

MEATFARE SUNDAY
SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT



Icon of the Last Judgment

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend



On this next to last weekend before the beginning of the Great Fast, we hear St. Paul exhort us to not scandalize our fellowmen and Luke share with us a picture of what is called the Last Judgment. I would focus, in my comments, on Luke's Gospel.

This particular chapter in Luke's Gospel, in its present form, has been produced by ecclesiastical expansions of the sayings of Jesus. The usual designation of the passage as "the Last Judgment" is somewhat misleading; it is an imaginative scene in which is set the core of the more teaching of Jesus. It has no parallel in the other Gospels. The scene is the parousia, and "all nations" mean all mankind. But the process is addressed to the disciples; the standards on which they will be judged are set forth. That faith is not mentioned should lead to no theological conclusions; it is clear that for Matthew as for other New Testament writers, faith in Jesus is the first movement of man toward God. The point of this scene is that faith is not the whole movement; that it should transform the disciple.

Christ did not leave with his disciples a doctrine of individual salvation but a new commandment that they must love one another. To this Jesus added, "By this shall all know that you are my disciples if you love one another". Love, thus is the foundation, the very life of the Church which is, in the words of St. Ignatius of Antioch, "unity of faith and love."

So this Gospel passage is not really about God, in the Person of Jesus, judging those at the end of time but, rather, a presentation of the basic core message

of Jesus. To be His disciple, we must attempt to develop unconditional love for all others, regardless of their response to us. This is a very important point. During this lifetime we must learn how to be authentic humans, imitating Jesus, and not allowing the behavior of others determine the way that we freely choose to live. The Christian way of living is one of true, personal transformation.

We use the teachings of Jesus to determine and govern our behaviors and attitudes. We do not depend upon our society to determine how we will live but, rather, we commit ourselves to living like Jesus did and to grow in our likeness of God as expressed in the human person of Jesus.

We are called to embrace and hold sacred the values about life that Jesus expressed through the way He treated other people. We no longer embrace the idea of an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

To be a true Christian means to be "confident" that the way we choose to live is the right way. The right way to live is the way that God intended us humans to live in order to spiritually grow. What is better, to be accepted by God or by your fellowmen? I guess that I would rather be accepted by God than by other humans.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

The Tradition of our Church is to integrate some sort of *fasting* into our lives during the Great Fast. The purpose of our fasting is spiritual. Spirituality must not be viewed as something that does not concern the body, but as something that is made possible through and within the body. The desires and needs of the flesh can all too often overpower the spirit. Fasting is a means of restoring balance between soul and body, a means of bringing the flesh under the control and will of the mind and spirit.

Here are some suggestions for actively observing the Great Fast 2017 in accordance with our Traditions.

Recommended Minimal Effort

- Abstain from meat and dairy products on the first day of the Fast (*February 27*) and Good Friday (*April 14*)
- Abstain from meat on **All Fridays** of Lent and Holy Saturday (*April 15*)

In order to enter into the spirit of the Great Fast this is seen as a minimal effort

A Strict Lenten Tradition

- Abstain from *meat products*, even weekends, the day after Meat Fare (*February 20*) until after Easter services (*April 16*)
- Abstain from *daily products*, even weekends, the day after Cheese Fare (*February 27*) until after Easter services (*April 16*)

This is seen as the maximum effort to observe the Great Fast

Українська Греко-Католицька Церква

Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church



Modified Strict Lenten Tradition

A *modified version* of the strict tradition calls for us, in addition to the *minimal effort* suggested, to *abstain from meat* on all Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent and all the days of Great and Holy Week and pray more frequently.

Again I would express my belief that we should never do anything because we feel that it is an obligation. God wants, from what I can discern from the New Testament and Tradition, us to freely return His love. Therefore, we should never feel that we are obliged to do something as much as we want to do something to return His love.

The interesting thing is that our Tradition is focused on helping us to spiritually grow. Of course we have to *want* or *desire* to grow. There may be many reasons why we can't observe the Great Fast. That is always between you and God. I believe that as long as you are honest and sincere with Him, He accepts your decisions. Only make the Great Fast a special time if you understand how it will help you to spiritually grow. Your observance must help you to trust and hope in God. If it doesn't, then it is useless. Remember, God IS with us and understand us.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

What is also important to note about the prayer before Communion is that, if we are truly sincere and pray this prayer with genuine sincerity, our sins are forgiven. We ask God to “make me worthy to receive [Communion] for the remission of all my sins and for life ever-lasting.”

Once we have prayed this special pre-Communion prayer, the priest declares: “Approach now with fear of God, with faith and with love”. These are the conditions we must think of when we approach the chalice for Holy Communion. Faith is essential. Awe and fear of God is essential. And, of course, love is essential.

The response to the priest’s prayer is very special. It is: “Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord. God, the Lord, has revealed Himself to us.”

This should give us pause to stop and reflect upon our attitude as we approach Communion. Each of us must ask ourselves: *Do I truly believe that what I receive in Communion is truly Christ and do I understand how He has revealed Himself to me?*

Participation in the Divine Liturgy, if it is genuine and sincere, requires that we also receive Communion since this completes what we do together, we become more united to

God because we have professed belief in His presence with us. Christ is truly present with us in the eating of the Sacred Transformed Bread and drinking the Sacred Transformed Wine. This is so confirmed by the prayer that the celebrant offers right after all have been communicated. He states: “Behold, this has touched our lips and shall take away our iniquities and shall cleanse us of our sins.” The sincere reception in faith of Holy Communion has, or should have, an impact on our lives. The ritual action of receiving the transformed gifts should put us into a deeper communion with God.

One way to make the experience of receiving Communion much more impactful is to think

about what it means to you. It should spark your belief of God being with you. The ritual is only as powerful as you allow it to be in your life.

After this introductory prayer the celebrant says: “Save Your people, O God, and bless Your inheritance.” The response is:

We have seen the true light. We have received the heavenly Spirit. We have found the true faith and we worship the undivided Trinity, for the Trinity has saved us.

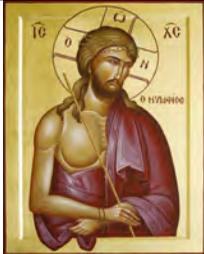
What is truly important is that we mean these words. DO YOU?





St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



PRE-GREAT FAST

On this fourth week-end of our preparation for the Great Fast, we hear clearly spelled out what Jesus meant by "love of neighbor."

While cast within the context of the "Last Judgment," what the Gospel is truly telling us that METANOIA really requires that we are fully aware of how God intends us to live as human beings in order to be His children. We cannot really change our attitudes and behaviors - change our hearts and minds - if we are not aware of what that requires. It requires that we learn how to treat others.

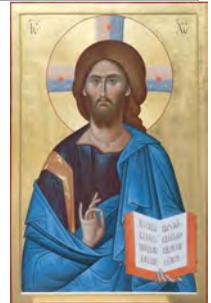
HOLY TRADITION

Those who desire to observe the Great Fast in accordance with Holy Tradition, this weekend marks the beginning of our abstinence from meat. That is why it is called Meat Fare. This should not be undertaken, however, if one is older or engaged in strenuous work. We must always be sensible about our faith.

One of the most beautiful qualities of true friendship is to understand and to be understood

CALLED TO HOLINESS

The "call" to holiness is a call from God to pursue an active program of spiritual development. It is the call that Jesus gave us when He said: "You shall be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.



Dose this mean that God expects us to be perfect now during this life? It is regrettable that the words of Jesus, "You shall be perfect," were mistranslated by some as "You must be perfect". The Greek verb *eseste*, used in the original Greek, is a verb in the future tense. It is a promise which says very clearly that perfection is to be granted in the future by grace. It is an ongoing process of continued growth in the life of Christ of which perfection is the goal. In the English translation it is incorrectly translated in the present tense and in the imperative implying that we are expected to reach perfection now. It is not you *must* be perfect but you *shall be* perfect.

Perfection in this life according to Eastern theology and spirituality is not the state of "I have arrived. I have made it. I am saved." Rather, it is the state of "I am on the way. I am moving. I am on a journey. I am growing." Man's life is never complete

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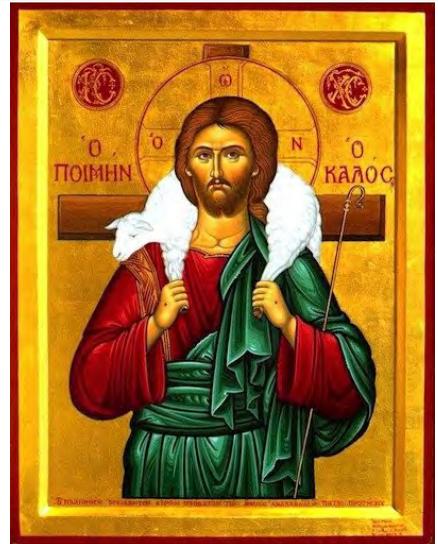
Acquiring the Mind of Christ

The Eastern Church sees man's task during this earthly existence as one of growing in his relationship and communion with God through his growing and relationship with his fellowmen. As he perfects his ability to unconditionally love and forgive others he grows in his ability to have a real relationship with God. Why? Because he grows in his likeness to Jesus, the Christ. The believer conquers death through participation in God's Life through the mysteries (sacraments) and ascetical or religious discipline. Conversely, the Anselmian understanding essentially declares man "not guilty," and leaves him, unfortunately, unhealed and unchanged. This is a difference in how the Eastern Church sees the real message of Christian salvation: to "be partakers of the divine nature."

The formation of the Anselmian doctrine of Atonement is seen by modern commentators as "a revolution in theology," beginning "a new epoch in the theology of Atonement." This new doctrine stemmed from several factors. Foremost, a characteristic influence of the legalistic Roman mindset is exhibited in Western theologians as early as Tertullian which encourages and supports a juridical conceptualization concerning the truths of the faith.

We must always remember that the Church is set in the context of particular societies and, because it is a human organization, is influenced by the society in which it is set. The Eastern and Western societies even in the Holy Roman Empire were extremely different.

Anselm drew from Tertullian who saw man's sin as a disturbance in the "divine order of justice," and made penance a "satisfaction to the Lord."



Another strong influence on Anselm was St. Augustine. Not only did Anselm utilize Augustine's concept of "limited Atonement," but he also used his methods theological and philosophical experimentation. After Anselm's and subsequently Peter Abelard's "revolution" in Atonement theology, most in the West became further estranged from the Eastern Church's experience. Thus arose a host of new supposed "developments" in theology from Catholic and Protestant scholars: Vicarious Atonement which placates God's anger; Don Scotus' "merits" for the predestined; and indulgences, which apparently "pays" for the offenders' sins.

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of Our Faith



Although the mother of Jesus was seen, within the mystery of human salvation, as the representative of humanity in need of salvation, she was the closest to the Savior and the worthiest receptacle of the new life.

In the medieval West, the Augustinian understanding of original sin as inherited guilt made it inevitable that Mary be approached in terms of an “immaculate conception,” as the object of a special grace of God that made her in advance worthy of divine motherhood. The East did not follow that trend, because the consequences of the sin of Adam were seen as inherited *mortality* rather than as guilt, so that there was no need to

see Mary in isolation from the common lot of humanity. However, there developed in the East the tradition of her eschatological glorification after death. Anticipating the general resurrection, her Son made her, as His mother, inseparable from his own risen body, above the angelic powers themselves.

Christ and the Holy Spirit

The Synthesis of Maximus the Confessor

The place of Maximus the Confessor (580-662), in the history of Christian doctrine is primarily associated with his defense of Chalcedonian orthodoxy against Monotheletism (the belief that Christ had only one divine-human “will”). Indeed, for Maximus, real humanity is dynamic, creative and endowed with a proper “energy”: this was, indeed, the case with the humanity of Christ who, being a man, possessed a human will distinct from the divine. This human will of Christ was restored in conformity with the original and eternal purpose of God in his design of humanity. In monotheletism, the humanity of Christ, although accessible to “contemplation”, did not possess any “movement” or energy proper to itself, and the Chalcedonian definition, which affirmed that “the characteristic property of each nature of Christ was preserved” in the hypostatic union, had lost its meaning. The merit of Maximus was, therefore, in having decisively counteracted a “monophysitic” trend which interpreted “deification” as an absorption of humanity into divinity. For Maximus, deification was to be seen not as a denial but as a reaffirmation and restoration of created humanity in its proper and God-established integrity.

Chalcedon asserted that Jesus was fully God and fully Man in every and all respects.

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 19 - Weekend of Meat Fare - Tone 7

10:00 AM - Rosemary Katynski; Greg & Esther Petrovich

Week of Cheese Fare - Tone 8

Monday, February 20 - Leo of Catania, Bishop
No Liturgy Scheduled

Tuesday, February 21 - Timothy, Venerable
No Liturgy Scheduled

Wednesday, February 22 - Rinding the Relics of Martyrs of Eugeniq
No Liturgy Scheduled

Thursday, February 23 - 1st & 2nd Finding of John the Baptizer's Head
No Liturgy Scheduled

Friday, February 24 - Erasmus, Venerable Father
No Liturgy Scheduled

Saturday, February 25 - Ascetical Fathers and Mothers
No Liturgy Scheduled

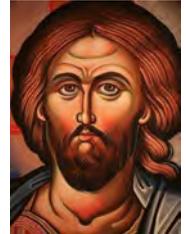
Sunday, February 26 - Weekend of Cheese Fare - Tone 8

10:00 AM - Walter Kizel; Julia Stoiko & Subdeacon Andrew

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

even in the Kingdom of God. We shall always be "on the way." Our very perfection is always to grow more perfect, more like unto Christ. And this is a never-ending process.

St. Gregory of Nyssa used the word *epectasis* which means a "stretching out," a striving to exceeds one's capacity. It is based on Paul's statement: "I strain ahead for what is still to come". The Holy Spirit plants a power in us that expands our capacity and makes us capable of possessing God in an unending process of great and greater growth, both in this life as well as in the life to come. St. Gregory described true perfection as "never to stop growing toward what is better and never to place a limit on perfection." God, in creating us, saw that the process and growing, without limits, was something good and allows us to freely return His love.



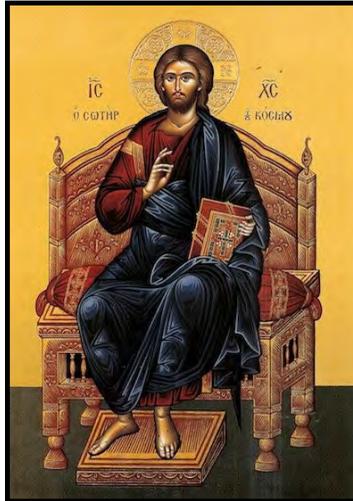
<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

After the destruction of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE, Judaism itself might have disappeared had it not been for the Pharisees. The Pharisees' reputation in the New Testament (NT) as rigid legalists is ill-deserved, according to some modern NT scholars. They were, in fact, a devout lay group who had developed a flexible and creative approach to the interpretation of Scripture and had also fostered ways of bringing the prayers of the Temple into Jewish homes. When the Temple was lost, they provided the foundations for a continuing and vital Judaism. As the ancestors of modern rabbinic Judaism, they deserve the respect of modern Christians.

Why, then, are the Pharisees vilified in the NT? The answer does not lie in the time of Jesus. Indeed, many of the teachings of Jesus are so close to those of the Pharisees that some scholars have proposed that he is shown arguing with them because he was a member of their school. Judaism before the fall of the Temple was tolerant of many different forms of expression, and historical studies suggest that Christianity did not begin as a consciously separate religion, but a new formulation of the ancient

Jewish faith. After the Temple fell, however, Judaism regrouped and the Pharisaic leaders became less tolerant of diversity within their ranks. In that new atmosphere, Jewish followers of Jesus were regarded with suspicion and put out of the synagogues. The Christian-Jewish community responded with anger. In the context of the post-seventies, the Pharisees appeared hostile to Jesus, and it is that hostility (and their own anger) that the evangelists retroactively projected into their accounts of Jesus' time. As I have so very many times attempted to share with my readers, there is no real indication from the teachings of Jesus that He intended to found a new religion. I know that this flies in the face



of many Christians who want to believe that He did. Indeed Jesus wanted to reform Judaism, that is quite clear. But so did other Jewish groups at His time (the Essenes being one group. They were responsible for the Dead Sea Scrolls. They were a sect of **Second Temple Judaism** that flourished from the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE which some scholars claim seceded from the Zadokite priests. Some claim that Jesus actually studied with them).

The events of history set the stage for Christianity to become a religion!

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



In this particular article I have been presenting thoughts of the Greek Fathers of Our Church. I have been trying to highlight the struggle that the Church has had over the centuries to come to a true understanding of Who Jesus Is and the true content of our faith. In essence I have been presenting what I call the “theology” of our Church.

I know that some may ask which there is a need for theology. Why can't we simply preserve and proclaim the simplicity of the Good News, the Gospel? Indeed as you my readers have seen, theology seems only to add complexities to what we believe about the Trinity, and, especially, our understanding

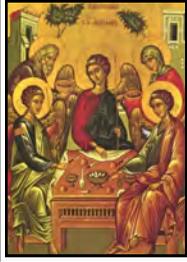
of Jesus. Our Church's beliefs about Jesus, for example, are based on the idea of the “hypostatic union” that makes Him fully God and Man. The question is: Doesn't theology only complicate our faith?

Theology, I believe, helps us come to a true understanding of these great mysteries. What I have been presenting in this article has highlighted how priests and bishops, in an attempt to promote their understanding of these great mysteries, have promoted what the Church has come to believe is truly heresy - a wrong understanding of them. Thus, theology has been the tool that the Church has used to come to a realistic and genuine understanding of these mysteries.

Because religion deals with mysteries and complex ideas, theology, which is the study of God, gives us the language to express what we really believe.

For example, the Church struggled for centuries to understand how Jesus could truly be a human being and, at the same time, truly God. He needed to be both in order for us to say that what He taught about how to live as a human being is what God intended when He created us. To come to this conclusion, however, required that the Church find a way to express Who God Is - He is a Trinity of separate Persons joined in one Godhead - so that we could also say that Jesus is both fully God and fully Man.

I, for one, find that what we believe about Jesus is, based on also Who God Is, the very reason why I believe in Him. Because Jesus is also truly God, while remaining truly Man, I can truly say that what He taught is truth.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 63 No 8 Weekend of Meat Fare February 18-19, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

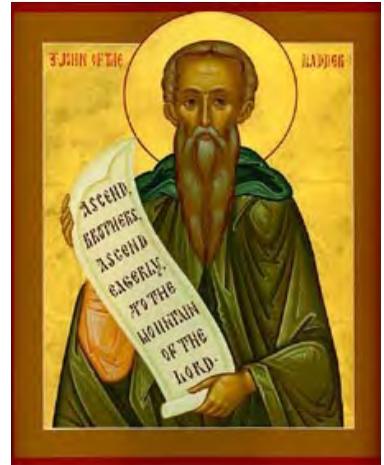
In the last issue I began sharing thoughts on the 29th Step on John's *Ladder* of spiritual growth. That step is **DISPASSION**.

Dispassion could perhaps be considered synonymous with another important word in Eastern theology and spirituality: *deification* or *Theosis*, which means to attain the likeness of God, or, as countless Church Fathers have put it, "to become god by grace," that we "may be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4).

Advanced spirituality can be complicated. One cannot delve into advanced spirituality without getting deep into advanced theology, and the subject of dispassion and *theosis* is a case in point. *Theosis* is so important to Eastern spirituality and theology. We must examine what it means to "become god by grace."

The Eastern Church's doctrine of *theosis* is rooted in the Scriptures: "I said, 'You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High' (Psalm 81:6). But what does it mean for human beings to be gods? There is only one God, and He is God because He is eternal and uncreated. All other things were created by God from nothing, which means that everything created is wholly contingent. So what does it mean for us who are "but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27) to "become" God?

It certainly does not mean that we evolve into the Deity - we cannot be what God is by nature (above being, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful,



all-holy and all-loving) - nor does it involve absorption into the Divine Being and a loss of our own, unique personhood. Rather, it means to acquire the "likeness of God," which man was given the potential of achieving (Genesis 1:26) through synergy (the cooperation of the human will with divine grace).

Hopefully my readers are getting a clearer idea of what *Theosis* is since I deal with it several times.

The Twofold Coming of Christ

We do not preach only one coming of Christ, but a second as well, much more glorious than the first. The first coming was marked by patience; the second will bring the crown of a divine kingdom.

In general, whatever relates to our Lord Jesus Christ has two aspects. There is a birth from God before the ages, and a birth from a virgin at the fullness of time. There is a hidden coming, like that of rain on fleece, and a coming before all eyes, still in the future.

At the first coming He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger. At His second coming He will be clothed in light as in a garment. In the first coming He endured

the cross, despising the shame; in the second coming He will be in glory, escorted by an army of angels.

We look then beyond the first coming and await the second. At the first coming we said: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. At the second we shall say it again; we shall go out with the angels to meet the Lord and cry out in adoration: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

**For more information on Eastern spirituality, visit
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