

SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS



Icon of All Saints

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this weekend of ALL SAINTS, our readings are taken from Paul's Letter to the Hebrews and Matthew's Gospel. The opening sentence of the eleventh chapter of Paul's letter states this: "Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for and conviction about things we do not see." A truly powerful statement on which we do well to reflect. Then in chapter 12 he provides us with this exhortation: "let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith".

In the last section of the Gospel reading, which is taken from chapter 19, Jesus is quoted as saying to Peter: "everyone who has given up home, brothers or sisters, father or mother, wife or children or property for my sake will receive many times as much and inherit everlasting life."

If you have ever wondered what makes a person a saint, I believe that these quotes give you truly a clear idea. A saint is a person who, first and foremost, believes and has faith in the Lord Jesus as the true revelation of God about how to be a human in the manner that God intended when He created humankind. Second, a saint is a person who first seeks the Kingdom of God and then deals with the responsibilities that life presents. And last, a saint is a person who clearly sees that the primary task in life is to "put God first" in all he does. If you make anyone or anything more important than God, then you fail to live up to how God intended you to live this earthly life.

This, I know, may be difficult for some to understand. We tend to put those we love first in our lives. I truly believe that if we put God first in our lives, we will not fail to support those we love and care about. Why do I say



this? I say this because when I place God first in my life, I clearly bear witness to others, especially those I love, how to live and achieve the fullness of life. I also say this because when God is first in my life, I will automatically treat all others with unconditional love, kindness and acceptance.

We are all called to be saints - that is people who live in accord with God's Spirit which He has poured into us in the process of sharing His divine life with us. You will never hurt the people you love and others when God is at the center of your life.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

The eighth weekend after Pascha, that is the first weekend after Pentecost, is called the Weekend of ALL SAINTS. This feast completes the cycle of moveable feasts. On this day the Eastern Church pays particular veneration to all those who are the fruit of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and, I believe, also highlights God's plan for all Christians. We all have been called to be saints. I know that many will immediately think that this is truly an impossible task. It is not! It requires us, however, to embrace the WAY OF JESUS.

I think that one of the reasons why many people think that becoming a saint is impossible for them is that they think that they have to be **perfect** and feel that they can't achieve this state. Sainthood does not involve perfection. It involves, rather, a **desire** to grow in the **likeness** of Jesus. It also requires that we have a true **intention** to live in a manner that we believe God has called us to live.

The veneration of the saints began with the death of the first martyrs of the Christian era. The cult of the Martyrs in later centuries incorporated also the cult of the apostles, bishops, ascetics and religious of both sexes.

Before long, the cult of the New Testament (NT) saints was extended to include that of the Old Testament (OT) saints. St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his fifth Mystagogical Catechesis attests that during the Divine Liturgy after the Anamnensis "we commemorate those who have fallen asleep before us and who have believed in God: the forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, apostles,

Українська Греко-Католицька Церква
Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church



preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, ascetics and for every just spirit", so that through their prayers and their intercession, God may receive our petitions. Our Church clearly believes that (1) those who have gone before us into the next dimension (1) are alive; (2) can have a positive relationship with us; and (3) care about us. There is an unbroken connection between all humans who believe in the reality of a God Who loves His creation and who desires humans only to grow in the likeness of His Son, Jesus, so that they might understand that they are His children, the heirs of His kingdom.

We humans have been created with "free will," that is the ability to make choices about what we believe and how we act. This means we can choose either to believe in a God Who truly cares about us or we can reject the notion of a loving and caring Creator-God.

What is truly interesting in my estimation is that our human experience tells us that anyone who creates anything, takes pride in and cares about his creation. Why would this not be true about the creator of humankind?

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

As I shared in the last issue of this article, the Eucharistic service in the early Church was often connected with and followed baptisms and also catechetical assemblies. Justin, a Father of the Church (148-155 CE) provides us with this description:

Thus, after baptizing him that professes his faith and assents to our doctrine, we lead him into the assembly of those called the brethren to say earnest prayers in common for ourselves, for the newly baptized, and for all others all over the world so that we who have come to the knowledge of the truth may also by the grace of God be found worthy to live a good life by deed and to observe the commandments by which we may gain eternal life. After finishing the prayers, we greet each other with a kiss. Then bread and a cup of wine are brought to the one presiding over the brethren. When he takes it, he gives praise and glory to the Father of all in the name of the Son and of the Holy spirit, and gives thanks at length because he considered us worthy of these gifts.

Justin also provides us with a similar description of the Eucharist being celebrated after a catechetical assembly.

The celebration of the Eucharist liturgy, as reconstructed from various writers of the next two centuries and a half, contain all the salient features described by Justin. What preceded the Eucharistic portion of the liturgy



need not concern us, only that at which the initiated alone could participate: (1) Common, Intercessory Prayers of the Faithful; (2) the Kiss of Peace; (3) the Presentation of Bread and Wine or the Offertory; (4) the Eucharistic Prayer; (5) Fraction - the breaking apart of the Bread; (6) Communion; and (7) Ablutions and Dismissal.

We need to consider each of these elements to understand the structure of the Eucharistic Service. The first is the common, intercessory prayers that were said by “the brethren.” Authors tell us that these prayers were offered while the brethren stood with uplifted hands. Their content must have been similar to the petitions included in Clement of Rome’s *Letter to the Corinthians*: for the sick and weak, for those in need, for the erring, the faint-hearted, for peace, for princes, governors and all civil authority. As summarized by Tertullian, there were petitions for “all emperors, that they may have a long life, loyal people, a quiet territory and whatever else may be desired by men and by Caesar.”

More to follow!



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 11th

Today I will bless graves at St. Hedwig Cemetery @ 1:00 PM in the Mausoleum. If weather permits I will bless individual graves after the common

Service.

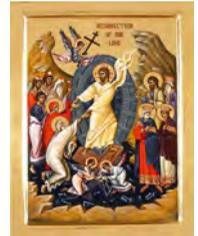
SUMMERTIME

Summertime is always a difficult time for parishes.... The bills keep coming in but people go on well-deserved vacations. Please remember your parish during this vacation time. Whether there are 40 or 5 people in church, we still have to pay the bills as if a 100 people are here. You are a generous community, I know that you will realize that we have to maintain our parish buildings.



CALLED TO HOLINESS

It is probably evident that the “call” I have been writing about in this article, is a “call” to FOLLOW JESUS. How do we accomplish this? We attempt to change the way that we think and behave, realizing that the thinking of most people is driven by their unconscious thoughts and experiences and that our thinking drives our behaviors. Also, humans, like all animals, have instincts, genetically hard-wired behaviors that enhance our ability to cope with vital environmental contingencies - fight or flight. There is a natural instinct to defend ourselves from perceived dangers. Other basic instincts include denial, revenge, tribal loyalty, greed and the urge to procreate.



Jesus calls us to thoughtful reflection on how we think and act and then work to bring our thinking and behaviors into line with His way of thinking and behaving. His way is a thoughtful human way which has a firm “spiritual” foundation - that is to allow God’s Spirit within us to direct our thinking and behaving so that we grow in our

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The good life is a process, not a state of being. It is a direction not a destination

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

TOPIC: FIRST SERMON

By Len Mier

TOPIC: Transfiguration of Christ as presented in St. Matthew's Gospel (17:1-3)

Every year the Church celebrates this great feast of the transfiguration of Christ, one of the twelve great feasts of the Church. A feast that reveals to us something about our own salvation, we are presented with the transfiguration account as told in St. Matthew's gospel.

I find it not to be overlooked that Matthew begins with the phrase, "After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John, his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. What happened six days prior?" Matthew seems to want us to be aware of a specific frame of time. Numbers played a role in Jewish understanding of the cosmos. Why is it important that Matthew tells us six days passed? What does this miraculous event mean for us in our lives?

We have to look back to the previous chapter of Matthew's gospel to find out why this mention of six days is important to the telling of the transfiguration account, and why it is important to our own understanding about Jesus. Let us look back in the gospel of Matthew to hear Jesus asking the twelve a question that Christians still ask themselves today: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" We need to remind ourselves that Matthew was writing to an audience that was primarily of Jewish origin. For them the term "Son of Man" had messianic overtones. For them the messiah was to be a person who restored the earthly kingdom of the people of Israel. The answers varied from the twelve. So Jesus

probes his disciples further. Having lived with them and taught them in word and deed, Jesus does on to ask them more specifically: "But who do you say that I am?" to which Peter gives his confession "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

As if starting a timer Matthew starts counting. Where else do we encounter this time frame? It is the same time frame as the writing of the creation narrative in the Book of Genesis. On the first day of creation we hear the revelation that God makes His presence known to this world He is creating, by showing his presence with that of light, "Let there be light, and there was light." This idea of six days of creation I think spoke to the mind of the early Jewish followers of Christ. A great revelation of light is God's presence made manifest. We see the creation narrative moving in time through to the sixth day. The last day of creation is the summit of all that God wanted to create. This first creation ends with "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness."

Peter saying, "You are the Messiah" about Jesus is as great a revelation to the other disciples who are probably expecting the messiah to be the warrior king, giving Divine order and displacing the chaos of their world, just as the creative revelation of God's divine light displaced the darkness of chaos. They start to realize at this moment that Jesus was not the warrior political kingdom restorer Messiah main stream Judaism

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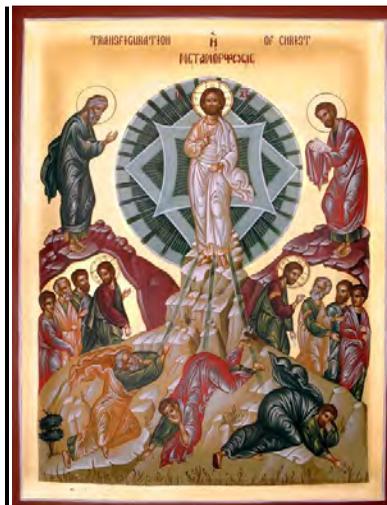
of the day wanted. We see that Matthew now progresses full force forward this event of the transfiguration. All the gospel accounts take Peter, who made the profound confession, along with James and his brother John, to this event. It is here on the height of creation that this miraculous event takes place.

Matthew tells us Jesus was transfigured before them and that appearing with him are Moses, the first law giver, and Elisha, the greatest of Israel's prophets. The evangelist tells us Jesus' face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light, and we hear the voice of the Father reaffirming Peter's confession to the three, "This is my beloved Son." Our icon of this great feast gives us glimpse of what this event looks like to the believer. If we compare it to the icon of the Lord's resurrection we can see that the transfigured Jesus is depicted with the same glorious mandorla, the uncreated eternal light of the resurrected Christ.

Is Matthew trying to tell us that this transfiguration happening six days post proclamation by Peter that Jesus is the messiah, the culmination of a new creation in Christ? Yes, I think Matthew is revealing to us a completion of the new creation, the fact that Jesus is the perfection of creation, and that the resurrected Jesus will be the first born of this new creation.

Now comes the difficulty with reading about this miraculous event, what does this miraculous event mean for us in our lives?

In order for this passage of scripture to be relevant to a modern Eastern Christian we have to go beyond basking in the glow of light from the miracle of the manifestation of Jesus on the mountain. I think that we must take away from the account of the transfiguration, that in baptism we too have become a new creation, if we truly take on Christ. His presence with Moses, the first law giver, he is also a new law giver. Giving us the law, "Love one another as I have loved you." His presence with Elijah, he is also the new and greatest of prophets, in that he shows to us truly what God's will is. In accepting this new creation for ourselves we need to see that the spark of Divine light is within us. We need to nurture and grow this Divine light dwelling with in us, until it busts forth from



We need to make manifest this Divine light for not only those close to us to see but make it shine for the whole world to see in us.

As you think about the transfiguration of Our Lord, which you have heard about many different times, what message does it have for you? The events in the life of Christ are all meant to reveal something to us that can help us live our present lives. The icon of the transfiguration is the icon that the Eastern Church uses to convey a message to us about the meaning and purpose of our lives. What is that message, as you understand it? Go back and reread Matthew's account of this event and reflect on the message it has for you!

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 11 - Weekend of All Saints

10:00 AM + Deceased Members of the Parish.

1:00 PM - Grave Blessings at St. Hedwig's Cemetery

SECOND WEEK AFTER PENTECOST

Monday June 12 - Onuphrius & Peter, Venerables

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday June 13 - Aquilina, Martyr

No Service Scheduled

Wednesday June 14 - Elisha, Prophet

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday June 15 - Amos, Prophet

No Service Scheduled

Friday June 16 - Tychon the Wonderworker, Bishop

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday June 17 - Manuel, Sabel & Ishmael, Martyrs

No Service Scheduled

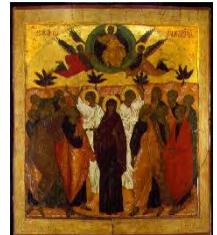
Sunday June 18 - Second Weekend of Pentecost

10:00 AM + Michael Washuta; George & Dolla Khalife

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

likeness to Jesus. This requires that we believe that the "meaning and purpose of life" is to grow in our likeness of Jesus Who is truly God's revelation of what humans were created to be like. When God created humans, He gave us a free will and an ability to grow in our understanding of who we are in His creation. He loves us so very much, that He granted us freedom to be our own persons. Why, because He sees us as His children and we are created in His image. He did this so that there would be a possibility for us to "freely return His love". To make that possible, He risked being rejected by us. To truly be His children we need to be free.

Any good parent, I believe, understands this. They only want their children to freely return their love. The goal is to freely return God's love by freely choosing to think and live like Jesus.



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Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

As I shared in the last issue of this article, the Pauline letter were written before the Gospels. It is difficult to be certain when the earliest pre-Gospel traditions were written down. It seems reasonable to place in the 50's some of the works that modern scholars suppose to have antedated the Gospels (e.g., "Q", proto-Mark, the earliest written tradition behind John).

In antiquity Papias knew of a collection of the sayings of the Lord in Hebrew or Aramaic compiled by Matthew and Irenaeus states that this material antedated Mark. By the time that Luke was writing (in the 80's?), many others had undertaken to compile a narrative of all the things that had been accomplished by Jesus. Such pre-Gospel written sources, now lost by theoretically reconstructed by scholars, must have already shown considerable development over the words and acts of Jesus. They would have constituted a trustworthy record of the memories of Jesus as preserved in the Christian communities of the 50's, but scarcely a verbatim report of what had been said and done in the 20's.

The canonical Gospels were written in the period 60-100 CE, with probably only Mark to be dated in the 60's. In them, the pre-Gospel written tradition was systematized along both chronological and theological lines. In Mark, the material to be narrated was

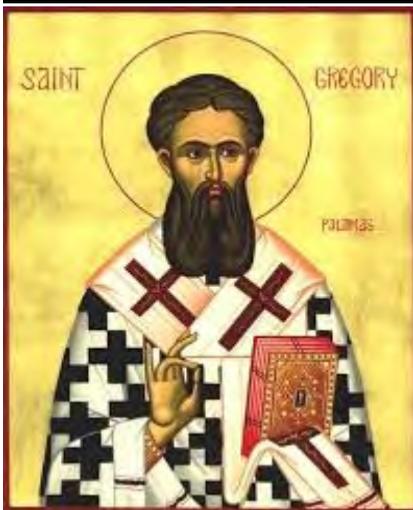
fitted into a simplified sequence of the public ministry of Jesus (baptism, ministry in Galilee, ministry outside Galilee, journey to Jerusalem, passion, death and resurrection), with the Evangelist inserting incidents where they seemed *logically* to fit - not necessarily on the basis of a correct historical chronology. The choice of the material to be incorporated and the orientation given to it were determined by the Evangelist's theological outlook and by the needs of the community for which the Gospel was being written.

In the 70's, or more likely in the 80's, an unknown Christian wrote the Gospel that has come down to us as the Gospel according to Matthew, *perhaps* because the Evangelist was a disciple of Matthew, or drew on the earlier collection of sayings written by Matthew. Probably, also in the 80's, Luke undertook a more elaborate project that produced not only a Gospel which had more formal historical pretensions but also a history of the origin and spread of Christianity in the post-resurrectional period (i.e., ACTS). The theological orientation is far more pronounced in Matthew and Luke than it is in Mark. In the 90's, but drawing on an earlier tradition related to John son of Zebedee, a disciple of John produced a Gospel somewhat different from the others.

More to follow!



Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



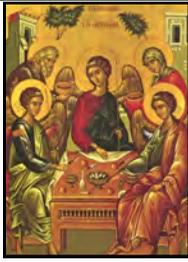
Gregory admits that if God does not possess a body, then God must be “incorporeal.” The term *incorporeal* “does not yet set before us - or contain within itself - his essence.” Neither do other terms such as unbegotten, unoriginate, unchanging, incorruptible or “any other predicate which is used concerning God or in reference to him. For what effect is produced upon his being or substance by his having no beginning and being incapable of change of limitation?” Other human predicates we sometimes employ, such as “corporeal, begotten, or mortal,” fall short unless one “clearly and adequately” describes the subject to which they

apply. All, for example, could equally apply to “a man, or a cow, or a horse.”

Hence, Gregory believes those who would speak well of God must reverently and humbly move beyond a merely negative or apophatic theology. To describe God only in negative terms would be much like a mathematician “who, when asked how many twice five make, should answer, “not two, nor three, nor four, nor five, nor twenty, nor thirty, not in short any number below ten, nor any multiple of ten, but refused to answer, “ten.” A better path to follow, both in mathematics and in theology, is to broaden our knowledge “both by the elimination of negatives and the assertion of positives to arrive at a comprehension of the truth.” The best theologians, then, will know both when to speak and when to remain silent.

On the basis of this methodology, Gregory begins to add to and arrange his fundamental building blocks concerning God. Having concluded that God is incorporeal, Gregory explores the relationship of God to space. Is God “nowhere or somewhere”? If God is nowhere, is it reasonable or coherent to speak of God as existing at all? Gregory thinks not. “For if the nonexistent is nowhere, then that which is nowhere is also perhaps nonexistent.” On the other hand, if God is somewhere, where is he? The only two options seem to be a spatial location within the universe or existence “above the universe.”

Hopefully my readers can see the great efforts that Fathers of the Church, like Gregory, put into coming up with the understanding of God that we say is true. I know that some may feel that all of this is quite pedantic and useless. I share this only because I feel that each of us has to really answer the question: *What do I really believe God is like? Why?* In order to have a relationship with Him.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 24

WEEKEND OF ALL SAINTS

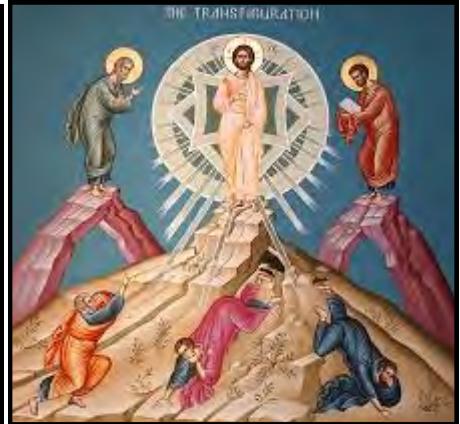
June 10-11, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

I have shared the thought, in another article in the last Bulletin, that **PRAYER** must be an **ENCOUNTER** with God - must be an experience of the existence of the God. This experience, however, can only take place when we are willing to enter into a relationship with God.

All relationships require, however, that we recognize the other person as they are and not as we desire them to be. We experience this in our relationships with other humans. If we expect others to be who we want them to be and refuse to accept them as they are, we never establish a real relationship with them. *(One of the reasons why there are so many divorces in our country is that people go into marriage wanting the other person to be who they want them to be and they really don't know the real person with whom they enter into marriage).* The same is true with God. If we expect Him to be who we want Him to be, we can never have a genuine relationship with Him - we can never come to know Him as He is. He is our fantasy God.

I find that one of the major mistakes in our modern religious world is that people try to make God "in their image and likeness" and don't strive to become someone in His image and likeness. Think about it. Most Christians expect God to have the same values that they do. They refuse to accept the fact that God



doesn't act like us humans. Many Christians want to believe that they know exactly how God thinks and behaves. They want Him to hate the people they hate and judge the people they judge and, of course, punish the people they want punished. This only proves that the God they think they know is not real.

We are called to discover the God Who really is and Who is sharing Himself intimately with His creation. I always say, don't try to put God in a box and dictate how He should be and act. **Think about this!**

Dwarfs on the Shoulders of Giants

There is a crowd of wings fluttering in our hearts: the holiness of the Holy One, of God, and the holiness of Christians sanctified by mortification in their faith and their love.

We have the twenty centuries of the Church's life in our blood. We are its heirs. Not only in the sense that we possess an inheritance to administer, but in the sense that we are like we are, because our ancestors were like they were. Our faith has the stamp of their faith. Our hope has the strength of their hope. Our love has the intensity of their love. Our freedom is tinged with the color of their freedom, whatever it was like: more or less bright, more or less

somber, more or less filled with laughter. We ought to know them in order to know ourselves better. We ought, as they used to say in the Middle Ages, to climb on their shoulders so as to see further.

We are dwarfs; they are giants. For this very reason we need their shoulders

By living the Word, they have scanned the horizon of God's plan for salvation. They can help us to see what they have seen.

Tomáš Cardinal Špidlík, S.J.

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