

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Moving Forward toward the Omega Point Thirteenth Week in Ordinary Time
Tuesday, July 4, 2017 8:15 AM **Gn 19:15-29;** Mt 8:23-27 Independence Day
(The past can help us with wisdom and with some forms of prudence, but we don't look back.)

Today we are reading from the **Book of Genesis, which is a collection of stories.** Each has a germ of historical fact in it, but the way the authors have woven them together they are decidedly didactic in nature, meaning **they are teaching something, but not exactly relating what happened.** So we don't take the stories literally; in general that's a good rule in Scripture.

But here we have the story of Lot's wife who turned into a pillar of salt. Now that is deeply symbolic. First of all, let me say that modern archaeologists are sure there were cities on the plain east of the Dead Sea. But they were destroyed by some monumental earthquake thirteen hundred years prior to the time of Abraham. So, yes, there were cities. Yes, they were destroyed by earthquake, but not at the time of Abraham. **The author has woven together stories of Abraham and Lot with stories of Sodom and Gomorrah, but they didn't exist at the same time** originally.

But in this story Lot's wife turns into a pillar of salt. Now you may wonder, what could that be about? Well, salt is a very interesting substance; it's crystal, and crystals actually do grow for a while, but then they stop. So they are not really living. They might appear to be living as they are growing and forming, but their very nature is to become crystallized. And since they are crystallized, they no longer change. And this is actually a symbol of what can happen to human beings. We are made in the image and likeness of God. **We have extraordinary potential, but we can waste that potential. We can become crystallized, unable to change, unable to do anything.**

And what causes this? Looking back. That's what Lot's wife did. We have to look forward. The creation is always a work in progress. It is moving toward some point we cannot

see. But Christ is identified in the Book of Revelation as the Alpha and the Omega. So we are moving toward the Omega. We don't know what it's going to be like. St. Paul says, "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has the mind imagined what God has prepared for those who love him." We have to keep that in mind. This has to be our horizon. **We are moving toward the Omega of whatever God has prepared for those who love him.** It's very important that we keep this in mind. When we turn back and when we look at the past, we become crystallized, we become frozen. We are not able to change anymore. We are not able to move. We are not able to move toward God's Omega point. That's true for us as individuals. It's true for us as a Church. It's true for every society, our nation for example. **We have to move forward to what we need to become.** The past can teach us. The past can teach us all the mistakes we've made. It can help us become wise. But it is not the pattern we have to follow. **The pattern we have to follow isn't quite formed yet, but it is already present in Christ.** That is the pattern for believers: for our own individual lives and for our collective lives. And we can't have others, other patterns that don't fit. That would be equivalent to idolatry. We have to be authentic believers in Christ, the Alpha and the Omega. We have to move forward. **The past can help us with wisdom and with some forms of prudence, but we don't look back;** we don't get our reality from the past.