



DEACON DAVID LOCHBIHLER, J.D.

OUR ORTHODOX HOLY FAMILY:

A JOYFUL JOURNEY WITH JESUS AND MARY

ORTHODOX LOGOS PUBLISHING



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by Deacon David Lochbihler, J.D.

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To
Emily Grace
Olivia Anne
James Patrick
Clare Love
Charlotte Frances
and
Our Favourite Cat Louie

The Mother's sorrow oh so deep!
As the awful truth hit her, she began to weep.
Her darling Son, her Messiah, her Lord!
To everyone His whereabouts she had implored.

Mary and Joseph both searched for their Son.
For two days they saw no sign of Him, not one!
Oh glorious Theotokos, what awful woe!
A parent's peace you did forego.

On the third day they found Him, in the temple He was.
When asked, He said because,
"Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"
No need to have searched with such anxiousness.

Olivia Anne Wetzel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Biblical translations fascinate. Compare these two translations of the first recorded words of Jesus when He visited the Jerusalem Temple at the age of twelve.

“And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business” (Luke 2:49 KJV)?

And He said to them, “Why *is it* that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s *house*” (Luke 2:49 NASB)?

Saint Luke nearly two millennia ago writing the original manuscript did not use the Greek words for either “business” or “house” in his Temple narrative. Biblical scholars debated for centuries the precise English words to best express what Jesus originally said in this most memorable verse. Saint Luke chose only these two questions to place in God’s Word among the thousands of words spoken by Jesus during the first thirty years of His life.

This book truly embodies a long labour of love. Begun more than fifteen years ago, the birth of this new book springs from a deep joy experienced by enthusiastically exploring and prayerfully pondering five Greek words within one single Biblical verse.

Thank you to Father Patrick and Khouria Kerrie Cardine, Deacon Douglas and Shamassy Phyllis King, and the

wonder-full people of Saint Patrick Orthodox Church in Bealeton, Virginia, especially my numerous Pen Pals, for your decade-long love and support. We experience “heaven on earth” each Sunday morning. Lauds and Mass last more than two hours, yet our communal worship seems timeless as if only fifteen minutes pass. A source of abundant joy each Sunday also occurs after Lauds and Mass: playing the baseball card game with Mark Ross, consulting with Craft Captain Luci Marie, comparing manuscripts with fellow author Olivia Anne, discussing literature with Evangeline Sophia, helping Lucas Otter place the priest’s vestments for the next Mass, walking outside with Maggie McLaurin, swapping fantasy football teams with Jadon Kai, trading fantasy football players with Knox Hutchins, talking about the Houston Astros with James Patrick, teaching Maximus Ashby to like Notre Dame more than Alabama, playing catch with softball star Natalie Grace, enjoying how much Sola Elise loves her Orthodox school, and receiving a handwritten letter from Millie Ruth, a myriad of amazing adventures following our Sunday Divine Liturgy.

A special thank you to my friend Scott Richardson for meticulously editing my draft manuscript of this book. Scott worked tirelessly to send substantive suggestions and catch typographical errors. Our friendship dates back a decade. After being tonsured as subdeacons, we received certificates from Saint Stephen’s Course of Studies and earned Master’s degrees from Balamand University. We continue our studies by reading and discussing in depth an array of Orthodox books through our informal yet informative Balamand Book Club get togethers.

I am eternally grateful to Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of blessed memory, Father Peter Gillquist of blessed memo-

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A heartfelt thank you to my beloved mother as she recently attained an historic lifetime achievement. Mom is still playing cards with superb skill (and winning!) at one hundred years of age, and a deep and abiding love extends to the rest of my family: Fred and his wife Whitney, my nephew Fred and his wife Tania Xiong and their children Frederick Fuechee and Leilana Hli Nra, Doctor Lyn, Vince and his wife Judy, my niece Angela and Kevin and their sons Grant and Nolan, my niece Stephanie and her son Isaac, and my nephew Brett Jordan.

A final, essential thank you to my faithful publisher Maxim Hodak, Esquire, and my excellent editor, Max Mendor. My association with Orthodox Logos in the Netherlands brings great joy to my heart. Your commitment to sharing Orthodox scholarship both deepens our faith and enriches our world.

Every single error in this book is entirely my own. I would love to hear from you, my beloved reader, if any small part of this work touches your heart.

Friends in Jesus and Mary,
Deacon David Lochbihler, J.D.
Saint Patrick Orthodox Church
Tuesday 11 October 2022
Feast of the Motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary
orthodoxdeacondavid@gmail.com

PROLOGUE

THE JOY OF FAMILY

Dad lay on his deathbed. The year was 1983.

Having the best Dad in the world makes for the most wonder-full childhood memories. Dad came home after work one day with the greatest gift ever, and it wasn't anyone's birthday. Baseball cards! My first baseball card was a 1966 Topps Willie Mays. Dad also brought home a simple one-dollar baseball card game, and we played season after season with the baseball cards and the card game, keeping stats and enjoying memorable family fun.

Our baseball card games became more advanced as we children grew older. In one strategic game, you could select your own players, and Dad looked back to his own childhood four decades past and played with his favourite team, the 1919 Chicago White Sox. Dad grew up in Chicago and went with the South Siders. For those of you unfamiliar with baseball history, some of Dad's favourite players cavorted with gamblers, threw the 1919 World Series when Dad was nine, and were kicked out of baseball for life. As we played our baseball board games, these disgraced baseball players, the Black Sox, fondly recalled from Dad's early childhood, were the stars of his team.

Dad took my brother Vince and I to our first major league baseball game on Saturday 22 April 1966 at Wrigley

Field in Chicago. When you are nine years old and you first see the beautiful green field and majestic ivy outfield fence after a few years of watching the game on a black-and-white television, you experience a timeless memory to last a lifetime. My brother Vince and I brought our gloves, and as we walked to our seats, we watched in awe and wonder as if entering the most magnificent Gothic Cathedral. All of a sudden, unbeknownst to us, a foul ball came directly towards us. As we stood and stared into space, mitts in hand, we were not aware of the growing fervor around us. I recall seeing the baseball on the ground, Dad reaching for it, but another fan snatching it just ahead of him. Vince and I wore our mitts this ballgame and the next at Wrigley waiting for and expecting another foul ball that would not arrive until a quarter of a century later.

Beginning during my fourth-grade school year, Dad was now sixty years old. Dad and I began hanging out together each Saturday. We would begin our weekend adventure at his office. While Dad worked on his clients' insurance policies, I calculated batting averages for the hitters and earned run averages (with the help of a slide rule) for the pitchers. After a pickup or delivery to Arnold Palmer Dry Cleaners, we headed for the Fort Wayne Public Library. Dad picked up some books to read at home on his favourite chair, and I headed for the sports section to read about the baseball, football, and basketball stars. We then would drive to Northcrest Shopping Center and soon, better yet, to an amazing new thing in America, the indoor mall at Glenbrook. We concluded our fine morning together with a visit to Ponderosa Steak House. Our Saturday adventures continued for about seven years until my junior year in high school, ordinary weekend tasks building precious lifelong childhood memories.

Although our whole family enjoyed vacations together at McCormick's Creek State Park in Indiana, and we all had different favourite teams, I inherited from Dad his love for Chicago sports teams loved from his own childhood. We travelled to Rensselaer, Indiana, a couple summers to watch the Chicago Bears during their summer training camp at Saint Joseph's College. Dad took a memorable picture of me with legendary All-Pro linebacker Dick Butkus, and in my autograph book from 1968, with Dad's help, I secured autographs from many players including running backs Gale Sayers and Brian Piccolo, their biracial friendship featured a few years later in a fantastic family film, *Brian's Song*.

After a few years, I followed my brother Fred's footsteps and enrolled at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, and Mom and Dad retired to Sun City Center, a golf retirement community, in Florida. During one summer vacation, I remember playing Dad with one of our most skillful baseball board games from my childhood. This particular game required a lot of thought and strategy. As a college student, the game seemed so simple to me, and I crushed Dad by double digits, showing no mercy. Many years later, thinking about my life and the many good times together with Dad, I thought back to our many baseball card and board game seasons together, and something occurred to me. Looking back, it seems like Dad won most all of our regular seasons, but somehow, when it came time for the World Series, I always seemed to win the championship. It dawned on me that Dad most likely let me win the coveted World Series crown at the end of every season we played together. I then recalled how I showed no mercy and ran up the score against Dad when I in college, and I felt quite ashamed.

After Notre Dame, I attended the University of Texas School of Law, and Dad was there for my graduation in Austin, Texas. His visit was memorable. We watched the Texas Longhorns play a college baseball game, and I sat between Dad and my friend Stacey. A booming foul ball touched the sky and was heading straight towards us. Here was another chance to catch a foul ball, this time without a mitt. Unhindered, the ball would have landed on Stacey's head. I reached up, the ball hit my hand, and sadly bounced about ten feet in the air, a fumbled foul ball as the crowd sighed. As I rubbed my hand to get rid of the sting, Stacey asked, "Did you hurt your hand?" Dad quipped, "The only thing he hurt was his pride." During that Texas visit, Dad asked me to drive to a suburban neighborhood, and in one of the houses, Dad met Bib Falk, a famous Texas Longhorn baseball coach for many years. Mr. Falk was Dad's favourite player, a 1920 major league rookie joining the Chicago White Sox a year after the Black Sox Scandal, when Dad was ten. Dad came out of the house with an old autographed photograph of his boyhood hero.

Cancer struck Dad a few years later. Cancer is the most hated and dreadful of diseases. Any family suffering through cancer understands the deep pain of this deadly disease. Yet for one brief moment as Dad suffered, Mom sought a pathway towards hope. Mom had seen a segment on the television news show called *20/20*, with a Roman Catholic priest, Father Dennis Kelleher of blessed memory, engaged in a faith healing ministry. A healing Mass was scheduled in Chicago, and Mom and Dad flew into O'Hare Airport with our family gathering to attend Mass with Dad.

I cannot recall ever seeing Dad sick a day in his life, and it was quite jarring to see him quite tired and sickly

arriving at O'Hare in a wheelchair. Our family drove to the church. During the healing service, everyone wanting a blessing lined up in the front of the church by the altar rail, and Father Kelleher laid hands on everyone's head and prayed. We all need healing, and we all need prayer. The time seemed to move along somewhat quickly as Father Kelleher prayed and blessed each person. Father Kelleher approached and laid his hands on Dad's head. Unlike anyone else in the church, Dad spent an inordinate amount of time with Father Kelleher. I saw Dad cry for the first time in my life. Father Kelleher continued praying softly and powerfully in Christ as Dad wept. Our family felt something profound was happening.

Dad still suffered with cancer, yet an unexpected blessing for Dad occurred. Despite his widespread cancer and throughout the many months of his debilitating sickness, Dad felt no pain, and this freedom from pain mystified Dad's health care providers. One nurse told us it was inexplicable that despite cancer affecting so much of his body, Dad felt no pain. Although not healed, both the absence of pain and the shedding of tears truly blessed Dad.

A special hospital bed with an oxygen tank was set up in Mom and Dad's Sun City Center living room as Dad's condition continued to deteriorate. By the time I arrived from Illinois to keep watch with Mom, Dad had slipped into a coma. Mom laboured with grace and courage to take care of Dad during this final, deeply sad and silent time. One day, all of a sudden, Dad slipped out of his comatose state and looked around, his eyes darting back and forth, alert and troubled, as if suddenly awakening from a long slumber. Mom and I were both excited to be able to communicate with Dad, and we immediately began talking to

him. After a few short minutes, Mom asked Dad, “Do you see David?” Although my face was inches from his, Dad shook his head no. Mom then asked Dad, “Do you see Jesus?” Dad nodded yes. Within seconds Dad slipped back into his coma. The next day, as I said the Rosary, holding Dad’s hand, my father suddenly ceased breathing, or so it seemed. About forty-five seconds later, there was a very deep breath. About forty-five seconds later, another very deep breath. One more deep breath, and Dad was gone.

I did not cry then, and I did not cry at Dad’s funeral. About one month later, at a youth retreat, I could not stop crying. For about forty-five minutes during the Stations of the Cross, as we sang this most beautiful song “Tell the People,” memorized now nearly forty years later, the tears flowed freely:

“Last night Jesus came to me
Wiped the tears from my eyes
He said not to worry,
He would stay by my side.

“Tell the people I love them,
Tell the people I care,
When they feel far away from me,
Tell the people I’m there.”

I simply could not stop crying, an uncontrollable gift of tears.

A few years later, I lived in South Minneapolis, by coincidence three blocks from where George Floyd was murdered during the summer of 2020. I moved to this special neighborhood by church and school three decades ago in

1992. Mom refurnished her Florida home and bought a new recliner. Knowing how much I loved Dad, Mom did want to discard Dad's old recliner without checking with me first. She somehow arranged with a trucking company to ship Dad's brown La-Z-Boy recliner to me all the way from Florida to Minnesota.

I kept the recliner for the past thirty years, moving with it quite often, from Minnesota to South Carolina, from Virginia to Indiana and back. As you can expect, the chair gradually became worn and torn, with frayed and tattered arms and broken reclining gears. At one point about a decade ago, the gears were so broken, the chair could not even be used at all. But a church member skilled in carpentry made the chair usable for a few more years.

Another decade passed, and Dad's old recliner continued deteriorating. Luckily the chair was locked in one somewhat comfortable position. One of the subdeacons at our church excels in household renovations. I offered \$100.00 to him to try to fix the gears. I told him about Dad and how the old recliner had great sentimental value for me. Yet realizing a chair half-a-century-old may soon be past repair, I added this caveat: If my friend could not fix Dad's old recliner, I asked Subdeacon James to finally toss it without letting me know. It simply would pass in the night as a fond but distant memory of Dad without me knowing for sure it was gone forever.

Nearly nine months passed and, hearing nothing, I assumed the chair finally was finished for good. After school one day, arriving home, I saw a most unexpected surprise. I was stunned to see what looked like a new recliner. My first thought was that Subdeacon James had somehow found a new recliner for me. Looking more closely, I realized this

new chair actually was Dad's old recliner, completely re-upholstered with leather and featuring a new gear system!

Subdeacon James almost gave up, and the chair looked like a goner for sure. Yet he persisted, thinking outside the box and asking for assistance as necessary. He knew how much I loved Dad and, how anyone who has lost a parent knows, how I still think about him every day, nearly forty years after holding Dad's hand on his deathbed. The chair was broken, other chairs were more comfortable, but because it reminded me of Dad, the old recliner was priceless, a giver of precious memories.

Subdeacon James discovered a skilled professional in a nearby larger city in Northern Virginia. The chair could be fixed, yet the repair work would be extensive and far more expensive than I anticipated. He brought the matter before our Parish Council at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church and also mentioned the situation to the servers and acolytes in our Sacristy. A collection was taken, and the necessary funds were raised. My Dad's old recliner, with innumerable precious and priceless memories, both joyful and sorrowful, is now as good as new. The gears work superbly, the old, torn leather has been completely refurbished, and the chair is at its best since Dad first sat in it more than two score years ago.

Mom this year turned one hundred, and her thoughtfulness and kindness placed in her mind and heart the unorthodox idea of shipping an old recliner across the country to a son still missing his dad. I call Mom on the telephone each Sunday afternoon after going to church, the same time each week. I knew this story would bring great joy to her heart. When I shared with her about the kind and generous people at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church, and how Dad's

old recliner was now as good as new, Mom said, “Tell your friends at church that I really appreciate this. It’s a keepsake. Tell them I appreciate it with all my heart.”

So blessed to be serving as a Deacon at the finest Orthodox church.

This simple story about an old chair, the joy of childhood memories, and the sorrow of cancer and death, brings the joyful sorrow of family, friendship, and faith forcefully to my heart. Faith and family, life and death. Thoughts about the Holy Family come readily to mind. What does Sacred Scripture teach us about the Birth of Jesus and the Finding of Jesus in the Temple? What does Holy Tradition teach us about the Childhood of the Theotokos and the Death of Saint Joseph?

This book explores one historical event in the life of the Holy Family: The Boy Jesus at the Jerusalem Temple at the age of twelve as described in Luke 2:41-52. Specifically, five Greek words – εν τοις του πατρος μου, the first recorded words of Jesus in Sacred Scripture – are explored in depth. Remarkably “He did nothing while He was a child, save only that one thing to which Luke has testified (Luke ii. 46), that at the age of twelve years He sat hearing the doctors, and was thought admirable for His questioning.”¹ The relationship between the Boy Jesus and the Holy Family arising from this magnificent childhood adventure will be the sole focus of this book.

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¹ Saint Chrysostom, “Homilies on the Gospel of St. John,” *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. XIV (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 74.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Deacon David Lochbihler, J.D., serves at the Holy Altar at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church and teaches Fourth Grade at The Fairfax Christian School in Virginia. After graduating *summa cum laude* from the University of Notre Dame and *cum laude* from the University of Texas School of Law, Deacon David worked as a Chicago attorney for three years before becoming a teacher and coach for three decades. He also earned three Master's degrees in Elementary Education, Biblical Studies, and Orthodox Theology. His varsity high school basketball and soccer teams captured four N.V.I.A.C. conference championships. He authored *Prayers to Our Lady East and West* (2021) and *The Joy of Orthodoxy* (2022).



PRAYERS TO OUR LADY EAST AND WEST

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THE JOY OF ORTHODOXY

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Sacred Scripture quotes Jesus Christ only once during the first thirty years of His life on earth. The twelve-year-old asks two precise and profound questions: “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business (Luke 2:49 NKJV)? Other translations say “about My Father’s house.” Neither the Greek word for “business” nor “house” is found within this pivotal verse. For centuries Biblical scholars delved deeply into this interpretive predicament. Deacon David combines extensive research and superb storytelling to bring the historical drama and dilemma of Luke 2:49 to life.

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