

THIRTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
SUNDAY OF THE CANAANITE WOMAN



Icon of Saints Akymius, Ignatius and Demetrius -- January 29nd

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

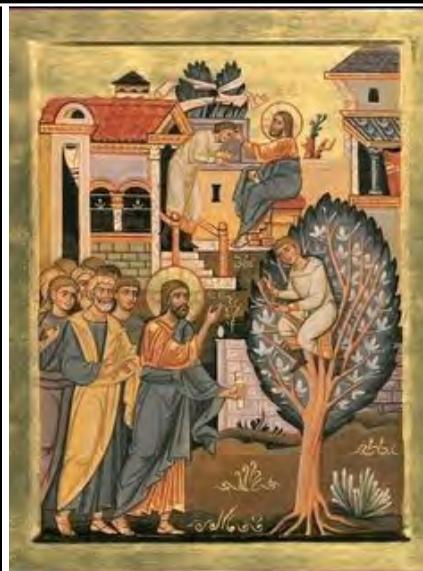
On this weekend of Zacchaeus, our Epistle reading is taken from the first letter of Paul to Timothy wherein he states: "Our hopes are fixed on the living God who is the savior of all men, but especially of those who believe." He also shares this with Timothy: "You can depend on this [that God is the savior of all men] as a means of trying to encourage Timothy to persist in his ministry.

Our Gospel reading, which is taken from Luke's Gospel, relates the story of the calling of Zacchaeus. His name is used to designate this weekend which begins a sequence of five weekends that are designed to help us enter into the Great Fast - our preparation for Easter. Each of these five weekends are dedicated to some fundamental aspect of METANOIA (*repentance*) which is the focus of the Great Lent.

Long before the actual beginning of Lent, the Church announces its approach and invites us to enter into the period of pre-Lenten preparation. It is a characteristic feature of the Eastern Church's liturgical tradition. Thus, long before the actual effort of Lent is to begin, the Church calls our attention to its seriousness and invites us to meditate on its significance. Before we can *practice* Lent we are given its meaning.

The story of Zacchaeus is the story of a man who was too short to see Jesus but who *desired* so much to see Him that he climbed up a tree. Thus the first fundamental aspect of metanoia is DESIRE. A strong desire overcomes the natural limitations of man. When he passionately desires something he does things of which "normally" he is incapable.

So we must, at this point in our yearly journey to Pascha, ask ourselves: *Do I truly desire to become more like Jesus Christ?* If I do, then I will make plans to observe the Great Fast in a way



that will truly promote my spiritual development. As we know from St. Paul, God desires to bring all of us to union with Him. He will never force us to this greater union because He respects our *free will*. God has revealed to us His offer of helping us become His children. It is our choice. We have to truly *desire* to be His child which requires that we engage in a process of personal transformation or change. We need to change if we want to be His children. Why? In order to freely return His love. We do that - return His love - by working to grow in our likeness of Jesus.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

In this article I have been sharing information about the establishment of the major feasts of our Church. I have reached a point where I have been sharing information about the Marian Feasts in our Church. In the last issue I shared information about the feast of the Presentation or the Purification of Mary.

The Dormition is clearly a Marian feast. It marks the “falling asleep” and bodily assumption of the Virgin into heaven. The existence of this wholly Marian feast in the cycle of the twelve becomes intelligible only in the context of the heresies and schismatic doctrines at the time of this feast’s establishment. Contrary to a foremost author, Dix, who sees the Twelve Feasts as a life cycle of Christ, we are totally unable to account for the Dormition and can only explain it as a “sort of afterthought.” The Dormition is an increasingly bold declaration of Marian thought that makes perfect historical sense, however, when one realizes that the Twelve Feasts are not merely a life cycle of Christ but a series of doctrinal statements using Christ’s life and also Mary’s, as the basis of their authority.

The Dormition was first celebrated (c. 450) in Jerusalem under Bishop Juvenal as a feast of the Memory of the *Theotokos*, on August 15th. According to Karl Holl, Juvenal instituted this feast both to affirm the title *Theotokos* and to assert his independence from Nestorian Antioch at a time when he



was trying to establish Jerusalem as a patriarchate. (*I would have my readers note that again it was the Emperor that prescribed that a feast be established. The emperor was the head of the Church at that time*).

Although it has not yet been definitely proved, it appears that Juvenal established the feast even before the Council of Chalcedon took place. During the Council, in an act of monumental insincerity, Juvenal, at the last minute, abandoned the Monophysite party he had been supporting for many years in order to join the party that would prevail, namely the True Church. The Dormition’s true pro-Monophysite implications did not lessen its appeal to the True Church as a weapon against Nestorianism.

As, hopefully, it has become much more apparent from the information that I have been sharing, the Twelve Major Feasts of our Church were really established as a means of reinforcing the True Faith as expressed by the Church through the major Councils of the Church. Each feast reinforces the true faith and, because of the prayers of the feasts, reinforce that faith.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

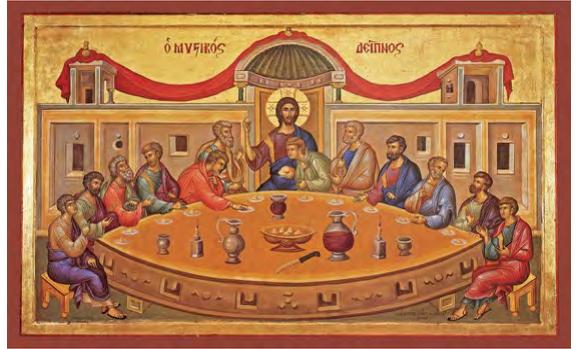
In the last issue I began a description of the Communion Service which takes place after the Anaphora. While it can begin with a litany, the true beginning of this service is the praying of the OUR FATHER, the Lord's Prayer.

Immediately after this prayer, the celebrant again offers a blessing and invites people to bow their heads for the Head-Bowing Prayer. Almost all of our services include a Head-Bowing Prayer. It is a very ancient ritual.

The Head-Bowing Prayer in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is a true declaration of our faith. It starts out by making a declaration of our faith that the God we are worshipping is the God who has "fashioned all things". We acknowledge Him as the Creator of the Universe. It also states that we believe that He brought "all things out of nonexistence into being."

This is an important part of our faith. The God we worship created all things out of "nothingness." Even if we take into consideration evolution, He, we believe, started the process and initiated it out of "nothingness." This is stated to express our belief that there was nothing but God Who originally existed and that He is the source of all things.

The prayer then states something that I believe is very important. It says that we bow our heads to Him and then adds that we do not "bow to flesh and blood but to You, our awesome God". This statement, I believe,



declares something that is so very important, namely that the bread and wine are not just transformed into the elements of Christ's Body and Blood but, rather, into Christ Himself. We sometimes fail to realize this fact. The words Body and Blood could mean that only Christ's bodily accidents are present and, therefore, He is only "represented" by them. Our faith tells us that HE, Christ, is truly present and that the Body and Blood are only an indication of His presence since all humans have both a body and blood.

The most important thing is to believe and realize that HE, Christ, is truly present among us. This is the way that Christ fulfills the promise He first gave to the Apostles that He would be with them until the end of time. HE, Himself, is present in our midst just as He was at the Last Supper.

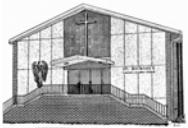
It is critical that we understand that we believe in Christ's REAL PRESENCE. Communion is not just something symbolic or representative of Him. Through our faith and prayers HE IS WITH US.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

UPDATE ON PARISH PROJECT



We have encountered a slight problem with the replacement of our church building windows. We just recently found out that the glass we had picked out for the windows is not available in the size that we need. While this is quite disturbing, there is a silver lining. We will get another discount.

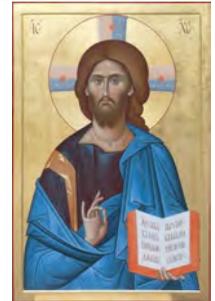
Thanks to the efforts of Council Member Gordon Malaniak, I think that we have solved the problem. It will be several weeks yet before we can move ahead.

I have already met with Gary Tarala (*the contractor who worked on our renovation*) and he has a plan for closing in the windows in the two back rooms. He is also coming up with a plan for our front porch. I have absolute trust in him since he worked so conscientiously on our renovation and was reasonable in his costs. He installed a light on the side of the north side of the building. Before the porch renovation I will hold a general parish meeting.

We must let go of the life we have planned so as to accept the one that is waiting for us

CALLED TO HOLINESS

I believe that we are “called to holiness” by God out of love. If we truly respond to this call, we begin to understand that our personal “salvation” is what transpires. So, it would seem that personal salvation is somehow connected to our real and true understanding of the meaning and purpose of this earthly existence. Further I believe that we are challenged to believe that this present life is only a small portion of the immortality which is ours - only a portion of *eternal life*.



The “call to holiness” requires that we come to a real understanding of the “meaning and purpose of life.” There is truly some reason why we have earthly existence. Our lives are not just some kind of accident and the result of truly undefined purpose.

So the “call to holiness” is a call to wrestle with the meaning and purpose of life. It requires that we attempt to find answers to such questions as: *Why is life the way that it is? Why does life include suffering, pain, struggle and disappointment?*

The “call to holiness” is actually a call to think seriously about life and not just live life.

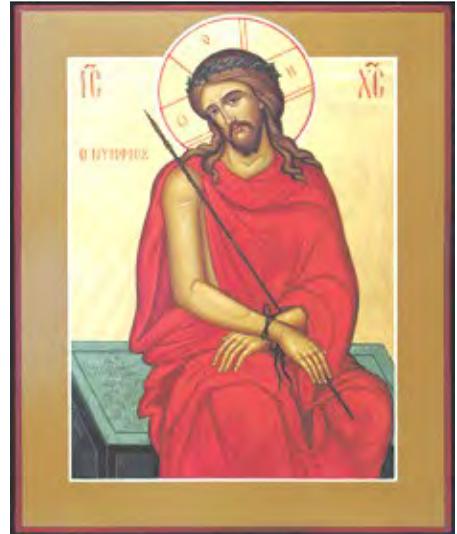
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Acquiring the Mind of Christ

In order to acquire the mind of Christ, we must learn how to embrace the *vision* He had about human life. This involves our understanding of why God became a human being. It seems that several different versions of Jesus' vision of life has developed over the centuries and since the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches, we have seen different versions emerge.

Anselm of Canterbury's doctrine of the Atonement (*the Western approach*) has been said by some to be a key to understanding the rejection of the saving truth of Christianity by an untold number of people in the last millennium. They reject Anselm's portrait of an angry God who is in need of being appeased; who pronounces people guilty or not. The modern Anselmian doctrine of Atonement reduces the powerfully transformative aspect of the Gospel to a juridical concept, drained of its life. In order to understand the difference between the Churches of the East and West, we must understand something about the approach of Anselm.

One of the greatest miracles for people of ancient times was coming to know the Gospel message: that the True and Living God is Love; a personal and living God Who gave His only Begotten Son, "not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). The god's of ancient times were remote, murderous and even required sacrifices such as children. The concept alone that the Christian God was a personal God of mercy, love and forgiveness, powerfully attracted great numbers. Many even willingly faced the possibility of martyrdom for confessing their faith.



Christ came to bring Life to us, who were dead in Adam, because He Himself is "the Way, the Truth and the Life." This is the foundation which the first Christians, from St. Paul the Apostle onward, understood as the key to salvation: that "forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil...abolishing death and bringing life an immortality to light" through the Gospel (Hebrews 2:14; II Timothy 1:10).

I will attempt to contrast the understanding of the Eastern and Western Churches about the meaning of salvation.

More to come!

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of Our Faith

It seems that a certain tradition of interpreting Chalcedon as a factual disavowal of Cyril has existed in the West. In the East, on the contrary, Christian orthodoxy remained quite definitely Cyrillian. Further more, the implications of the Chalcedonian statement about “the preservation of the properties of each nature” were not always fully recognized in the East. For instance, many Byzantine spiritual authors explain such passages as Luke 2:52 (“Jesus progressed in wisdom and maturity”) as some pedagogical tactic on the part of Christ rather than as a real change from ignorance to knowledge, from childhood to human adulthood. For them, Christ’s divinity implied omniscience, and his humanity was modified accordingly. But was it then concretely identical with our humanity? This reluctance to admit human ignorance in Christ may have Hellenistic-Evagrian roots, which equated “ignorance” with “sinfulness,” and may therefore be anthropologically, and not christologically, motivated. Other Byzantine theologians had no difficulty admitting human “ignorance” in Christ. Their opposition to “aphthartodocetism” also indicates a perception - both biblical and Chalcedonian - that Christ’s humanity was, indeed, very similar to ours in every way except sin. Aphthartodocetism (*aphthartos*, “incorruptible”), a Christian heresy of the 6th century that truly carried Monophysitism (“*Christ had but one nature and that divine*”) to a new extreme. It was proclaimed by Julian, bishop of Halicarnassus, who asserted that the body of Christ was divine and therefore naturally incorruptible and impassible. Christ, however, was free to will his sufferings and death voluntarily. Severus, patriarch of Antioch, himself a condemned



Monophysite, vigorously challenged Julian on the ground that the doctrine of salvation was meaningless unless Christ’s body was truly human. Justinian I, the Byzantine emperor, then proclaimed it a new heresy in an edict of 564 and would have imposed it on the Eastern church but for his death the following year.

We see in all of this that the Fathers of the Church truly struggled with coming up with the faith that we now hold about Jesus, namely that He is truly God and truly man. It was not a simple, easy path to find a way to express Who Jesus Is. The various heresies that arose challenged the Church to come up with statements about who She thinks Jesus truly is.

Schedule of Services

St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

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

Rectory: (313) 582-1424
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

Sunday, January 29 - Weekend of Zacchaeus - Tone 4
10:00 AM - Eva Sikora; Lesia Florchuk

33rd Week - Tone 5

Monday, January 30 - Three Holy Hierarchs
No Liturgy Scheduled

Tuesday, January 31 - Cyrus & John, Unmercenaries
No Liturgy Scheduled

Wednesday, February 1 - Tryphon, Martyr
No Liturgy Scheduled

Thursday, February 2 – Encounter of Our Lord with Simeon
8:00 AM - Special Intention

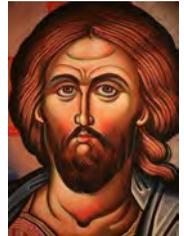
Friday, February 3 - Synaxis of the Holy Prophets Simeon & Anna
No Liturgy Scheduled

Saturday, February 4 - Isidore, Venerable
No Liturgy Scheduled

Sunday, February 5 - Weekend of the Publican & Pharisee - Tone 5
10:00 AM - Adrian Bluj; Wife Luba and Family
- Mike Papinchak; Bob & Corinne Boyko

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

To think seriously about life means to make every attempt to come to an true understanding of our personal attitudes and behaviors and what motivates them. To think seriously about life means to make a true assessment of our attitudes and behaviors and determine how they match up to the attitudes and behaviors of Jesus.



Once we seriously think about our life, the “call to holiness” asks us to change/transform our attitudes and behaviors, working to make them more like those of Jesus Christ. Christ, we must always remember, is God’s revelation to us about how we must live in order to truly be His children and to live like He intended human beings to live.

God intended us to live in a certain way for no other reasons than to achieve the fullness of life. To live His way achieves peace and contentment.

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

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

Continuing on my comments in the last issue of this article concerning the methodology used to attempt to determine the meaning of a biblical texts, it must be reported that biblical scholars do not agree on the value and use of the methodology that I described for determining the *meaning* of a given passage. The problem involved is two-fold: to determine the meaning of the apostolic writing in its original historical context, and to discern its significance for today in the internal life of the Church and for the Christian mission to the world. Strictly speaking, the first aspect concerning the original message that is communicated by a biblical author is, in a way, a scientific problem. In seeking its solution, exegetes are divided only by their selection of different critical methods used to study the text: for example, literary and form criticism, redaction criticism or structuralism. Most exegetes today employ a combination of these tools and their differences concern the particular accent they place upon one or another of these diverse methods.

So, as you might guess, it is truly very difficult to determine the exact meaning of the biblical texts since their authors were influenced by many

different things. We do not believe that God's inspiration is seen as "dictation". Most serious disagreement occurs when the exegete attempts to interpret the doctrinal content of a biblical passage and to elaborate its significance for Christian life and faith. And yet, the Fathers of the Church all used various biblical texts to focus their teachings and used those texts in the formulation of dogma and doctrine. This is one reason why dogma always has been the product of *consensus* of bishops in Council. The Church believes that when the leadership of the Church is joined in debate about religious dogma and doctrine, the resultant meaning is guided by the Holy Spirit. Dogma cannot be generated by just one bishop.



The Eastern Church has always maintained that truth comes from a synodal approach. That is why the first seven Councils are considered to be the foundation of our Christian faith. Why? Because the leadership of the whole Church participated in those Councils.

It is because of the problems involved in interpreting biblical passages that Protestantism emerged with its approach to the Bible. All biblical literature was produced in a historical-social context which helped form the literature.

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

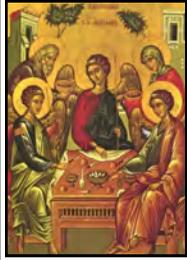
In thinking about what the Fathers of the Church have contributed to our understanding of the Christian faith, it is obvious that error or heresy can often spur one to seek the truth. Heresy has often performed this troubling function in the Church. Surely faulty teaching prodded the Church to understand Christ more clearly, both in His deity and humanity.

Exactly what is heresy? Tertullian, writing in the early third century CE, argued that heresy could be identified by its divergence from apostolic teaching and doctrine. He describes a distinct paradigm of revelation and authority. First, Jesus in his earthly ministry “declared what He was, what He had been, what was the Father’s will which He was carrying out, what was the conduct He laid down for humankind: all this He declared either openly to the people, privately to the disciples or through His personal example.

Second, Tertullian explains that Jesus “chose twelve leading ones to be his close companions, appointed as leaders of the nations.” We must always remember that Israel was made-up of twelve tribes. These men proceeded to plant churches through the Mediterranean basin and in doing so “published the same doctrine of the same faith.” While this is true, the doctrine that they planted was not as highly organized and explained as it is now. They preached Jesus Crucified and focused on bringing people to a true relationship with Him. The churches, founded by apostles who had, in turn, been selected by Jesus either directly or indirectly (*we must remember that Paul was selected by Jesus through a vision and by connecting him with followers of Jesus*) were His authoritative representatives and interpreters, were all part of one connected plant or vine. Indeed, Tertullian contends newer churches “borrowed the shoot of faith and the seeds of doctrine” from those previously planted. It is this shared



seed, of a common apostolic life and doctrine, that identifies a church as “apostolic, as being the offspring of apostolic churches. Every kind of thing must needs be classed with its origin. And so the churches, many and great as they are, are identical with that one primitive Church issuing from the Apostles, for thence they are all derived. So all are primitive and all apostolic, while all are one. One of the signs of the true Church is, of course, apostolic succession - tracing leadership back to the Apostles.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

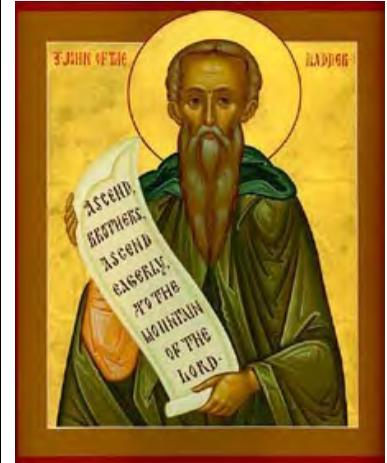
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 63 No 5 36th Weekend after Pentecost January 28-29, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

The 28th Step on John's *Ladder*, which is PRAYER, can actually be divided into three different kinds of prayer: Spoken Prayer, Mental Prayer and Prayer of the Heart. I have already shared thoughts about Spoken Prayer.

The second form of prayer is mental prayer, or prayer of the mind. This is when prayer goes from being something we do only at certain times of the day to being something we do inwardly throughout the day. Although it is thought of as the next level of prayer, it is something that even beginners can do. We can pray to God silently in our own words in almost any situation. But it takes time and experience in prayer to be able to learn the prayers of the Church by heart. The vast majority of Christians know the Lord's Prayer, but there are other prayers that Eastern Christians should learn by heart, such as the *Trisagion Prayer* (i.e., *Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us*) and the Nicene Creed.

The Greek phrase *Trisagion* translates as "Thrice Holy" - as in this hymn God is described as holy in three different qualities. The hymn is of great antiquity and, perhaps, much older than the event assigned by the Greek Menology as connected to its origin. The tradition recounts that during the reign of Theodosius II (408-450), Constantinople was shaken by a violent earthquake, 24 September, and that while the people, the emperor and the Patriarch Proclus (434-446) were praying for heavenly assistance,



a child was suddenly lifted into midair, to whom all cried out *Kyrie eleison* ('Lord, have mercy'). The child was then seen to descend again to the earth and in a loud voice he exhorted the people to pray: 'Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal'. The emperor then prescribed that it should be introduced into Christian worship. It is one of the oldest prayers of our Church and said at each service.

I Am God's Wheat

I am writing to all the churches and I am instructing everyone that I am willingly dying for God, unless you prevent me. I beseech you, do not become an unseasonable kindness for me. Leave me to be bread for the beasts, through which I may be able to attain to God. I am God's wheat and through the beasts' teeth I shall be found to be pure bread for Christ.

Rather encourage the beasts, so that they may be my tomb and nothing be leftover of my body, so that I become no burden to anyone when I am dead. Then I shall truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world does not see even my

body. Beseech the Lord on my behalf, so that I may be found a sacrifice for God through these instruments.

I am not directing you like Peter and Paul. They were apostles, I am a condemned criminal. They were free, I am still a slave. But if I should suffer I shall become a free man of Jesus Christ, and I shall rise up free in Him. And now I am learning, while chained, to be desirous of nothing.

St. Ignatius of Antioch

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