

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS AT THE
FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL AT NICEA



Icon of the Holy Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea

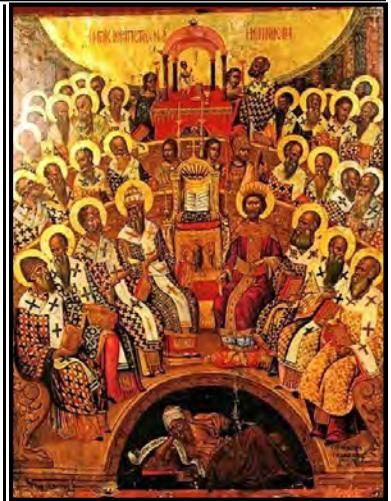
Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

Since the Council of Nicaea I is the foundational Council of the Christian Church, I thought that I would take this opportunity to provide information about the actions of the Council.

Doctrinal issues were the Council's first concern. Arian-minded bishops proposed a formula of faith (contents not extant) that was indignantly rejected by the vast majority. Then Eusebius of Caesarea proposed the baptismal creed of his own Church, the oldest eastern creed now known. Its orthodoxy gained it general approval, but a majority of the bishops insisted on certain additions that would counter the Arian errors more clearly and explicitly. The first directly contradicted the Arian affirmation that the Son, not genuinely begotten, did not proceed from the very essence, or nature, of the Father, but only by the Father's will, like other creatures. The second addition confronted Arius' statement that the Son is not so by nature, but is "made" by the Father. The third addition comprised the most significant word of the creed, the sword of division for decades after the Council.

Not a biblical word, *homoousios* appears for the first time in Gnostic literature. Since in strict generation the son has the same nature as his father. The Arians denied this of the Word with understandable logic because they denied His generation. The use of this Greek word affirms that the Word is God as the Father is God, and this because He is the Father's true son. And if this affirmation is linked with the first article of the creed, "on God Father," it is clear that the Nicene Creed proclaims numerical identity of the Father's nature and the Son's. The creed does no more than mention the Third Person, for the divinity of the Spirit was not at issue.

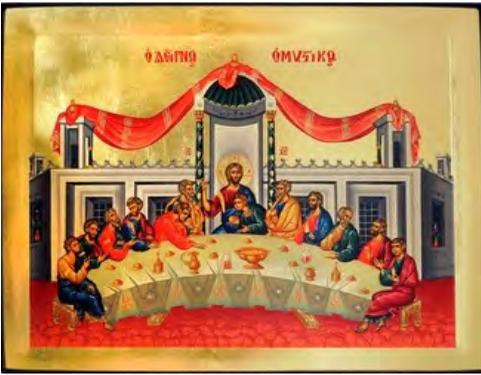
The Nicene Creed was the first dogmatic definition of the Christian Church and through the



ages has served as a test of orthodoxy. Almost all of the expressions used in the creed are scriptural, with the addition of certain words that are philosophical in origin. Indeed the meaning of Scripture is made clear in the light of tradition. The Son's divinity in its strict sense is defined.

Recall that this Council was held in 325 CE. There was still not a clear idea of the Trinity since the idea of Who Jesus Is was still being debated. The idea of God being "Father" came from the fact that Jesus referred to Him as Father - "Abba."

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God



The prominence given the Eucharistic celebration in the ancient Church leaves no doubt that at the time it was the most important part of Christian liturgical life. It originated in the simple rite instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper the night before he died. The paschal ritual framing the Eucharistic rite was not considered essential to it, otherwise the Gospel account would not have omitted so many of its details.

Still, the oldest sources, the *Acts* and Paul's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, call this special celebration "The Breaking of the Bread," suggesting the Jewish preliminary ceremony of bread-breaking at a meal (with the usual Jewish blessing of bread and the giving of thanks). At Corinth, Paul refers to the Eucharistic rite and the meal simply as "the Lord's Supper". Frequent repetition of the paschal ritual would have been

out of the question: it is too complicated and its repeated performance would have contradicted the prescriptions of the Old Law to which the apostle still clung. But pious Jewish households had other solemn religious suppers, especially the *chaburah* which was furnished with formality and consecration. Held on Sabbath and holyday eves, its ritual could be used with as much effect as the paschal rites in the celebration of the Eucharist, for it, too, included the ceremonies of bread-breaking and of the cup of the blessing which could be shared with family and friends as a sign of unity. During its course, the head of the family or host took bread, broke it, while pronouncing the customary blessing of bread, and gave a fragment to each person at table. This blessing and sharing of the one loaf drew the entire group into a unit, into "one company." After the meal, he pronounced a solemn benediction over a special cup of wine, called the Cup of the Blessing, sipped a little from it, and passed it around to each of those present. Again, this common cup gave a sense of oneness to the whole group.

At the Christian Suppers of the Lord, these ceremonials, present in both the paschal and in the *chaburah* suppers, were made into the Eucharistic celebration by the re-enactment of what Christ had said and done at the Last Supper. What among the Jews had been a mere sign of unity and fellowship was transformed into real union and oneness by sharing in the one body and blood of Christ. It became the transformative action of the Church. All were joined to Christ and to one another.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



COMING THIS FALL

Start cleaning out your closets, cupboards and storage spaces for our fall fund-raiser. PLEASE NOTE: This year our sale will not include clothing or shoes! Please do not offer items that are not clean or are not in working order. Thank You!

GRAVE BLESSINGS

Sunday, June 4th



This year I will bless graves at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery on Pentecost @ 1:00 PM in the Mausoleum.

Then on Sunday June 11th I will bless graves at St. Hedwig's Cemetery @ 1:00 PM in the Mausoleum. If weather permits on both occasions I will bless individual graves after the Service.

STANDING IN PRAYER

It is our tradition to continue "standing in prayer" until the Feast of Pentecost. On the feast of Pentecost we will be the first time in 50 days that we will kneel in prayer. Traditionally this prayer posture is assumed not only in our communal prayer but also in our personal prayer.



CALLED TO HOLINESS

Perhaps one of the most challenging and demanding aspects of Christianity is its call to unconditional love of others. I know that this is one of the most difficult things about Christianity. We humans instinctively lash out at our enemies or those who insult or harm us. And yet we see that God has revealed through Jesus that our response to hatred the hatred of others, if it is similar to that which Jesus gave, is transformative. When a person truly engaged in love of others which is unconditional, something happens to them.



It sounds scary, I know. It is against natural instincts, I know. It is not the normal response to hatred that is directed against us. And yet, it is the response that can radically change us into the children of God.

I don't know of anyone that I have ever encounter that hasn't been challenged to unconditionally love others. In life we repeatedly encounter people who find fault with us, judge us and try to diminish our feelings of self-worth. If you read the story of Jesus you realize that this all happened to Him.

(Continued on page 6)

Change your thoughts and you change your world.

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

TOPIC: SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

By Len Mier

QUESTION: How have I seen God's baffling and unsettling wisdom at work in my own life experience?

ESSAY 2

The whole notion of God's wisdom at work in my life is something I struggle with almost daily. For the most part it boils down to accepting the world not as I want it to be or how I want those things outside of my direct control to influence my being.

I am coming to realize, after much and soul searching, that God is not testing me or my love of Him. In God's wisdom I get what I need, not what I necessarily want.

I can only draw from my own life experiences to see the baffling wisdom of God at work. After being morbidly obese for years, God gave me the strength to go through the trials that go along with bariatric surgery. I initially thought that in God's wisdom I would never have to deal with major health issues once I lost the excess weight. But God's wisdom did not give me what I wanted, to be without any major health issue. He gave me what I needed. He placed before me a trial that was not to test me, but to challenge me to accept this life as He wants me to experience life. It is what we do with these challenges that gives us insight into what God's wisdom is. God challenges me to keep the Gospel message even if I don't see for myself

what the outcome of life may be. The challenge is to trust that God knows more about me than I know about myself.

Again, the challenge I would give my readers is to think about this very same question and formulate your answer.

There are not any right or wrong answers to these questions but only your response. Usually it takes a little reflection and thought. How is God's wisdom at work in your life?

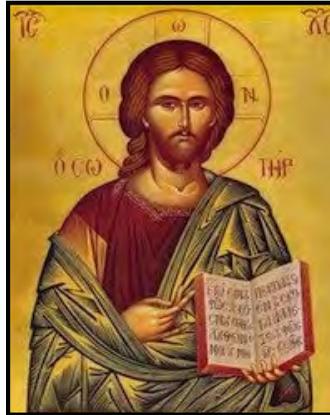
I know that God's Wisdom led me to the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. I never had a thought of being a priest in the Ukrainian Church. But life's very unique circumstances led me here. I now consider this fact as one of the most wonderful experiences of my life. I had no experience with the Eastern Church. I sincerely believe that the Eastern Church has been my salvation. I don't know where I would be, as I think about it today, if I hadn't come into our Church.

I wonder what your experience of life has been? I wonder whether you see your life as truly an expression of Divine Providence, God helping you to become all that you can possibly be. I think that it is important to think in this manner - it brings the fullness of life and personal salvation.



A POTPOURRI OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS

It is by prayer, gropingly at first, in the dawn of a new vision, that we seek and find God and ourselves in a co-relative way. Then later, when a clearer light has shown us what we can see of the invisible and the visible transfigured in the light of its own immensity and the eternity in God, prayer becomes a state. It also constantly remains a situation. While we are seeking, partly blind with partly restored sight, our first steps in prayer take the form of astonishment, fear that is reverent and a sense of sadness. We are truly astonished at the discovery of ourselves which is also the beginnings of knowledge of God. We are astonished to see the world open out towards God's infinity. We are afraid, glad and terrified when we come into the presence of God's holiness and beauty. We are also sad, both for ourselves and the world. It is sad to be blind, it is sad to be unable to live the fullness of our vocation, to be trapped again and again in our own limitations. It is sad to see our world without God, vacillating between life and death and unable to choose life once and for all or to escape once and for all from death. Wonder and sadness are thus the two sources of our prayer. Both arise from our encounter with the world's depths, which have begun to be revealed to us



in their totality. Without this encounter, our world and the forces at work in it are incomprehensible and often monstrous; we are bewildered and afraid.

Thus encounter is central to prayer. It is the basic category of revelation, because revelation itself is an encounter with God who gives us a new vision of the world. Everything is encounter, in scripture as in life. It is both personal and universal, unique and exemplary. It always has two poles: encounter with God and in him with creation, an encounter with man in his depths rooted in God's creative will, straining towards fulfillment when God will be all in all. This encounter is personal because each of us must experience it for himself, we cannot have it second-hand. It is our own, but it also has a universal significance because it goes beyond our superficial and limited ego. This encounter is unique because for God as for one another when we truly see, each of us is irreplaceable and unique. Each creature knows God in his own way which no one else will ever know unless we tell them. And at the same time because human nature is universal, each encounter is exemplary. It is a revelation to all of what is known personally by each.

Schedule of Services

SEVENTH PASCHAL WEEK

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 May 28 - Weekend of the Fathers of the 1st Council

10:00 AM + Dmytro & Ksenia Dubczak; Mary Krill

Monday May 29 - Theodosia, Venerable-Martyr - Memorial Day

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday May 30 - Isaac, Venerable

No Service Scheduled

Wednesday May 31 - Hermas, Apostle & Hermeas, Martyr

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday June 1 - Justin & Others, Martyrs

No Service Scheduled

Friday June 2 - Nicephor, Patriarch

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday June 3 - Martyrs Lucillian, Claudius, Hypatius, Paul & Dionysius

No Service Scheduled

Sunday June 4 - Weekend of Pentecost

10:00 AM + John Kushner; Anna Bliss

1:00 PM - Grave Blessings at Holy Sepulchre

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

Jesus is God's revelation to us about how to respond to the challenges of life. He showed us by the way that He faced the challenges of His life, how we should live if we desire the fullness of life. Instead of respond to hatred with hatred, He chose to love. He also chose to "forgive" those who inflicted pain on Him because He realized that they didn't know what they were doing. They were only being the products of their own culture and the mores of their society. They revealed to us, however, that we cannot just "go along" with whatever our society embraces but we must govern our lives by the Gospel - we must look to Jesus as we decide how we must live in this present day-and-age. Much hatred fills our world today. We are called not to get caught up in the hatred of our society.



<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>

[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

In the last issue of this article, I began sharing the “criteria” for not only the preservation of early writings but also the acceptance of these writings as inspired and part of the canon of the New Testament (NT). I already shared two reasons.

Third, conformity with the rule of faith was a criterion. Doubts about its millenarianism caused suspicion with regards REVELATION and an gospel attributed to Peter was rejected on doctrinal grounds.

Fourth, to what extent did chance play a role in preservation? Some would argue from a theory of inspiration that chance could have had no role: God would not have inspired a work and then allowed it to be lost. But this argument presumes that every inspired work had to have permanent value. Could not the task for which God inspired a particular work have been accomplished when it was received? A good example may have been the lost letter of Paul that pronounced judgment on an individual at Corinth. Moreover, the argument presumes that God always protects against human vicissitudes the works he has motivated - a presumption that is not verified in the history of Israel and of the Church. Consequently, many

scholars do believe that chance had a role in the preservation of less important works, like Philemon, when more important works were lost (i.e., part of the Corinthian correspondence; Matthew’s *logia* of Jesus in Aramaic).

All of the NT works were probably written before 125 CE; the dates for their collection into fixed groups are much harder to specify. Now some thoughts about the Paul’s writings.

Most of the Pauline letters and epistles were written as instruction and encouragement to churches that Paul himself had evangelized (Romans is an exception).

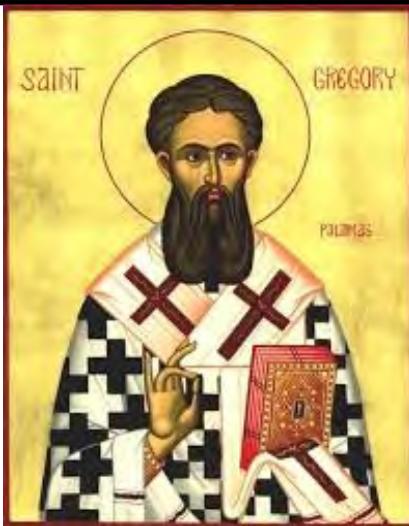
In the early 50’s 1-2 Thessalonians were written and in the late 50’s the Great Letters (Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, Romans and perhaps also Philemon). In the early

60’s there were the Captivity Letters (Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians). Traditionally, the Pastoral Letters (1-2 Timothy, Titus) have been dated in the mid-60’s. In all, there were 13 letters or epistles attributed to Paul.

As I am sure all of my readers are aware, all of the writings of Paul pre-date the Gospels and seem to be a foundation upon which much of later Christian writing was based. Out of the 27 books of the NT, 14 are attributed to Paul. ***More about this to come.***



Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



Gregory of Nazianzus, a 4th-century Archbishop of Constantinople and an eminent theologian, is widely considered the most accomplished rhetorical stylist of the patristic age. As a classically trained orator and philosopher, he infused Hellenism into the early church, firmly establishing a paradigm for all subsequent Byzantine theologians and church officials.

Gregory made a significant impact on the shape of Trinitarian theology among both Greek and Latin-speaking theologians. He is truly remembered as the "Trinitarian Theologian". Much of his theological work continues to influence modern theologians, especially in regard to the

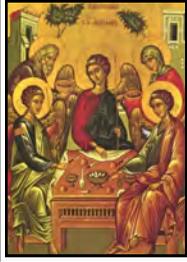
relationship among the three Persons of the Trinity. Along with his brothers Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, he is known as one of the Cappadocian Fathers. From the very outset of his orations, Gregory warns his audience that they and he are attempting a high and holy task. Theology, while employing the mind, also involves the heart. A pure heart, one grounded in the worship of the Church and a life of prayer, will produce clear and fruitful theological reflection. A murky heart and a dark mind, on the other hand, will produce a sick, thorny theology; it will offer no nourishment, only harm.

Gregory counsels that, because of this intimate connection between mind and heart, those who choose to write on the Father, Son and Holy Spirit "ought to be, as far as may be, pure, in order that light may be

apprehended by light." Theologians who would unfold Scripture can do so safely and sanely only if they themselves have been "molded" and shaped by it. Only then can they "enter upon theological questions, setting at the head thereof the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ... one in diversity, diverse in unity, wherein is a marvel."

He also asserts that not only is a pure heart a prerequisite necessary for thinking well about God, he also warns us that we must remember that there are definite limits to theological perception and true understanding. Alluding to Moses' experience on Mount Sinai, Gregory describes himself as drawing "aside the curtain of the cloud," only to withdraw.

***I shall be sharing more from
St. Gregory of Nazianzus.***



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

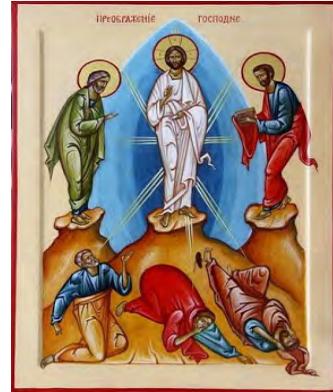
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 63 No 22 WEEKEND OF THE FATHERS OF NICAEA May 27-28, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

In the Eastern Church, *theosis* is the understanding that human beings can have real union with God and so become like God to such a degree that we participate in the divine nature. It is a concept derived from the New Testament (NT) regarding the goal of our relationship with the Triune God. Many Christians who are a part of the Eastern Church, might find the concept of *theosis* unnerving, especially when hearing this quote from Athanasius: “God became man so that men might become gods,” they immediately fear an influence of Eastern mysticism from Hinduism or pantheism.

But such an influence could not be further from the Eastern Church’s understanding. The human person does not merge with some sort of impersonal divine force, losing individual identity or consciousness. Intrinsic divinity is never ascribed to humankind or any part of the creation, and no created thing is confused with the being of God. Most certainly, humans are not accorded ontological equality with God, nor are they considered to merge or co-mingle with the being of God as He is in His essence.

In fact, to safeguard against any sort of misunderstanding of this kind, Eastern Christian theologians have been careful to distinguish between God’s essence and His energies. God is incomprehensible in His essence. But God, who is love, allows us to know Him through His divine energies, those actions whereby He reveals Himself



to us through and in His creation, providence, and redemption. It is through the divine energies, therefore, that we achieve union with God.

We become united with God by grace in the Person of Christ, who is God come in the flesh. The means of becoming “like God” is through perfection in holiness, the continuous process of acquiring the Holy Spirit by grace through ascetic devotion.

Think about this.
Do you want to become more like God? If not, why

Revealing His Name

When the Savior declares that He has made known the name of God the Father, it is the same as saying that He has shown the whole world His glory. How did He do this? By making Himself known through His wonderful works. The Father is glorified in the Son as in an image and type of His own form, for the beauty of the archetype is seen in its image. The only Son then has made Himself known, and He is in His essence wisdom and life, the creator of the universe; He is immortal and incorruptible, pure, blameless, merciful, holy, good. His Father is known to be like Him, since He could not be different in nature from His offspring. The Father's glory is seen, as in an image and type of His own form, in the glory of the Son.

To call God "Father" is more exact than to call Him "God." The word "God" signifies His

dignity, but the word "Father" points to the distinctive attribute of his Person. If we say "God" we declare Him to be Lord of the universe. If we call him "Father" we show the way in which He is distinct as a Person, for we make known the fact that He has a Son. The Son himself gave God the name of Father, as being in some sense the more appropriate and truer appellation, when He said, not "I and God" but I and the Father are one, and also, with reference to Himself, On him has God the Father set his seal. And when He commanded His disciples to baptize all nations, He did not tell them to do this in the name of God, but expressly ordained that they were to do it in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

St. Cyril of Alexandria

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