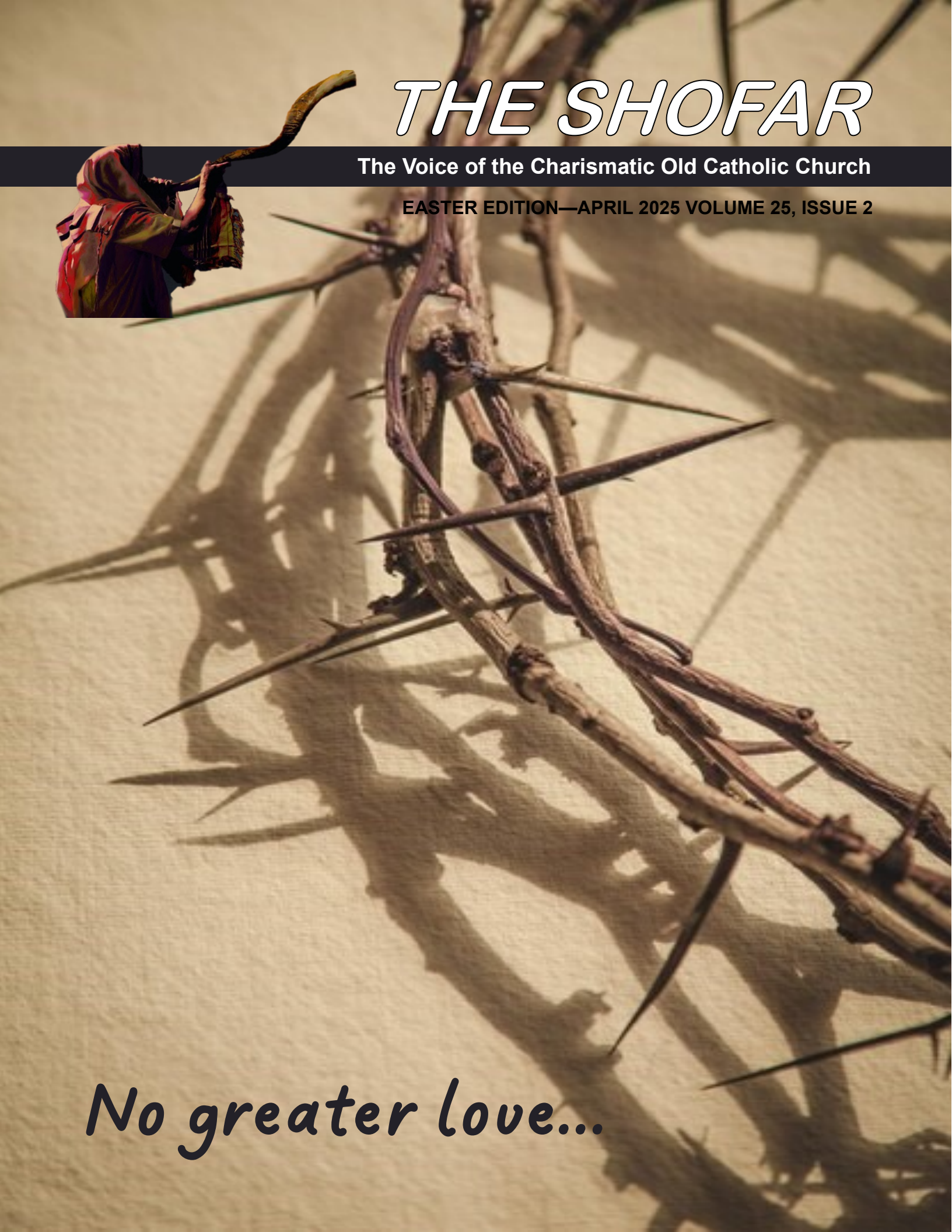




THE SHOFAR

The Voice of the Charismatic Old Catholic Church

EASTER EDITION—APRIL 2025 VOLUME 25, ISSUE 2

No greater love...

"That they all may be one..."

Jesus prayed to the Father for the unity of His followers. How much more important then is the unity of His clergy that work to lead his people to Him. It is obvious that throughout the centuries our unified Christianity has become divided into smaller churches, ours being one of them. I think the Lord is using the smaller churches like ours (small compared to the larger mainstream churches) to reach out to the many who have been injured in some way by a church, or estranged from church in general, or those lost sheep who are yet to know Him.

I firmly believe that the Charismatic Old Catholic Church has a unique and special mission to a flock of just as unique and special Christians. We are spread out across seven countries; a volunteer clergy from all walks of life, and for each a special ministry we are called to by the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that He would lose none of those the Father had given Him, and would raise them on the last day. Our mission—if we choose to accept it - is to go to all the places and people the Lord sends us to, no matter how simple or obscure, to find the lost sheep wandering outside the safety of the sheepfold, and work to bring them home.

Because our diverse clergy are spread far and wide, it is easy to feel isolated and alone. Alone we become ripe targets for the evil one. So let us stand firm in unity. I hope the Shofar will be the instrument of communication and education it is intended to be as all of us go about our ministries. If there are any particular topics that you would be interested in reading about, or have a ministry or accomplishment or reflection you would like to share with our church please get in touch with the Shofar staff through our contact information. As a church, let us support each other with prayer and interaction so none of us are left feeling alone, and as a church, we "all may be one."

Love and prayers to all,

Fr. Tim, Editor



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Fr. Joey has diplomas in Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Missiology, as well as two Seminary Doctoral Degrees. He has been pastor of Means Baptist Church in Frenchburg, KY for 23 years.

The True Death Blow...

By Rev. Joey Rogers

Few conversations breed controversy and contention like those pertaining to the wrath of God. Much ink has been spilled, many hours of lectures have been divested, and countless hours of academic pursuit have been spent on wrestling through the issue

of God's wrath in sacred scripture. From an eschatological perspective, to moral arguments, and even to creeds and confessions and councils; understanding God's wrath has always been a difficult topic for the people of God.

For the purpose of this brief devotion, I want us to hop in our imaginary Time Machine and travel to the Ancient Near-East, to the period of Genesis 1:11. As the church has preserved this important text in the beginning of our Bibles (no pun intended), perhaps Genesis 1:11 can tell us something about the earliest concepts of God's wrath expressed against Satan and sin. I would contend it does as it sets forth a foundation for our understanding of God's wrath. Further, I would contend Genesis 1:11 establishes what would become a consistent theme throughout Holy Writ: God's wrath is primarily understood as exilic in nature.

Let us consider the opening scene in the Garden, which is God's sacred space where Adam and Eve resided in God's presence and under His protection and provision. It is clearly established early in the narrative that life in all of creation finds its source in God alone. Therefore, the tree of life in the midst of the Garden—Eden being God's sacred space—is vital to man's existence. To be separated or exiled from the Garden would mean death.

Then we see a serpent enter the Garden, a shining one, a spiritual being who tempts Eve to rebel. Cunning and crafty, the enemy succeeds in his mission to lead man into rebellion. But we must ask, "Why

was he there? Why was a spiritual being roaming about in the material creation?” Answer: Because of his sinful pride and rebellion against God (as we later learn in scripture) he was exiled from his place in the spiritual realm; he was exiled to the dust of the earth. Thus, the serpent is our first example that God’s wrath against sin is exilic in nature. It is depicted as the removal from, or the casting out from the presence of God.

The result of Adam and Eve’s rebellion follows the same pattern. They are cast out of Eden, God’s sacred space. Specifically, they were exiled east of Eden, which in the Ancient Near-Eastern Jewish mind meant you were being exiled toward the desert and closer to the sea. Both the desert (wilderness) and sea are seen as instruments of violence, suffering, famine, chaos, and death.

In this brief fly-over of Genesis 1:11, we have seen certain themes emerge. First, sin has consequences. Because God is holy and just, He deals with sin. Second, the ultimate consequence of sin is that it separates us from God. Third, being exiled from the presence of YHWH, who is the source of life, will ultimately end in death. Death is all that awaits us outside of God’s presence.

Knowing all this is why the Person and work of Jesus is so very important. It is Christ our Lord who reconciles us to the Father. We find our living hope in His resurrection and ascension, having dealt the death blow to Satan and sin on the cross. As He ascended to the right hand of the Father, He became the reconciliatory and resurrection hope of eternal glory for us all. Thus, we long for the eschatological new creation when again we dwell with God in that glorious sacred space free from death, and free to partake of the Tree of Life.

This is also why the Church is so needed in our world! We are the Body, the voice, the means by which our Risen Savior cries out to a world in exile, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Come to Me and be reconciled to the Father. Come to Me and eat of the Tree of Life forever. Come to Me, and live.”





Image courtesy www.freepik.com

Remembering Simon the Cyrenian

Happy Easter to all of our Brothers and Sisters in the Lord!

Mark 15:21 "A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross."

This “random” man Simon, and his family, just happened to be in Jerusalem, hundreds of miles from their home which is currently Libya on the day of Jesus’ crucifixion. The Roman soldiers realized that Jesus was not going to be able to physically continue up the hill to the place of the skull, so they looked through the crowd for someone to help Jesus. No doubt they recognized that Simon was a strong man and could carry the weight of this cross. He would be able to make it the almost mile path to Golgotha.

Simon had his family with him and obviously would not want to be separated from them in all the commotion of the city at that time. However, the soldiers forced him to take part. He was made to grab the heavy wood and lifted the weight off Jesus’ battered body. He now forever is recorded in history as Simon, of Cyrene, the one who helped carry our Lord’s cross. It sounds so noble and honoring to be the one that helped our Lord in the most crucial time, and it is because we know how the story “ends”. But at that moment, it must have been very frightening for Simon not knowing what his own fate was, and will his family be safe in this crowd? Carrying this 90-pound beam would take energy, it would take strength and determination. It also took time to walk that hill. No doubt it would have bruised his own body to have the cross laid on his shoulders. He didn’t realize that his suffering was for the King of Kings and the Savior of the world and at that moment our Lord



Image courtesy www.freepik.com

needed him! Jesus, the human Jesus needed help and God provided Simon to come to his aid. What a beautiful picture. Jesus was going to die for our sins, Simon's included, and Simon was an answer to help Jesus accomplish his destiny. What a humble honor. Jesus could have called the angels to help him, but God sent a man named Simon.

Throughout the 64 years of my life I have had many moments when I have needed "a Simon" to help carry my cross. God had provided help during those times when I had fallen under the weight of the burden - when I just couldn't go another step. The times when I needed guidance on my path to make the right decisions. The times when my heart felt fear instead of faith and pain instead of peace. It was those moments when God providentially placed "Simons" before me, beside me and behind me. To this day, I can call their name immediately to mind. They impacted me and were that strength I needed – they were my Godsend. They followed the example of Simon, of Cyrene and sacrificed their time to pray for me and see me to victory. They extended their hand with the temporal blessings that I lacked. They gave me that hug that ushered in the love that I so desperately needed.

I'm sure you can call to mind the "Simons" in your life as well.

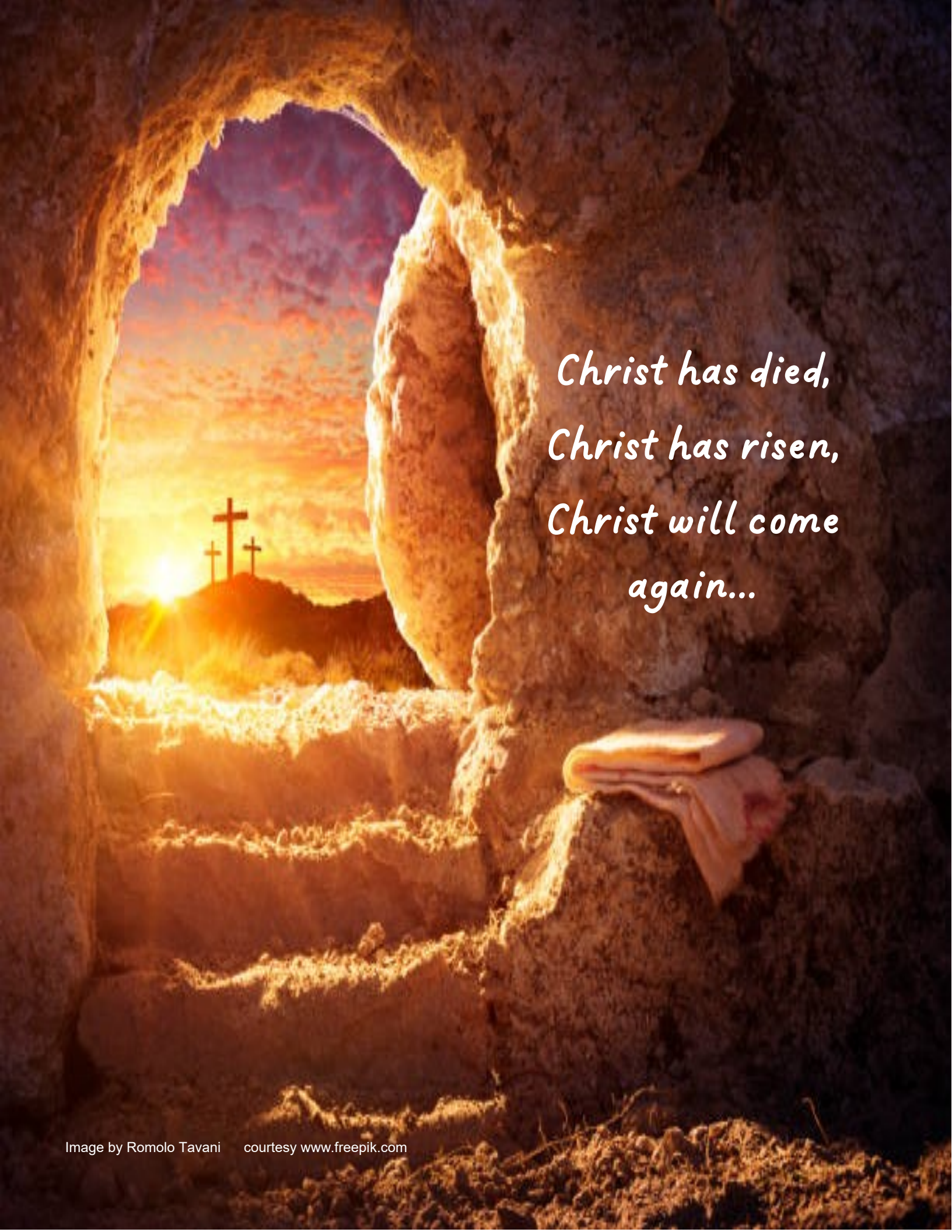
Let us reflect on how we can be that "Simon" to others this year and help them make it to their destination. Maybe you will be the answer to someone's prayer at your job, or in your neighborhood. Maybe you will be the "Simon" to someone right here in the COCC.

Be open to the Holy Spirit and let your strength uphold someone who just can't make it up that hill without help.

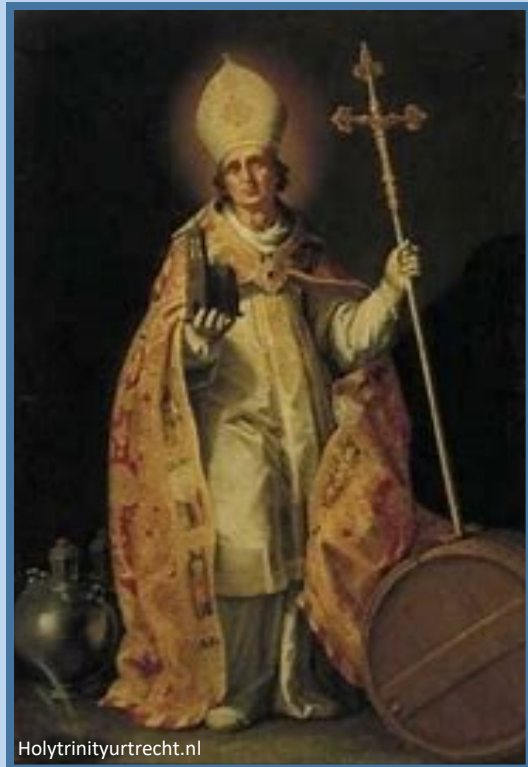
May God's presence overtake you this Easter season.

Deacon Karla





*Christ has died,
Christ has risen,
Christ will come
again...*



Holytrinityurtrecht.nl

St. Willibrord

St. Willibrord (658-739) was the first Archbishop of the then new See of Utrecht, and as such our Charismatic Old Catholic Church and Apostolic succession ultimately descends from him, as far as our ties to Utrecht and Ultrajectine Tradition are concerned.

Willibrord was born in Northumbria (near York, England). He was the son of a hermit, St. Wilgis, who sent him to the care of St. Wilfrid, Abbot of York. In 677 Willibrord went to Ireland, becoming a disciple of St. Egbert, who ordained Willibrord a priest in 688.

Eventually he was sent with other companions on a mission to convert the newly conquered Frisians. In 695 he was consecrated archbishop by Pope St. Sergius I. In 698 Willibrord established the monastery of Echternach.

In 714 he baptized the future French King Pippin III, son of Charles Martel, and Father of Charlemagne (1). From 719 to 722 he went on missionary journeys with St. Boniface, the future “Apostle of Germany”. Willibrord was martyred in 739. His tomb resides within the Abbey Church of Echternach (2).

- (1) Britannica.com (<https://www.britannica.com/summary/Pippin-III>)
- (2) Britannica.com (<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Willibrord>)



Wikipedia image

An Informal Gathering of Our Michigan COCC Clergy

All of our Michigan COCC clergy recently got together for a “summit” of prayer, breaking bread, and fun at a Cheddar’s restaurant in Lansing, MI. It was a great opportunity to discuss over lunch the different

personal and ministerial challenges each faced, and to talk over various ideas each had about future ministry opportunities.

- SHOFAR STAFF



R to L: Fr. Tim, Deacon Karla, Kathy and Fr. John Santeramo





+Archbishop Robert Ortega, Primate
+Archbishop (emeritus) Maurice McCormick

Affiliated Churches of the COCC:

AGAPE OF JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

Jeffersontown, KY

HOLY SPIRIT OF HOPE

CHARISMATIC OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

El Paso, TX

(Both Ground and Zoom Services)

ST MICHAEL'S INDEPENDENT OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH

Loganville, GA

LIGHT OF CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

Bedford, KY

ONLINE SEMINARIES:

AGAPE SEMINARY of LOUISVILLE

Jeffersontown, KY

ST. THOMAS OLD CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Titusville, FL

Note to all Clergy:

If you have a church proper or similar ministry in progress (anywhere in the world) that people could attend if they have the notion, please notify the Shofar so we can include it! This includes online stuff too. Thanks!

The Shofar is always seeking new submissions and contributors for future issues:

Contact: revtimschoonard@gmail.com **Editor**