

SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN AND PHARISEE



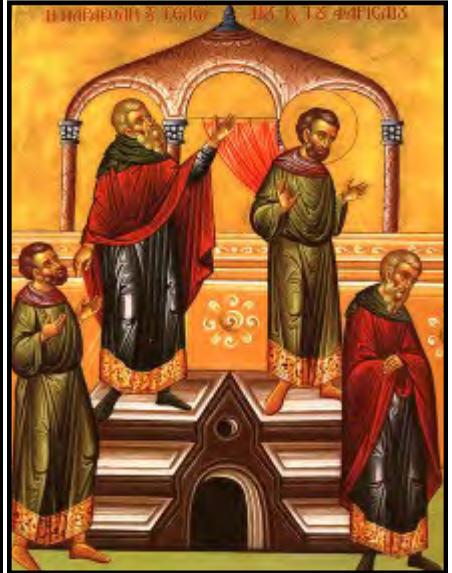
Icon of the Publican and Pharisee

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this second weekend of the five weekends of preparation for the Great Fast, our readings are taken from the second letter of Paul to Timothy and Luke's Gospel. In Paul's second letter he urges Timothy, the Bishop of Ephesus, to protect the community from the inevitable impact of false teaching, without fear of the personal attacks which may result. He recommends that Timothy rely on the power of the Scriptures and on the positive proposal of doctrine without being trouble by those who do not accept him. It must be remembered that the Scriptures that Paul refers to are those which are now a part of the Old Testament, the stories and teachings of Jesus that oral tradition maintained, and the things that Paul taught him.

In this letter Paul exhorts Timothy to adhere to what he has been taught from his infancy. His teachers have been principally his mother, grandmother and Paul. Jewish parents were obliged to see that their children were instructed in the Law as soon as they reached the age of five. It is a moot point question to what extent this statement can be applied to any writings of the New Testament as it is not certain if any were written at the time Paul wrote this letter. There were many oral stories, however, that the Christian communities held as sacred.

The parable of the Publican and Pharisee is the last of Luke's own parables. Although it prominently displays Luke's doctrinal emphasis (*universal salvation, failure of the Law alone to sanctify, divine mercy*) it reveals many idioms of Semitic Palestine. The Pharisees believed they were completely "just" before the Law and therefore had such confidence in themselves. They felt that their interpretation of the Law and their behaviors according to the Law, were the



true and only way to practice Judaism. Among the various Jewish sects, they felt that they were right and everyone else was wrong (*one of the ways of thinking that seems frequently to happen among religions groups*).

So, it is critical that we not fall into the same trap as the Pharisees did but, rather only attempt in our own lives to live in accord with the teachings we have received from Jesus Christ. This may mean, however, that we have to evaluate what we learned as children and grow in our knowledge of our faith. Our faith must be intelligent and reasonable.

Think about this!

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

In the last issue I began to share thoughts about the establishment of the feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God (*Assumption in the Western Church*). As I indicated, the feast was established because the Church was fighting Nestorianism.

Relations between the Nestorians and the rest of the Empire were not good. In 486 the Christian Church in Persia officially pronounced itself to be Nestorian, in 489 the Nestorians were expelled from Edessa. Conflict between Nestorianism and the those who held an orthodox faith, continued during the entire sixth century. By this time the new heresy was tolerated to such a degree in Persia that even the ruler Kavadh II was rumored to be a Nestorian Christian. Some time during the reign of the Emperor Maurice (582-602), the Feast of the Dormition was established throughout the Empire on the date of August 15th. Maurice had had one war with Persia and was threatened soon after that with another. It seems likely that, with his record of religious persecution and practice of enforcing Chalcedonian Faith in the Eastern regions of his empire, the Emperor decreed the Feast of the Dormition as part of an anti-Nestorian policy to bolster religious and political unity in the face of the Persian threat. The fact that this feast, like the one before it, was established by imperial decree demonstrates that the institution of a liturgical feast was a



recognized and effective method of promulgating a particular doctrine. And this practice was not limited to the portion of the Church that upheld the decrees of Chalcedon. One author points out that during the sixth century some churches kept older Marian feasts celebrated at various times of the year rather than the new one on August 15th. This same author rather mistakenly suggests that Maurice instituted the Dormition to end this diversity of observance. It was not the diversity of observance to which Maurice objected, however, but the diversity of intention. The older feasts commemorated the role of the Virgin in a manner which did not acknowledge her as *Theotokos*. In fact, Maurice was suppressing what he must have felt to be heterodox festal practice.

One thing is important to point out. The Church developed feasts as a result of reinforcing doctrines that were established by various Councils and emperors established them, many times, to bring political order to the empire. All the feasts were established, however, to somehow help Christians understand more clearly the doctrines that the Church saw as truth.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Following the head-bowing prayer of the Divine Liturgy, the celebrant says another prayer which, I believe, has deep content. In the very first part of the prayer, the celebrant calls upon the “Lord Jesus Christ, our God” to look down upon what we are doing. The prayer also specifies that Christ is in His “holy dwelling place” and sits on the “throne of glory of Your Kingdom.” Christ is seen as a King. In fact, much of the ritual of our Divine Liturgy emulates the ritual of the emperor’s court (*the holding of the fans over the Gospel Book when it is read is a direct reflection of a court ritual*).

In the prayer, the celebrant asks Jesus Christ to come and sanctify those who are praying the Divine Liturgy. He asks this of Jesus who is “seated on high with the Father” and “dwells invisibly among us.” Again, this stresses the REAL PRESENCE of CHRIST in our midst.

This prayer also suggests that it is Christ Himself who imparts the transformed bread and wine to us with His “mighty hand.” It is important to point out that this is the reason why in our Church it is traditional that only an ordained minister can distribute Holy Communion. When a person is ordained, he symbolically represents

Jesus Christ so that it becomes real that the transformed gifts come directly from Christ. A bishop, priest or deacon, when they serve Communion, do not represent themselves but, rather, Jesus Christ.

This prayer is ended by the celebrant saying on behalf of all those present, “O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.” It is critical that when the celebrant says these words that we all say them in our hearts. It is also traditional that we all make the Sign of the Cross on ourselves when these words are being said.

The next declaration that the celebrant makes is: “Let us be attentive. Holy Things to the Holy”. Think about this statement. We are called to holiness. The transformed gifts are a means of helping us attain holiness.

To this prayer the congregation responds:

One is Holy. One is Lord Jesus Christ. For the glory of God the Father. Amen

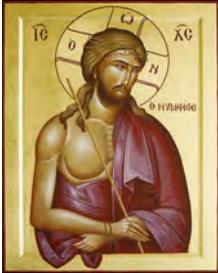
There truly is great meaning in this prayer. When we join ourselves with Jesus in offering thanksgiving for our lives, we do it for the glory of the Father. When we do it for His glory, we begin acting like holy people - we begin to act like God’s children.





St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



PRE-GREAT FAST

This is the second week of the five weeks that come before the Great Fast. Each week shares another real aspect of Metanoia.

This week the aspect that is highlighted through the parable is HUMILITY.

Humility is a quality by which a person, considering his own defects, has a lowly opinion of himself and willingly submits himself to God and to others for God's sake. While this is not the best definition, humility also involves having a realistic opinion of oneself - trying to see oneself as God sees you. This means that we don't deny our talents or deficits. It also means that we do not attempt to aggrandize ourselves by lessening the abilities of others. It means acknowledging the abilities of others without any reference to ourselves. It means not needing to be the center of all conversations. It means thinking of others first.

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 a real and true understanding of the meaning and purpose of this earthly existence. Furthermore, I believe that this "call to holiness" challenges us to believe that this present life is only a small portion of the immortality which is ours - only a portion of *eternal life*. We have things to learn during this earthly existence - things which can make us more like the human that God intended when He created us. The purpose of this present existence is to help us develop the spiritual-psychological dimensions of our person - to develop our ability to unconditionally love and forgive others. The ability to live in this manner is, perhaps, the most important ability to develop during this earthly life. I say this because this is the unique ability that Jesus demonstrated during His earthly life. This ability can also, as it did for Him, bring a certain internal peace. With this ability - that is



(Continued on page 8)

Unless you know where you are going then you will not know how to get there

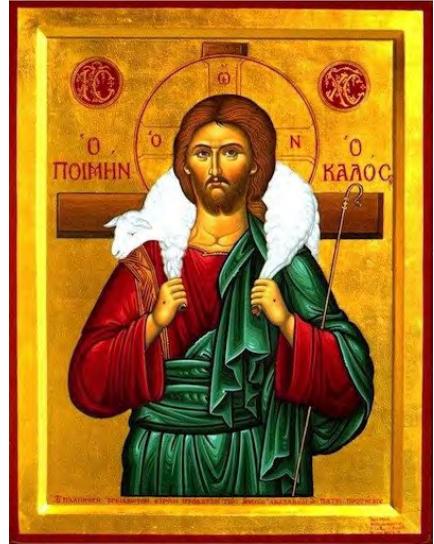
Acquiring the Mind of Christ

I would continue sharing thoughts about acquiring of the Mind of Christ. I have been sharing the thoughts of St. Anselm, whose thoughts Western Christianity has embraced. They are different from those thoughts of the Fathers of the Eastern Church.

For the first thousand years of Christianity, the Gospel message was not understood from the new common scholastic mindset of Anselm. Today, Anselm's ideas are unfortunately the most dominate perspective of Christianity in the Western world, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. The early Christians, understood that Christ releases us from sin by destroying its root, death. Those who have put on Christ are no longer slaves of sin, "because you are not under the Law but under grace" (Romans 6:14). For the "Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the Law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

Anselm, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury in the 11th Century (1033-1109), was the father of modern Scholastic theology and philosophy. He has been seen by some to be the first to develop a doctrine of Atonement apart from the Church's biblical-patristic heritage. By adjusting his theology to fit his society's understanding of the time, Anselm utilizes a feudal ethic to rationally discern the unfathomable depth of the mystery of God.

Anselm can be seen as a bridge between St. Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. By using classical philosophy and logic as instruments of discovery (instead of a means of interpretation), Anselm's doctrines made the finite truth of God subject to a created finite intellect. In contrast, the Scriptures are quite clear that God's revelation "is not after man. For



it neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12). *[It must be pointed out that the Eastern Fathers did use Greek philosophy to help them formulate their interpretations of the mystery of Christ].* The current Roman Catholic position, originating from Anselm, officially states that "justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ, who offered Himself on the cross as a living victim... whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men." The question then is raised: How does this Atonement happen and who is it offered to? The Eastern Church's approach is a little different. **More to come**

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of Our Faith



The fullness of humanity in Christ is also further defined in the theological synthesis of Maximus the Confessor and his doctrine of the “two wills”. It was affirmed during the period of iconoclasm when it was maintained the Christ could be depicted because He was truly a human.

In 431 the Council of Ephesus, which marked the first and decisive victory of Cyrillian Christology over Nestorianism, expressed itself in a single doctrinal decision: the Mother of Jesus is to be properly designated in the prayers of the Church, in preaching and in theological dissertations as “Bearer of God” (*Theotokos*), or “Mother Of God” (*meter theou*). The

decision was concerned with Christology: it affirmed the personal identity of Christ as the preexisting and eternal son of God assuming human nature (*not simply a single human individual*). Since a mother is necessarily the mother of somebody (*not of just a “nature”*) and since this “somebody” in Christ was God, her proper identity was indeed “Mother of God.” (*All should be aware that many Christians who are not of the Catholic or Orthodox Churches do not accept her as the “Mother of God”*). I am sure that my readers can see the profound logic that informed the thinking of the fathers of the Council of Ephesus.

It was inevitable that the Christological decision of Ephesus would also add a decisive new emphasis to Christian spirituality: a renewed veneration of Mary - the woman through whom the incarnation occurred; the one human person who, by free concurrence with the greatest act of God’s love, made the union of divinity and humanity possible.

It should be pointed out that **WE DO NOT WORSHIP** Mary. The Church “venerates” her and has devotion to her but we reserve adoration to the incarnate Word and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit. We worship only the Holy Trinity.

The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian devotions such as Moleben, show her honor for her role in the incarnation of our God in the Person of Jesus, the Christ. Catholic and Orthodox Christians often get accused of worshipping Mary, making her equal to God. This is not true. We hold her in the highest esteem and see her as a model of a person who freely did the will of God. Truly a person we should attempt to imitate.

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

Week of the Prodigal Son - Tone 6

Monday, February 6 - Bucolus, Bishop
No Liturgy Scheduled

Tuesday, February 7 - Parthenius, Bishop
No Liturgy Scheduled

Wednesday, February 8 - Theodore, Great-Martyr
No Liturgy Scheduled

Thursday, February 9 - Nicephor, Martyr
No Liturgy Scheduled

Friday, February 10 - Charalampus, Martyr
No Liturgy Scheduled

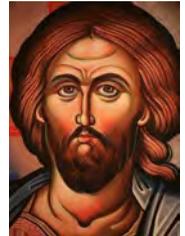
Saturday, February 11 - Blasé, Bishop-Martyr
No Liturgy Scheduled

Sunday, February 12 - Weekend of the Prodigal Son - Tone 6
10:00 AM - John Bliss; Wife Anna & Family (25th Anniversary)

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

the ability to unconditionally love and forgive others - we can grow in our likeness of God as seen in the Person of Jesus.

We must always remember that we are here on earth for a purpose. It is no accident that we have been born in this time and in this place. God has allowed life to orchestrate our existence. God's Divine Plan is that all humans will be given the opportunities and help to fully develop the spiritual-psychological dimensions of their personalities. We are here to accomplish this. It is all a matter of believing this and then, voluntarily, doing all in our power to achieve it. The one wonderful thing is that, if we freely attempt to develop ourselves in this manner, God will see to it that we are given all the help we need to achieve it. We were created with free will. We have to make the decision!

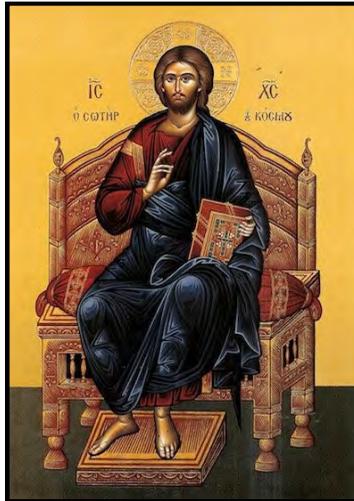


<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

It is my hope that, by providing various forms of information about the New Testament (NT), my readers will gain a deeper understanding and love of it. The NT must be one of the essential books in every Christian's library. It is the book that truly helps us to become true followers of Jesus Christ. Because of this, I have decided that I will, during the next several weeks, begin sharing information about each of the four Gospels. I will begin with Mark's gospel since it is supposedly the oldest of the four Gospels we have in the Canon approved by the Church.

The actual author of the Gospel of Mark, like those of all the Gospels, is unknown to us. The manuscripts that survived date from the fourth century; the names of the evangelists were added sometime in the second century. There is reason to believe that the early church was less interested in knowing the actual authorship than in connecting the Gospel narratives with actual apostolic witnesses. They found the names "Matthew" and "John" within their respective Gospels, and the name "Luke" as one mentioned by Paul as his traveling companion. For Mark they relied on a fragment written by a second-century bishop named Papias, who spoke of Mark as the "interpreter"



of Peter. This suggestion dovetailed with the observation in Acts that Peter had visited the home of someone in Jerusalem named "John who is called Mark" (Acts 12:12). Some also found support in the reference in the first letter of Peter to "Mark, my son" (1 Peter 5:13). Not all scholars accept these inferences, yet to link with Peter is supported by internal evidence.

Since we do not know for certain who wrote the Gospel of Mark, we also cannot be certain of its intended audience. The link with Peter has led some scholars to speculate that it was addressed, like Peter's first letter, to the church in Rome. But there are many other bases for speculating both about Mark's Gospel and Peter's letter. Among them is the fact that Peter is known in Acts as the head of the Jerusalem Church; an argument could be made that Mark was a member of that early Jewish-Christian community. Language offers some internal clues as to both the author and his intended audience. Mark's manuscript, like the other Gospels, has come down to us as a GREEK text. Why, one might wonder, would the evangelist have written in Greek instead of in Hebrew or Aramaic, the Jewish idiom common in Galilee?

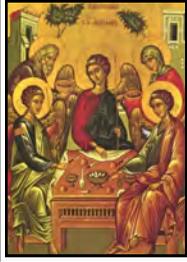
Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



Irenaeus (*icon above*), a gifted father writing in the second century, also emphasized the importance of apostolic teaching and tradition in the propagation of the Gospel and particularly stressed the important role bishops played in preserving and protecting apostolic truth. “By ‘knowledge of the truth,’” he writes, “we mean the teaching of the Apostles; the order of the Church as established from the earliest times throughout the world.” Irenaeus contends that the “distinctive stamp of the body of Christ” is “preserved through the Episcopal succession: for to the bishops the apostles committed

the care of the Church which is in each place, which has come down to our own time.” Heresy can be identified, Irenaeus believes, by the willingness of the heretic to proclaim a message “that he himself has discovered by himself - or rather invented.” When the heretic is presented with the tradition derived “from the Apostles, and which is preserved in the churches by the successions of presbyters, then they oppose tradition, claiming to be wiser not only than the presbyters but even than the Apostles, and to have discovered the truth undefiled.” Irenaeus explains that in distinction from the heretic - a theological maverick of sorts - the genuinely “talented theologian... will not say anything different from these beliefs (*for ‘no one is above his teacher’*): nor will the feeble diminish the tradition.

The word heresy is from a Greek word signifying (1) a choice, (2) the opinion chosen, and (3) the sect holding the opinion. In the Acts of the Apostles it denotes a sect, without reference to its character. Elsewhere, however, in the New Testament it has a different meaning attached to it. Paul ranks “heresies” with crimes and seditions. This word also denotes divisions or schisms in the church . In Titus 3:10 a “heretical person” is one who follows his own self-willed “questions,” and who is to be avoided. Heresies thus came to signify self-chosen doctrines not emanating from God. In the Church, heresy is always distinguished from true doctrine by a consensus of the Bishops of the Church.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 63 No 6 Weekend of the Publican & Pharisee February 4-5, 2017

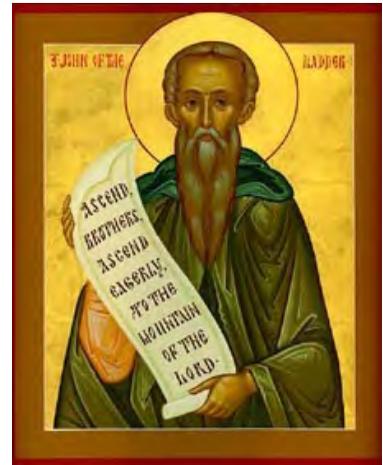
The Spirituality of the Christian East

The third type of prayer that is a part of the 28th Step on John's *Ladder*, is PRAYER OF THE HEART. The highest level of prayer is prayer of the heart. This is when prayer is not only something we do, but something we are; when the Holy Spirit Himself prays within us. Perhaps this is what St. Paul meant when he said,

We do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26) and It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. (Galatians 2:20)

As with prayer of the mind, so too with prayer of the heart, the Jesus Prayer has enjoyed special attention as a method of acquiring such an elevated state of being. Unfortunately, many have come to see the practice of the Jesus Prayer as synonymous with prayer of the heart, but they are not one and the same thing. The Jesus Prayer is a means of acquiring perfect and ceaseless prayer; it is not the only means, but there can be little doubt that it is the most tried and tested method. While practitioners of the Jesus Prayer sometimes employ certain techniques (*i.e.*, *controlled breathing*, *certain postures*, *use of a prayer rope*), prayer of the heart cannot be achieved simply by mastering any particular technique or method; nor can it be acquired by repetition and practice alone: it is truly a gift from God.

When one attains prayer of the heart, everything becomes prayer, but the act of prayer remains a



Central part of Christian life no matter how holy we become. St. John writes:

However pure you may be, do not be forward in your dealings with God. Approach Him rather in all humility, and you will be given still more boldness. And even if you have climbed the whole ladder of the virtues, pray still for the forgiveness of sins. Heed Paul's cry regarding sinners "of whom I am first" (1 Timothy 1:15).

The main thing is to make prayer a part of your life. Then leave everything else up to God. He will guide your spiritual growth.

Humbling Ourselves

A man begins to go astray when he withdraws from humility. He who has abandoned God does the evil spirit oppress, as he did Saul.

The enemy's snares are smeared with honey. He who is attracted by the sweetness of honey becomes caught in the snares and filled with all manner of woe. Love humility and you will never fall into the devils snare, for, soaring on humility's swift wings you will always remain above the enemy's snares.

Arrogance is like a very tall but rotten tree. All of its branches are brittle, and if someone climbs upon it, he immediately falls from the height he has attained.

Blessed is he who is enriched with good hope and illuminated with good thoughts: his glory is great and everlasting.

Let us strive for sober attention, that we

might recognize our sins and be constantly humbled, that we might not nurture, like the serpent, a high opinion of ourselves or wickedness. Let us love sobriety, that we might have a pure heart and that we might preserve the temple entrusted to us undefiled by sinful corruption.

Wondrous is prayer accompanied by sighs and tears, especially if the tears are shed in secret. He who prays in his mind with faith beholds the Lord before himself. For in Him do we live, move, and exist. If your heart has been hardened, weep before the Lord, that He might shine upon you the illumination of knowledge and grant that with an ardent heart you might be carried up to Him.

St. Ephrem the Syrian

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