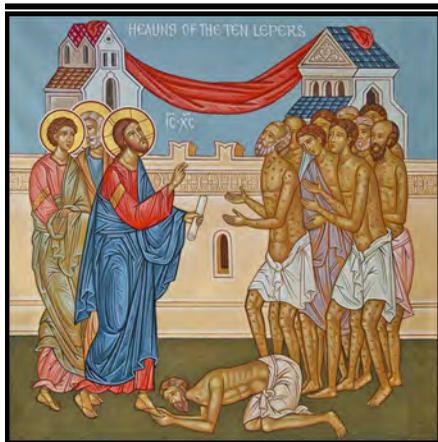


TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
TENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of Saint John of Damascus and Saint Barbara -- December 4th

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend



The readings assigned for this weekend are taken from Paul's letter to the Colossians (3:12-16) and Luke's account of Christ healing ten lepers. I would offer this reflection by combining my thoughts on these two readings.

In St. Paul's Letter, he writes to the Colossians about the "Practice of Virtues". He reminds them that, because they are "God's chosen ones," they must clothe themselves with "heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness and patience". He then writes to them that they must dedicate themselves to "thankfulness".

The Gospel story, I truly believe, also highlights the need for "thankfulness." Jesus cured ten lepers and only one came back to express his thanks to Jesus. The man who

came back and offered thanks was, as the Gospel describes him, a "foreigner," that is a Samaritan. Because of their imperfect adherence to Judaism and their partly pagan ancestry, the Samaritans were despised by ordinary Jews. Samaritans also harbored antipathy toward the Jews. That the Samaritans were separated from and looked down upon by the Jews makes them important in the New Testament. Jesus indicated that a new attitude must be taken toward the all others.

Lepers were typically ostracized from Jewish society because of their sickness. Religious Jews were forbidden to have any contact with them. It was believed that leprosy was God's punishment.

It is interesting that "thankfulness" is at the very heart of our Christian faith. The communal worship service we celebrate together is properly called an "Eucharistic" or "Thanksgiving" Service. We hold that central to our growing in our likeness of Jesus is the development of an attitude of "thankfulness" to God for all that He has given us, especially for the life He shares with us. It is only when we become thankful for our human life do we become united with Christ.

As I think about the Gospel story, several thoughts come to mind. First, when we don't practice the virtues that Paul speaks about, we separate ourselves from others and the followers of Christ - we separate ourselves from the "Body of Christ," the Church. Second, we need to be thankful for not only the easy things of life but also for the challenges since they become opportunities for us to grow in our trust and hope in God. And third, we must realize that anytime we ostracize others because they don't believe like we do, we manage, in effect, to separate ourselves from God Himself.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

In this article I have been sharing thoughts about the Major Feasts of our Church and why they were established. In the last issue I began sharing thoughts about the feast of our Lord's Ascension into heaven. As a feast concerned with the nature of Christ, the Ascension was potentially applicable to any controversy over that subject.

According to John of Damascus, the Nestorians credited Christ's more humble actions to His humanity and His more noble actions to His divinity. They believed that only Christ's separate human nature died and that it was only extrinsically united with His divine nature. Like Arianism, this was a threat to the true doctrine of salvation. Furthermore, the Nestorian denial of Mary's title "God-bearer" (*Theotokos*) in favor of the more limiting "Christ-bearer" provoked intense and increasing opposition to Nestorianism from both right-believing theologians and adherents to the growing Marian devotion. Nestorianism was condemned in 430. Pope Celestine gave Nestorius ten days upon receipt of a papal letter to deny his earlier schismatic position and Cyril of Alexandria added 12 anathemas to which Nestorius was to subscribe. Nestorius refused and was condemned by the majority party at the Council of Ephesus in 431, which also affirmed Mary as *Theotokos* (Mother of God). Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem (c. 420-458), had his see raised to the rank of



patriarchate as a reward for his part in the proceedings.

The Nestorians believed that Christ's human nature was incapable of the act of the Ascension without the Holy Spirit's assistance. In fact, according to John Cassian (c. 360-435), they even falsified the account of the Ascension in Acts 1:1-11 so that Holy Scripture would seem to confirm this. Since the Council of Ephesus only condemned Nestorianism but did not eliminate it, resistance to the celebration of this feast by Nestorian bishops and communities may have been considerable in certain areas. So while Nestorianism's troubled relationship with the "true and orthodox faith" (*that confirmed by the Council's of the Church*) stimulated the growth of later feasts it seems to have inhibited the spread of the Feast of the Ascension.

Liturgical experts are of the opinion that the celebration of this feast only became universal in the fourth century. It was extolled by John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Epiphany of Cyprus, Leo the Great and others. In the fourth century, Queen Helena erected a church in honor of this feast.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Key to our understanding of the Divine Liturgy is our understanding of the idea of **Anamnesis**. This word is taken from the Attic Greek word **ἀνάμνησις** meaning "reminiscence" or "memorial sacrifice". In Christian worship it is the liturgical statement in which the Church refers to the memorial character of the Eucharist, that is to the Passion, Resurrection and also the Ascension of Christ. It has its origin in Jesus' words at the Last Supper, "Do this in memory of me" (Greek: "τοῦτο ποιείτε εἰς τὴν ἔμνην **ἀνάμνησιν**"), (Luke 22:19, 1 Corinthians 11:24-25). It is a key concept in liturgical theology. In worship the faithful recall God's saving deeds. This memorial aspect is not simply a passive process but one by which the Christian can actually enter into the Paschal mystery. It truly signifies our belief that when we recall all that God did for us through the Person of Jesus Christ, we, like the disciples of Christ before us, actually participate in those events.

I realize that this is a very difficult idea to comprehend. How can it be that we actually participate in the past events of salvation history. We think of them as *past* events! How can they be events which are *present* to us. It is an act of *actualizing* past events in our life - concentrating on them and believing that we are actually a part of them in some way. This all requires, as you might immediately guess, faith



and a deep sense of God's presence in our lives. Remember, we can't prove that any of this is true or that it actually happens. We believe it happens and I would add my faith that I truly believe that it happens. We just don't know when and only know that the Holy Trinity causes it to be.

Of course this is why many refuse to believe in the true presence. I also believe that sometimes people misunderstand this faith mystery since we always talk about "body" and "blood" and fail to state that "Christ" is truly present. Remember what we pray: "For we do not bow to flesh and blood but to You, our awesome God." For Christ to be present it cannot be just the accidents of His human person but must be Him as a person. He told His disciples that He would be with us for all time. He is with us by His real presence in Communion. Again I must hasten to assert that this is something WE BELIEVE and not something that we can prove. I, for one, choose to believe in His real presence. I hope you do too.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS

LITURGY SCHEDULE

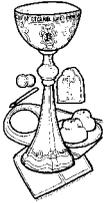
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Christmas Eve Liturgy

Saturday December 24th - 10 PM

Christmas Day Liturgy

Sunday December 25th - 10 AM



CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

Floral Memorials will be available again this year. Suggested donation is \$25. Form available next week.

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

First Step

A program that supports abused spouses and families.

We have supported them in the past.

If you would rather support the missionary activities of our

Patriarchal Synod, I will count that also as our Outreach Activity.

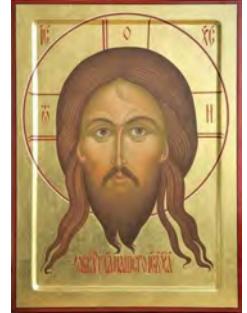
ST. PHILIP'S FAST

The Prayer-A-Day Program which I offer for this Fast, is now within this Bulletin. Try to do something to spiritually prepare yourself for these up-and-coming Winter Feasts.

Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple.

CALLED TO HOLINESS

I am sure that everyone and anyone who attends church services has a real awareness that PRAYER is an essential part of the call to holiness and an important ingredient in any attempt at personal transformation or change. Prayer helps to establish a personal relationship with God and fortifies any efforts at personal change. The important thing is to *learn* how to pray.



It has often been said that prayer is really a *conversation* with God. It must have a personal dimension to it. The problem that most people encounter is that, because God is invisible, they find it difficult to make their prayer a conversation. More often than not, people resort to *formalized* prayers - that is prayers written by others or the Church as a means of *communicating* with God. This is where most people start. They recite a number of standardized prayers with the hope that they are *communicating* with God. There is, of course, nothing wrong with this in our initial attempts at a real relationship with God.

It is important to remember, however, that when we use formal prayers, we must pause and also listen to any response to the prayer. God responds in many unique ways: (1) a new thought comes to mind; (2) a new insight surfaces; or (3) a new inspiration expresses itself.

(Continued on page 8)

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE ST. PHILIP'S FAST

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4th

As we remember the lives of the Great Martyr Barbara and the Righteous Father John of Damascus, O Heavenly Father, I ask You to help me develop the strength of Barbara and the insight of John so that I might truly prepare myself spiritually to celebrate the coming winter feasts. Give me the strength of Barbara so that I will not be seduced by the commercialism of my society. Give me the insight of John to understand what You have revealed to me and the world through these winter feasts. I make my request of You, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit, my one and only true God. AMEN

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5th

Today, as our Church remembers the righteous and God-bearing Father Sabbas the Sanctified, I implore You, Heavenly Father, to help me truly prepare myself to spiritually celebrate the coming Winter Feasts. Father Sabbas, through his works and prayers, made Your presence real in his world. Help me to make Your presence real in my world and to all those with whom I celebrate the great feasts of Christmas and Theophany. Help me to bear witness to Your Presence With Us and to promote the true meaning of these feasts! I ask this of You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and I rejoice in Your loving kindness now and always. AMEN

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6th

Today, Heavenly Father, the Church celebrates the life of our Father Among the Saints Nicholas the Wonderworker, I ask You to bless my efforts to prepare myself to celebrate the Winter Feasts by which You manifested Yourself to humankind. By Your Birth You showed me that You have, from all eternity, joined Yourself to me and all humankind. By Your baptism, You also revealed that You are the life-force that brings all things into existence and sustains all things in existence. Help me, like St. Nicholas, to embrace my faith with the same zeal that he did. I ask this of You, O God, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7th

Heavenly Father, today the Church celebrates the life of our Father Among the Saints, Ambrose. The Church knew him to be a temperate and meek man, an icon of Jesus, Your Son. During this holiday season I beg Your help, Father, to be a temperate and meek person, someone who, like Ambrose, is a reflection of Jesus. St. Ambrose looked to Your Son Jesus as a model for his life. Help me to do the same. Help me to accomplish this by the spiritual way I celebrate Christmas, witnessing to the spiritual meaning of this feast. I ask this of You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and always. AMEN

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE ST. PHILIP'S FAST

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8th

Today, Heavenly Father, the Church celebrates the life of the Righteous Father Patapius. He modeled his life after Jesus, the Christ, and achieved personal transformation. Help me, especially during this holiday time, to not be distracted by the way that my society observes Christmas, but to spiritually celebrate it by extending my love to others and bearing witness to the fact that God Is With Us! Help me to give the gift of unconditional love and acceptance to all I encounter, making God's Kingdom more real through my humble efforts. I ask this of You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and I render glory and praise to You always. AMEN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9th

Today, Heavenly Father, the Church celebrates the feast of the Conception of St. Anna, the Mother of the Theotokos. This feast celebrates God's loving response to Joachim and Anna, who persevered in their trust and hope in Him through the challenge of childlessness. As I reflect upon their faith in You, my loving God, I am encouraged to also place my hope and trust in You. Help me to do all in my power to celebrate these Winter Feasts in a manner that affirms and confirms my belief that You, O God, are With Me. Help me to grow spiritually through these feasts and renew my spirit, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10th

Heavenly Father, today the Church celebrates the lives of the Holy Martyrs, Menas, Hermogenes and EUGRAPHUS. The Church prays: "Since they had slain through their abstinence and struggles their passions, the staunch Martyrs of Christ God laid hold on the graces" to become icons of Christ. By my abstinence and struggles during this St. Philip's Fast, help me, O Father, to truly become the person You intended when You created me. Help me to do all in my power to imitate Your Son Jesus. Help to grow in my imitation of Jesus by spiritually celebrating the coming feasts. I make this prayer to You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11th

Today, Heavenly Father, the Church celebrates the Holy Forefathers of Your Son in the flesh, Jesus. As I reflect upon this remembrance, I realize in a real way that You have kept Your Promise to be with humankind if we open our hearts and minds to Your presence. I beg You, help me to open my mind and heart to Your presence in my life. Help me to never doubt Your loving kindness or fail to see Your Life-giving Spirit at work in my life. Help me to grow in Your Likeness as seen in the Person of Jesus, the Christ. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

Schedule of Services

Sunday, December 4 - 29th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 4
10:00 AM + Deborah Haddix; Maria Kotlinski

30th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 5

Monday, December 5 - Sabbas, Venerable
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, December 6 - Nicholas of Myra, Archbishop
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Wednesday, December 7 - Ambrose, Archbishop
No Liturgy Scheduled

Thursday, December 8 - Patapius, Venerable
No Liturgy Scheduled

Friday, December 9 - Maternity of the Holy Anna
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, December 10 - Mennas & Others, Martyrs
No Liturgy Scheduled

Sunday, December 11 - 30th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 5
Sunday of the Forefathers of Christ
10:00 AM + Stephen Mihalko; Kotlinski Family

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

God's response is typically not like regular human conversation, although it could be. It usually seems to be more like a *new idea* that is triggered in our thoughts. God operates this way so that He honors our independence and free will. He never outright *tells* us what to do. He allows things to happen that cause us to think and come up with solutions and ideas ourselves.

While this is true, we still have to be vigilant and open ourselves to the movement of the Spirit within us. God has planted His Spirit within us to help us and guide in our spiritual growth. Of course we first have to want to spiritually grow and change. We can disregard the insights that the Spirit causes to appear in our lives. God, in His Spirit, however persists and continues to try and help us grow.



St. Michael the Archangel
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Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

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Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

In the last issue of this article I indicated that it was important in considering the power of the New Testament (NT), that we consider three things: (1) the Word OF Jesus, (2) the Word ABOUT Jesus, and (3) Jesus AS THE WORD. I would first consider the Word OF Jesus.

The power of Jesus' Word becomes literally visible with the healing miracles. Evil spirits are exorcized by His Word (cf. *Matthew 8:16; Luke 4:36*), a word that can heal even at a distance if it is received with faith (cf., *Matthew 8:8*). By His word, "even the winds and sea obey Him" (cf., *Mark 4:41*). The nature-miracles attest to His authority over creation itself. Yes, His words, we see, are directed particularly towards men, establishing the criteria for salvation or judgment (cf., *Mark 8:38; John 12:48, Hebrews 4:12*) and affirming His ultimate authority to forgive sins, a power that only God can exercise (cf., *Mark 2:7*).

This fact directly relates Jesus to the work of God in creating all things as mentioned in Genesis. We hear in Genesis the description of creation being brought about by God speaking a word. This directly connects Jesus not only to God the Father but also to the act of creation accomplished by simple

"words" spoken by God. And God said: "Let there be bright lights in the sky to give light to the earth and to identify the day and the night; they shall bring about the seasons of the earth, and mark the days and years." And so it was! According to Genesis, God simply spoke what He wanted to bring into existence and, speaking the word, it came into existence.



This is one of the reasons why we say that Jesus is the WORD of God. The Father has the idea! The idea is then expressed in a WORD, which is the Son. And then it actually comes into existence through the POWER of GOD, the Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Holy Trinity plays an integral role in bringing about creation - bringing all things into existence.

Jesus is the WORD, the LOGOS, of God - He is the expressed sounds, in modern thinking, that express the THOUGHT/IDEA that God had/has. But the WORD alone cannot bring the idea into existence. The SPIRIT, the POWER of God is the life-giving force that brings the WORD into existence.

We know that in human language WORDS express what a particular society has agreed to call things that exist. The word of a thing allows others to know to what we refer. Once expressed, things become real.

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

The early Church had to think through and resolve many questions that arose, some immediately, others as the Church reflected on the gospel narrative. How She did it tells us much about the Church.

For example, we have the question of authority. We know that there were many things written by Christians during the formative years of Christianity. We have to ask: Why were certain documents considered authoritative for the life and thought of the Church? What was the source of this authority? What separates documents such as the four canonical Gospels (*i.e., those contained in the New Testament*) from other texts that attempt to tell and interpret the meaning of Jesus' life? There are the Gospels of Thomas and many others! Not only is the question of the Scripture's own inherent authority highly significant, but so also is the issue of what one is to do when Christians read the text of Scripture and interpret it differently. How can one distinguish a correct interpretation of Scripture from an incorrect one? How did the early church handle this considerable problem?

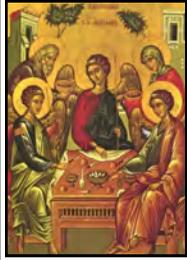
Another important question was, as I have written about in other articles in the Bulletin: Who is Jesus Christ? This was a very important question which the early Church had to address. Many different opinions and ideas, formulated by bishops and priests, arose in the early years of the Church. We have, for instance, the question of Jesus' divinity. If Jesus was God incarnate, as New Testament writers appeared to insist, in what way was He God? How could this be possible. Were there actually three gods: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? OR was Jesus perhaps a lesser god, not on the same plane as the Father, but in some mysterious and ineffable manner divine nonetheless? Maybe there was only one God, but that single God possessed the marvelous ability to manifest Himself in various forms or roles,



occasionally as the Father and at other times as the Son or the Spirit. How was one to make sense of the very complex biblical testimony regarding Jesus' divinity?

And then we have the question of Jesus' humanity. The Gospel narratives surely seem to portray Jesus as a human being. He had a human body - or at least appeared to have one - and thus ate food, drank wine, was tired after a long day's work, slept at night, spoke a human language and possessed all the qualities of a human.

More to come!



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 62 No 49 Twenty-Ninth Weekend After Pentecost December 3-4, 2016

The Spirituality of the Christian East

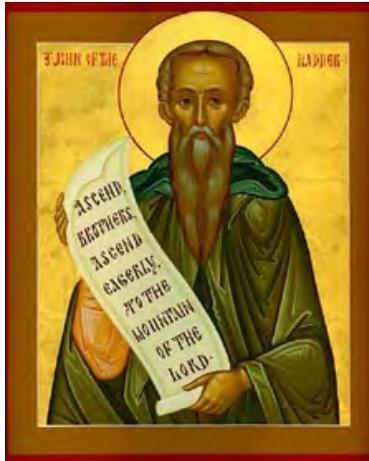
The 27th step on John's *Ladder*, is **STILLNESS**. There is something that can help us to acquire this inner stillness. Let the remembrance of Jesus, St. John says, be present with your every breath. Then you will appreciate the value of stillness.

Here St. John is probably referring to the practice of the Jesus Prayer. The Jesus prayer, being such a concise prayer, can be constantly repeated inwardly in any situation. The purpose of this practice is to sanctify time and to create inner stillness, as we purify our thoughts and actions with the repeated invocation of the name of Jesus.

In case you have not remembered, the Jesus prayer is this:

**Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of God, have mercy on
me a sinner.**

OR, one might simply say the name: Jesus! There is a simpler form: "Lord



Jesus Christ, have mercy on me".

One could come up with many more simple suggestions for how we can acquire a small measure of stillness in the midst of a hectic lifestyle. Be under no illusion that a person can acquire perfect stillness by giving such a small amount of time to

solitude and prayer. The masters of inward prayer spent years in the crucible of asceticism, giving themselves wholly to supplication, worship and contemplation for many hours each and every day. There are no quick and easy paths to perfect stillness. Nonetheless, a little time spent in heartfelt supplication each day will bring us closer to God than many years of empty, insincere prayer. So take heart, for stillness is a real possibility for all of us if we truly love God with all our being.

The main thing is to have the "intention" to be in the presence of God and desire internal stillness.

When Christ Comes, God Will Be Seen by Men

There is one God, who by His word and wisdom created all things and set them in order. His Word is our Lord Jesus Christ, who in this last age became man among men to unite end and beginning, that is, man and God.

The prophets, receiving the gift of prophecy from this same Word, foretold His coming in the flesh, which brought about the union and communion between God and man ordained by the Father. From the beginning the word of God prophesied that God would be seen by men and would live among them on earth; He would speak with His own creation and be present to it, bringing it salvation and being visible to it. He would free us from the hands of all who hate us, that is, from the universal spirit of sin, and enable us to serve Him in holiness and justice all our days. Man was to receive the

Spirit of God and so attain to the glory of the Father.

By his own powers man cannot see God, yet God will be seen by men because He wills it. He will be seen by those He chooses, at the time He chooses, and in the way He chooses, for God can do all things. He was seen of old through the Spirit in prophecy; He is seen through the Son by our adoption as His children, and He will be seen in the kingdom of heaven in His own being as the Father.

The Spirit prepares man to receive the Son of God, the Son leads him to the Father, and the Father, freeing him from change and decay, bestows the eternal life that comes to everyone from seeing God.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons

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