

SUNDAY OF PENTECOST



Icon of Pentecost

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

Our readings for this great feast of Pentecost are again taken from the Acts of the Apostles and from John's Gospel. The reading from Acts recounts the actual occasion of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the impact of that event. The reading from John's Gospel relates two episodes of Jesus teaching during the days of the Feast of Booths (*Sukkot*).

Sukkot was one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals which Israelites were commanded to make to the Jerusalem Temple. One of the meanings of *Sukkot* has religious significance since it commemorates Israel's Exodus from bondage and its dependence on the will of God.

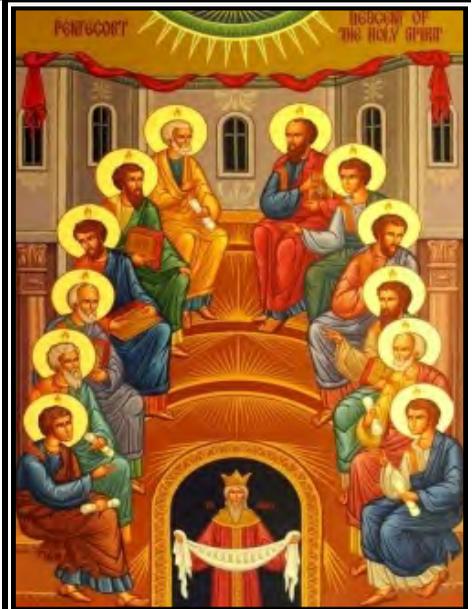
There is significance in relating this event on Pentecost since it summarizes what God's incarnation means to humanity. Jesus has led us out of bondage to Death and has revealed a way of living that is in accord with God's Spirit.

The two important Jesus quotes that John shares in his Gospel are:

If anyone thirsts, let him come to me; let him drink who believes in me. Scripture has it: 'From within him rivers of living water shall flow.' and

I am the light of the world. No follower of mine shall ever walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life.'

As you think about the first quote, you will recall that Jesus said these very same words to the Samaritan Woman at the well. These words were particularly poignant to people who lived in a desert environment. Water is absolutely essential for life. In saying this, Jesus shared how absolutely essential for the fullness of life His words are. I suspect that we who have an abundance of accessible water,



don't think about how life-giving the teachings of Jesus truly are. The more that we realize how essential His words are for the fullness of life, the more we will strive to live by them.

Indeed His teachings are filled with God's Spirit - they can help us understand the meaning and purpose of this earthly life. This earthly life is given to us to help us grow in our likeness of Jesus - to become true children of our Heavenly Father. Life is given to us to help us transform ourselves in such a manner that we might be able to experience the fullness of life.

Do you truly believe that the purpose of life is to grow in the likeness of Jesus?

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

The Apostles and the first Christians retained from the Old Testament (OT) the feast of Passover as well as the feast of Pentecost. They also preserved the name, Pentecost, because it was the fiftieth day after Pascha in the New Testament (NT) and also the fiftieth day after Passover in the OT.

The principal motive for celebrating Pentecost in the NT was the event known as the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. As you will recall that Jesus is quoted as telling His disciples that He would send God's Spirit on them after He ascended back to His Heavenly Father. I am sure that the Apostles did not have the same understanding of this as we do. They had yet to conceive of God as Three-In-One (Trinity). What they did experience, however, was a renewed fervor about the message of Jesus and also the courage to go out and *do what Jesus did*, namely preach as Jesus did: *Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand*. They found the strength to tell people about the Jesus they knew and loved and about how He told them to live. They shared the GOOD NEWS.

This feast became universally known in the third century. While the feast itself commemorates the event of the descent of the Spirit, the day after, Monday, our Church celebrates the feast of the Holy Spirit. This feast is dedicated to paying special worship to the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Trinity. We know that the Council of Nicaea put in place the beginning of our understanding that God



as three distinct Persons in one Godhead since it references Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

St. Basil the Great says this of the Holy Spirit, "Through the Holy Spirit, our return to paradise is achieved, we are elevated to the heavenly kingdom and become the children of God." He further states, "Through the Spirit, we are able to call God Father; we are able to become partakers of the grace of Jesus Christ and to be called children of light, and to share in everlasting glory."

As the Church understands what the Holy Spirit shares with us - that is His gifts - it is the power to be charitable, joyous, peaceful, patient, kind, good, modest and the ability restrain ourselves. In effect, the Spirit gives us the ability to live the Way of Jesus. Since we are called to become more like Jesus, God also gives us the ability to accomplish this task. All we have to do is to believe that we can live in the manner. All ways of God take belief. God would not call us to change our way of thinking and behaving if He didn't give us the power to accomplish this task. *Do you believe?*

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

As I shared in the article, originally the Church remembered what Jesus did at the Last Supper in the practice of Christian Suppers. He established a way to fulfill His promise to be with His friends unto the end of time. Abuses, however, soon crept in, especially among gentile converts, whose previous background included only religion-sponsored meals that were a pretext for merry-making and, of course, drunkenness. This happened at Corinth. Paul's words of reproof thunder down through the centuries. He truly condemns, not the meal itself, but the shocking selfishness of the participants who ate their own provisions, leaving nothing for the poor and even at times ending in real and true drunkenness.

Later, the meal was separated from the Eucharistic celebration, perhaps because of abuses or on account of the increased number of participants. With the tables removed, a room could accommodate many more people. Only one table remained, at which the bishop or presbyter presided. This now became the focal point known as the Lord's table," - the altar or, in our Church, known as the throne of God. Instead of reclining or sitting at supper, the worshippers stood for the whole

service, "gathered together for the one common Eucharist". Therefore, deprived of most characteristics of a meal, the independent Eucharist service lost its original designation as "the Lord's Supper," or "the Breaking of Bread," and became known as *Eucharistia* (*The prayer of thanksgiving to the Father. The words of Jesus were then inserted together into this with an invocation to the Spirit*). It could now

be held at any time of day. Mornings began to be favored, probably for symbolic reasons, in order to have Christ the Sun of Justice and Truth come upon the altar as the natural sun arose in the East.

Since the service was now brief, it usually was held immediately after the catechetical assembly, an instruction and prayer service modeled on the Morning Service (*Matins*) of the Jewish synagogue (*and, on occasion, after baptisms, consecration of bishops and other events*). Eventually, the special catechetical service was molded into one liturgical *Eucharistia* service. For years they were two services, the one open to all, including potential converts and penitents, the other, only for the faithful. (*Remember, only converts could say the Creed and attend the Eucharistic Service*).





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.



GRAVE BLESSINGS

Today, Sunday, June 4th

Today I will bless graves at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery @ 1:00 PM in the Mausoleum.

Next week, 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 common Service.

JUST A REMINDER

Although I suspect that no one will really notice this, put from this weekend until Pascha next year, Sundays become the last day of the week. This means that every Monday, we begin a new TONE for our worship. Our liturgical week is Monday to Sunday. *(Getting to know your Church)*



CALLED TO HOLINESS

In the last issue of this article I raised the issue of unconditional love of others. After I did that I realized that it is important for us to also realize that this admonition by Christ presupposes that we also "unconditional love ourselves." As I thought about this subject I realized that we can consider this exhortation of Jesus as beyond our ability IF we don't also unconditionally love ourselves.



Think about what Jesus said. He said, love your neighbor as yourself. If you don't love yourself, you can never love your neighbor. Of course we never really consider this point. There is always a presumption that we love ourselves. This, of course, is not always true. We cannot truly love ourselves if we feel that we are not worthy of being loved.

I find that many people really don't love themselves. They have this feeling that they are not good enough or perfect enough and, therefore, cannot love themselves.

I also find, however, that people love themselves and only want to indulge themselves, believing that

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

TOPIC: SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

By Len Mier

QUESTION: Who are the “strangers” that the trial of Jesus, as presented in the Gospel of Luke, challenges me to accept?

ESSAY 3

I think Luke is trying to challenge me to move beyond my own comfort level in every day interactions with people. The strangers that Luke seems to present are all those individuals and groups that I would view as different than myself. Living in a community that was at one time primarily a Christian community the population dynamics have moved to where the Christian in the community is not the minority. I am now like Luke's stronger.

The stranger idea gives me a new meaning of the Gospel message. I need to bring out the core message of the gospel in the way I live the message. The Good News is not just words but actions and attitudes. Luke's Jesus went to those on the fringe of society or different and brought them into the kingdom. As a stranger in the community, outside of that which wields social power, this should not diminish my drive to evangelize in the way I act.

The challenge is to bring the core message of the gospel into a community that sees this message as foreign and not their own, just as Jesus brought the message to those who are the strangers in Luke's Gospel.

Bringing the message to others by my interactions with them forces me to accept more the Gospel message of love which is more than a mere human principle of tolerance, but is the Divine principle of loving ones neighbor as ones self.



All the gospels record that the Jewish Sanhedrin called people to witness to the fact that Jesus said that they could destroy the temple in three days and He would rebuild it. Of course Jesus was not talking about the Jerusalem Temple building but His enemies did make this interpretation.

Who were the people, in your mind, that came forward to testify against Jesus? Where they the people who had listened to His teaching and witnessed the cures that He had performed? Or were they people who had only heard about Him and, at the instigation of the religious leaders, agreed to testify against Him.

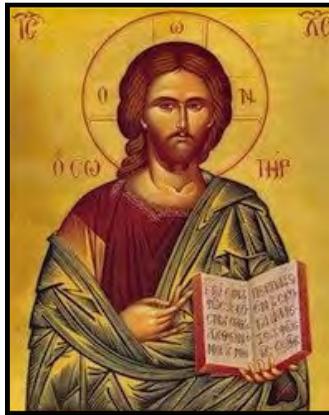
What are your thoughts on this topic? How would you respond to this question?

There are no right or wrong answers to this question. It is not a matter of analysis of a Gospel passage. It is all a matter of how you relate to what the Gospels present to us.

A POTPOURRI OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS

I introduced the idea that PRAYER is the means that we humans have to encounter God. We should try and analyze this encounter carefully, because if we do not know the laws it follows we may let it slip away. It is always a mutual encounter. It is always a discovery not only of the other but of ourselves. It is always a relationship. Perhaps the best image for it is a stained glass window. The light shining through it shows up its design, its colors, its beauty and its meaning. But at the same time the window itself by its design, colors, beauty and meaning reveals for us the invisible light beyond it. Thus the window and the light are discovered in relationship to one another. Discovering God in his serene eternity and in the man of sorrows who was the incarnate word, is also a discovery of the greatness of man. When we discover the depths in man, we go beyond the front he presents to us and discover his destiny which is not individual but personal. This destiny makes him more than an example of humankind; it makes him the member of a mysterious body, the whole of mankind, which is where God's presence is.

I wonder whether any of my readers have ever thought about this? Where is God discovered? In this



creation, especially in humankind. It is His Spirit which dwells within each human person, calling them into existence. Even though they may not realize it and even though they may live and act in a way which is contrary to the presence of God's Spirit in them, they never-the-less exist because God is within them. I know that many people find this hard to believe and understand. Just because a person is unaware of God's Spirit within them and just because a person does not act in accord with God's Spirit within them, doesn't mean that His Spirit isn't there. The bad behavior of a person does not negate God's Spirit within them. If His Spirit was not there, they would not be alive. This is important to think about. There is a lot of fuzzy thinking rampant in our world. A living person cannot drive out God's Spirit within them because of their "bad" behavior. Their bad behavior, of course, blocks their awareness of God's presence within them, calling them into real existence.

At the start, any man seeking this encounter with God is alone and must learn to recognize the existence of the other. This recognition must take place in a relationship and not in isolation. This is important. These are heavy thoughts. Think about them!

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 June 4 - Weekend of Pentecost
10:00 AM + John Kushner; Anna Bliss

WEEK OF PENTECOST

Monday June 5 - Pentecost Monday - Dorotheus, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday June 6 - Bessarion & Hilary, Venerables
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday June 7 - Theodotus, Bishop-Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday June 8 - Translation of Theodore's Relics
No Service Scheduled

Friday June 9 - Bartholomew & Barnabas, Apostles
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday June 10 - Timothy, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Sunday June 11 - Weekend of All Saints
10:00 AM + Deceased Members of the Parish.
1:00 PM - Grave Blessings at St. Hedwig's Cemetery

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

that they are deserving of all things in this world. It is a false love of self and usually covers up a deep sense of true unworthiness. Love of self means that I understand myself and see myself as God sees me. True love of self means I have a realistic understanding of who I am in the sight of God. It means recognizing my strengths and my weaknesses. All of us have certain weaknesses. We are not perfect nor does God expect us to be perfect. BUT, we have to be able to recognize ourselves as we are. That is true self love.

It seems to be a truth that if I cannot find the strength to love myself unconditionally, I can never love others unconditionally. Love others as your self. When I cannot truly love others, it usually means that I truly do not love myself. ***Think about this!***



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Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

In the last issue of this article, I introduced that the idea of the “works of Paul” were the first to make up what is now called the New Testament (NT). There are, however, a number of difficulties about the formation of a Pauline collection. The letters were written to handle particular problems in particular churches. Only Romans and Ephesians consciously reveal a larger scope. Why were such temporal documents preserved for later times? In Colossians 4:16 Paul recommends the exchange and circulation of his letters among neighboring churches. What prompted a wider circulation so that by the end of the 1st century Pauline letters were being read in churches far distant from the original destination? Perhaps their enduring value was quickly perceived! One wonders whether Paul himself ever expected that his correspondence would be read years after his death as a guide to universal Christian faith.

Some of the Pauline letters did not escape the doom that their temporal character might have brought to all. There was a letter to the Laodiceans and probably two lost letters to the Corinthians that never made it into the NT collection and were lost.

How then were the Pauline letters gathered together? Did a community take its letter from Paul and add to it the letters addressed to neighboring churches? Such a process would have produced several different collections.

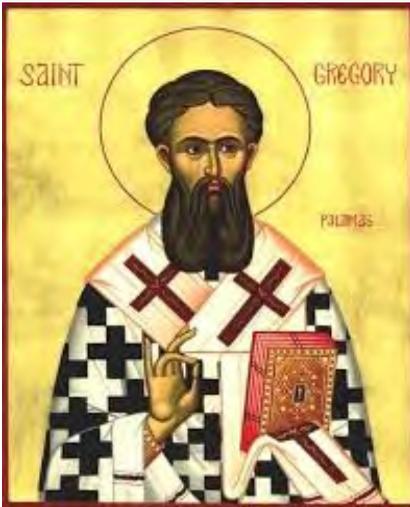
This is the theory of one biblical scholar and he uses it to account for the lack of agreement in the order of the Pauline writings that is evidenced in the Muratorian

Fragment and in Tertullian and Origen. Other scholars think that the attempt to collect Paul’s writings produced only one collection. One scholar proposes that at first there was a lack of interest in the Pauline letters and that only after 90 CE, with the publication of ACTS, was the importance of Paul’s contribution to Christianity realized. This realization led to a systematic attempt to collect his writings, some of which had already perished. According to other authors, a disciple of Paul, like Onesimus, began to collect the writings soon after Paul’s death.

When were the Pauline letters gathered into a collection? Obviously the questions of authorship and dating affect this problem. One scholar insists that the collection took place shortly after the writing of ACTS, for if the author of ACTS had known the Pauline writings, he would have cited them. Scholars agree that ACTS was written around 125 CE. There were references to some of Paul’s letters by early writers like Clement of Rome (96 CE) and Ignatius (110 CE).



Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



Gregory insists that there must be true theological boundaries when we think about God and these must include inherent limitations of human thought and speech about God. Any real discussion of the Trinity must begin with the humble acknowledgement of true human reason's inability to conceive and describe God's nature adequately: "It is difficult to conceive God, but to define him in words is an impossibility" he says. In his opinion, it is impossible to express Who God is and even more impossible to conceive Him. All we can really say is Who God IS not, indicating that He is without limitations or any sort of inabilities. St.

Gregory writes:

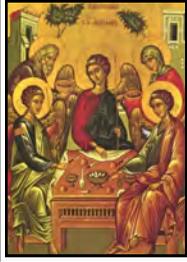
For that which may be conceived may perhaps be made clear by language, if not fairly well, at any rate imperfectly, to anyone who is not quite deprived of his hearing, or lazy in understanding. But to comprehend the whole of so great a subject as this is quite impossible and impracticable, not merely to the utterly careless and ignorant, but even to those who are highly exalted, and who love God.

These limitations apply to "every created nature; seeing that the darkness of this world and the thick covering of the flesh is an obstacle to the full understanding." Gregory is not denying the existence of God, but he insists that the knowledge of God's essence, the nature of God, is sharply limited because God's nature is by definition "incomprehensible and illimitable."

If so, what can be said? Are we left entirely in a wordless vacuum? No. Gregory insists. Both "our very eyes and the law of nature" clearly communicate to us the reality of God's existence and "that he is the efficient and maintaining cause of all things." As we gaze upon "visible objects," we see their "beautiful stability and progress, immovably moving and revolving if I may so say." Natural law in term manifests itself.

The difficulty that knowledge of God poses, Gregory states, is that the "approximations" of reason will always fall short of the glory of the subject it is trying to encompass, understand and explain. Yet there are certain things we can know about God, even if our knowledge is largely a series of negations. For example, Gregory comments, we can know that God does not have a body. If God did, how could God possible be "infinite and limitless, formless, intangible and invisible".

Think about this!



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

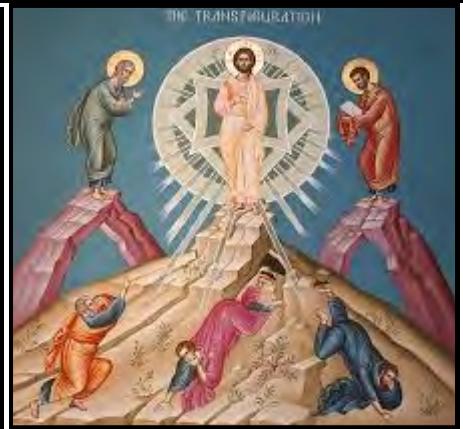
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.

The Spirituality of the Christian East

The Christian's spiritual life (*life in the Spirit*) is intimately connected with the Church's faith and worship. While we may consider them separately, we must know that they are essentially related, simply different aspects of the same reality. "Theology" (*the study of God*) for the Eastern Christian is not an abstract knowledge of the truth, but a knowledge flowing from a *living experience of God* - not from thought about Him or any logical consequences derived from intellectual analysis. Eastern Christianity does not see truth as primarily an intellectual reality deduced rationally, but as something experienced with the "eyes of the Spirit." Theology that does not flow from and/or lead to a deep union with God is merely speculation and may be dangerous and harmful.

This is why, in the Eastern Tradition, only three saints are called "the Theologian": SS. John the Apostle and Evangelist, Gregory Nazianzen and Symeon the "New" Theologian. Their writings reflect a deep personal union with God. They manifest a knowledge of the "heart" or "spirit" flowing from an experience of union with God.

Likewise, Liturgy must be understood as an experience of the divine realities - in particular a participation in the mystery of salvation. By the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ prays and acts



through His Body, the Church. As Christians participate in the Liturgy, they experience the "Truth" and come to "know" our God by experience and participate in the life of the Trinity, which the risen Christ communicates to them in and through the Spirit. Liturgical celebrations teach us the Church's true theology. Our spirituality is a living out of this Theology, which is experienced and manifested in Liturgy. All are expressions of Tradition, and ongoing life in the Spirit, an experience of the same reality. **Think about this!**

The Work of the Holy Spirit

The Spirit is the source of holiness, a spiritual light, and He offers His own light to every mind to help it in its search for truth. By nature the Spirit is beyond the reach of our mind, but we can know Him by His goodness. The power of the Spirit fills the whole universe, but He gives Himself only to those who are worthy, acting in each according to the measure of his faith.

Simple in himself, the Spirit is manifold in His mighty works. The whole of His being is present to each individual; the whole of His being is present everywhere. Though shared in by many, He remains unchanged; His self-giving is no loss to Himself. Like the sunshine, which permeates all the atmosphere, spreading over land and sea, and yet is enjoyed by each person as though it were for him alone, so the Spirit pours forth His grace in full measure, sufficient for all, and yet is present as though exclusively to everyone who can receive Him. To all creatures that share in Him He gives

a delight limited only by their own nature, not by His ability to give.

The Spirit raises our hearts to heaven, guides the steps of the weak, and brings to perfection those who are making progress. He enlightens those who have been cleansed from every stain of sin and makes them spiritual by communion with Himself.

From the Spirit comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of the mysteries of faith, insight into the hidden meaning of Scripture, and other special gifts. Through the Spirit we become citizens of heaven, we are admitted to the company of the angels, we enter into eternal happiness and abide in God. Through the Spirit we acquire a likeness to God; indeed, we attain what is beyond our most sublime aspirations - we become God.

St. Basil the Great

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