

The Future Church and Self
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The Future – such a word is this! We are, in that word, at once struck with hope and doubt.

We certainly may know the past; the historian grapples to find new bits of information of the past to record in our textbooks. We are confronted with the thoroughly digested, dissected, and theorized past. There is much to be learned, for sure, and we are astounded as the “sense of time” of the past, as expressed in the time lines of history that we find in our schools. Someone said that the history of man in relation to the whole of the world would be like placing a nickel on top of the Washington Monument! And surely, that has a certain excitement.

The present has its own excitement also, but when one thinks about it, he realizes that the present is so close to the past. Every moment that we live is already past!

But the future – that’s a different excitement. This is so because it is “out there,” the place to which I go, the hope for which I reach. And every decision about our future, in a way, is frightening because of this. There is, however, something about the Christian approach to the future. It is the positive knowledge the Christ is there, IN THE FUTURE, and not only in the past.

But WE must decide! We cannot be passive. We cannot simply sit back and hope that “something will happen.” What will happen will be because we, with the Grace of God, will MAKE it happen.

We must decide how we will enter that uncertain time, and there are certain over-riding principles that we all must be aware of. The very first is that we must know for what we are willing to live and, if necessary, to die for. This is so because the future, like the present, will certainly have times which are filled with boredom, times which are fraught with anxiety. A commitment will be needed, for sure!

But that word “committed” leaves us hanging, unless we know *to what* we are to be committed. There are two aspects to consider as any human being asks this question. The first is that we must first commit ourselves to our “self” – not in pride, but to bring our “self” to the highest possible concentration and dedication to God. What is meant here is exactly this: each of us has a unique goal as an individual; we are given our individuality as a Christian through *Chrismation*, for at that time, we are anointed as a soldier, a “particular” SOLDIER OF CHRIST. But to stand as a “self” before God will not be easy.

And finally, being a “self” does not mean that we cannot be part of the Church – the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We can AND must be both; a “self” and a “part of the

greater whole” in the Church. How can this be? There is only one way – by GIVING! It used to be that the greatest philosophy was “know thyself” and today, as is everywhere evident, it is “be thyself”; but for the Christian it was, it is, and it shall always be, “give thyself.” That is the way, indeed the only way, that we can be part of the Fellowship of the Church, and yet, preserve the need to be our own “self”...by giving. And it all began with the ONE who truly GAVE Himself to the Fellowship of all mankind and yet, remain as the greatest “self” ever known!