



## Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this second weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from Paul's Letter to the Romans and Matthew's Gospel. With Pentecost the Church ends taking our readings from the Acts of the Apostles and John's Gospel.

Christians in Rome were predominantly Gentile, with a Judaeo-Christian minority, which the majority of scholars see reflected in the letter. The principal theme of the letter is the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

The passage that we hear from Romans sets forth the Christian idea that humans have an "interior law" written in their hearts which supersedes any written law. That law, of course, is God's own Spirit and which we now think of as our "conscience." Most humans realize when they act in a way which is not loving or noble. It is God's Spirit attempting to help us live as God's children.

The passage we hear from Matthew's Gospel relates the call of the first disciples - the call of Simon, Andrew, James and John. In the three synoptic Gospels the calling of the first disciples is very similar. These accounts differ from that found in John's Gospel (John 1:35-51). In John's Gospel, it is the revelation made by John the Baptizer about Jesus that encourages Andrew to follow Jesus. In the synoptic, Jesus directly "calls" Peter, Andrew, James and John.

Regardless of how the disciples were called, in all of the accounts it was Jesus' charisma that seems to have attracted His followers who, once they heard what He taught, gave themselves completely and totally to following Him. They sensed the true difference in His message from that of their original faith. They sensed that His message was filled with hope and, importantly, a very reasonable approach



to life. I believe this is the underlying basis for calling the teaching of Jesus the GOOD NEWS.

God calls us through the Church, the assembly of those who believe in Jesus Christ as God incarnate, to embrace a way of living that is not regulated by rules and laws but is driven by a belief that how Jesus lived is the right way of living - driven by God's Spirit.

How did Jesus live? His entire life was dedicated to worshipping God by being kind and loving to His fellowmen. He made love of neighbor and forgiveness of those who hated Him, the sole criteria by which He lived. He believed that it is necessary for spiritual growth to treat others as you want to be treated, regardless of how they respond to you. The Jesus way "transforms" you and makes you a child of God.

# Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

Because our entire liturgical life is based on the ritual of the Byzantine Church, our theology, which flows from our liturgical practices, is Eastern. It truly differs from Western Roman Catholicism. We are Catholic because we are in union with Rome. This does not mean that we have the same theology, spirituality or understanding of the Good News that Western Catholics do. Our Western brothers, unfortunately, endured the Reformation, that is the establishment of Protestantism. We in the East, never experienced the same thing. We are as Catholic as the Roman Catholics yet we are different. But we have a different perspective on the Good News. I know that this, at times, is difficult for us and for Roman Catholics to understand. What does it mean to be Catholic? It doesn't mean to think like Western Catholics whose Church endured things which we, as Eastern Catholics, did not endure. To be Catholic only means that we are in union with the Bishop of Rome. It does not mean that we embrace the theology of the Western Church. Our experience of the Church must be different. Our liturgical theology, from which our understanding of the Good News emerges, is much different from that of the Roman Church.

In the past our Church has tried to worship with in the Eastern tradition but embrace Western theology. It just doesn't work. Our worship is based on a particular approach to an understanding of what God revealed through His Son



Jesus. Just as the Scriptures are not the same and report the events in the life of Jesus in very different ways, so we must be open to the possibility that there are a number of different approaches to the Gospel message and that all are equally legitimate.

Most Roman Catholics believe that if you are Catholic you have to think like the Western Church, believe like the Western Church, and be like the Western Church. The fact of the matter is that when we became of part of the Catholic Communion of Churches in 1596, the Union of Brest-Litovsk, we agreed that we would be in union with the Roman Church BUT retain our own liturgical practices and theology. People seem to confuse this. To be CATHOLIC does not mean that we have to embrace the Western Catholic way of thinking about and accepting the Good News. We have a different approach which is equally and truly legitimate.

The Western Catholic world, however, doesn't see it in this manner because of its experience with the REFORMATION. We are truly Catholic but we are different.

## The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Although all of you who are probably reading this Bulletin are aware that I have stressed that our Divine Liturgy is a worship of God the Father with the Son in the Holy Spirit, I don't know how many truly understand this.

We, as human beings, are called to worship God. People have, in the past, accomplished this in many ways. We have typically taken those things that we have that are special and then offered them to God in worship, destroying them so that they might only belong to God.

We Christians, however, believe that Jesus showed us a new way of worshipping God, namely the same way He worshipped Him. Jesus showed us how to worship God.

What did He do? He worshiped God by offering Himself - His very life - back to God in thanksgiving for life. He helped us realize that the "LIFEFORCE" within us is actually a sharing in the LIFEFORCE of God Himself. Therefore we offer our lives back to God in praise and adoration for the gift of life itself. So when we gather to worship, we do what Jesus did before He suffered and died - we offer our lives back to God in unity with His Son and in His Spirit.

When we think about it, we know that Jesus actually offered His very life back to the Father in worship and praise. He surrendered His life out of adoration to the Father. He did not "fight" the events of life BUT, rather, embraced the life that presented itself



to Him.

All this means that He did not see the betrayal and rejection by others as an obstacle to His praise and worship of the Father BUT as an opportunity to praise the Father. The challenges of His life provided Him an opportunity to thank God for His life.

Life presents multiple challenges. They are neither bad or good but, rather, opportunities to place our hope and trust in the Father - they are opportunities to truly understand that the meaning and purpose of life is to face challenges with the knowledge that we are loved by God and called to personally return His life by living as His children. This means, of course, that we seize each opportunity to offer Him praise and glory.

This particular approach to life truly answers the question about the meaning and purpose of life. We have been given this earthly existence to grow as Children of God. How are you approaching life? Do you understand that the life you have been given is to help you spiritually grow through the acceptance of life's challenges?

***Think about this!***



# 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. We will shortly arrange to receive any items you would like to offer for the sale

### TENTATIVE DATES

**September 15th & 16th**

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## BEST WISHES



On this Fathers' Day I would extend best wishes to all of the fathers and men in our parish. May God Grant You Many Years. I would also commend to your prayers,

all of our deceased fathers. May God grant them eternal memory and blessed repose.

**Many Years - Многая літа**

**Eternal Memory Вічна Память**

**We are not given a good or a bad life. We are given a life. It's up to us to make it good or bad.**

## CALLED TO HOLINESS

The "call to holiness" is, I must confess, a calling that requires us to make a real effort to understand the real meaning and purpose of life. First and foremost, the "call to holiness" requires us to come to a reasonable, sensible, intelligent understanding of Who God Is. Over the years I have found that people have a variety of real impressions of Who God Is. These impressions are not always positive. we humans seem to have a tendency to lay a "lot of trips" on God, blaming Him for a wide variety of things, especially those life events that we judge to be negative.



I don't seem to find, however, the same tendency in humans to see God as the "Giver of All Good Things and Benefits". So many presume that the good things that happen to them are the result of their own efforts. The bad things are a result of God responding to something that He doesn't like about in the way we chose to live. This tendency, I truly believe, is absolutely incorrect and unreasonable. It is, however, a tendency which, (Continued on page 8)

## FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

### TOPIC: SECOND SERMON

*By Len Mier*

TOPIC: Transfiguration of Christ as presented in St. Luke's Gospel (9:28-36)

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 on this day with the transfiguration account as told in St. Luke's Gospel.

Luke's gospel account of the transfiguration of Christ is not one we normally hear unless we attend Matins for this great feast. It is the account as given by St. Matthew that we normally hear during liturgy. At Matins Luke's account is used in place of what is normally a gospel reading that depicts the resurrection of our Lord. I think it is appropriate that this reading is placed in the Matins service. The opening line in Luke's telling of this miracle states "after eight days" the event takes place. What a powerful proclamation. The idea of the eight day is but one of the strong resurrection images in this gospel that makes it unique among the three transfiguration accounts. While all three of the synoptic gospels recount this event, Luke telling of the event is the most unique among them.

Luke was probably not Jewish, and tradition tells us he was most likely of Greek origin and a follower of the Apostle Paul. Luke's audience was most likely of Gentile origin, probably the same communities that Paul evangelized. His perspective of what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration was written to reaffirm the faith of those who were not deeply rooted in the Jewish mind set. Saint

Luke set forth his reason for writing his gospel as to give an orderly account so you may be certain of the teachings you received.

Luke, after his opening revelation, points us to the fact that Christ took the three apostles with him to pray on the mountain. Unique with Luke, he presents this event and Jesus' agony in the garden as the only time Jesus' prayer is shared with his disciples, otherwise prayer was always done in private between Jesus and his Father. Just as in the garden we find the same three overcome with sleep only to be awakened as Jesus enters into His glory.

As I have said, one of the most striking statements of Luke is that eight days have passed. The eight day is seen as the Lord's Day, a day outside the normal cycle of time and events. We as Eastern Christians refer to the Great Feast of the Resurrection as the eighth day. This in my mind makes me question if Luke was telling his readers of a post-resurrection encounter not a pre-crucifixion event, since there is no admonition to his disciples not to tell anyone till he has risen from the dead. It is as if Jesus is allowing James, John and Peter to a share in his resurrection, but their lack of understanding prevents them sharing what they have seen.

Luke in his account also points to the fact that as Jesus prayed, He encountered God the Father. During this interaction with His Father

*(Continued on page 7)*



*(Continued from page 6 - From our Deacon Candidate)*

Jesus' face changed in appearance becoming dazzling bright. Unlike for us, Jesus in this change is not a change by coming in contact with the Divine but a revelation of the Divine in his person. For us to change, or our salvation, is made by us coming in contact and being made aware of the Divine in us.

It as if Luke is recalling for those not of the Jewish faith the story of the encounter of Moses, also seen in this vision, how upon encountering God in the burning bush became radiant. In that event Moses encounter with the divine changed him. This touching of the divine and mankind changes God's creation in some physical and spiritual way, it causes salvation.

It is once this visible change in Jesus' appearance takes place does Luke tell us that conversing with Jesus are two of the greatest teachers in salvation history. Moses the person whose appearance was changed and his vocation established by his contact with the divine goes on to bring the law that will bring God's people closer to Him. Elijah, one the greatest prophets in the Old Testament also appears in this vision. His message to God's people transformed Elijah and the people of God to a closer union of God to mankind. It is Elijah who returns to God in a flash of light.

Luke in his narrative also gives his readers and us insight on what the discussion among the three persons in this vision contained. While in this glory Jesus talks of "his exodus" that will take place in Jerusalem. To Luke's non-Jewish reader whose community or nation was not shaped by the salvific act of bringing God's people out of physical slavery the Old Testament exodus did not have the same gravity of meaning to those who Luke paints the image for this new community of believers that Jesus' resurrection and glorification by the Father is the new exodus and community establishing event, delivering of this new community of believers from the slavery of our human nature.

The last thing I have to point out is Luke tells us that God the Father's presence is also made manifest in this event. In the same imagery found elsewhere in scripture, and in many cultures encounter with the Divine, a cloud comes and shadows the people experiencing a vision



of the Divine, a Divine affirmation of the event is given to the partakers.

What do Christians today need to take away from this event presented to us today? We need to wake from our slumber to the realization that if we truly believe that the glory of God dwells with in us, or reflected from us, we must be open to see and show forth that glory in some way. We need to take to heart the voice of the Divine so that we too can share in Jesus' glory and shine forth and show it in our appearance as the light shone though Moses and Elijah.

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I would again encourage my readers to think about this and reflect upon what is being said!

# 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 18 - Second Weekend of Pentecost - Father's Day**  
**10:00 AM + Michael Washuta; George & Dolla Khalife**  
**+ All Living and Deceased Fathers**

## THIRD WEEK AFTER PENTECOST

**Monday June 19 - Jude, Apostle**  
**8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Tuesday June 20 - Methodius, Bishop-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Wednesday June 21 - Julian, Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Thursday June 22 - Eusebius, Bishop-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

Friday June 23 - Agrippina, Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

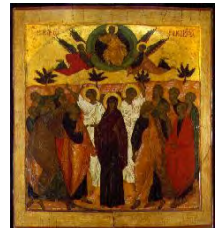
Saturday June 24 - Birth of John the Baptizer  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Sunday June 25 - Third Weekend of Pentecost**  
**10:00 AM +**

*(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)*

I have found, is difficult to change in people. What is very typical of humans is that we always need to find someone to blame when life doesn't turn out the way we think it should. We always find a scapegoat. The "call to holiness" is a call to genuine and truthful living, not blaming God for the challenges that we encounter in our lives.

The "call to holiness" is also a call to recognize that God is with us in all of our human struggles and challenges. He has revealed to us, through Jesus and the Church, that He has created us to be the Temples of His Holy Spirit. Therefore He is with us in all of the challenges of life. Although this cannot be proven with concrete data, it is something that we are called to believe. This belief will sustain us and help us as we meet the challenges of life.



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



## Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

As I ended this article in the last issue, in the 90's, but drawing on an earlier tradition related to John, a disciple of John produced a Gospel somewhat different from the three synoptic gospels. On the one hand, in John there were preserved historical reminiscences lost or over-simplified in the earlier Gospels; on the other hand, there was a truly profound theologizing of the words and deeds of Jesus.

One might ask these real questions: *Why were these four Gospels ultimately accepted by the Church? Why was not only one of them selected? Or at least, why was Mark not set aside, since most of its material is preserved in Matthew and Luke?*



This is all the more curious when we realize that the idea of there being only one Gospel was the primitive concept and the individual written Gospels were looked on as variations of the one basic Gospel.

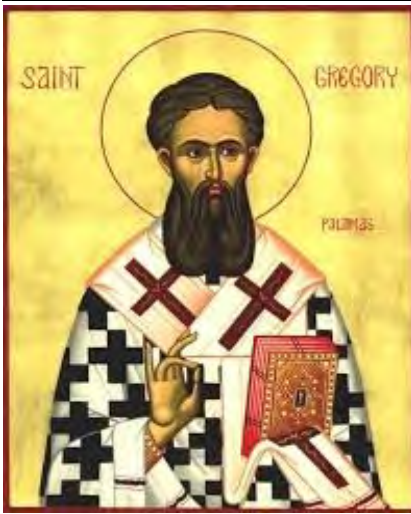
There is not the slightest indication that any one of the four Evangelists expected his audience to read other Gospels; his was *the* Gospel for this particular community. One might have expected that only the longest or most informative Gospel would have survived, after the principle of the survival of the fittest. Or at least, one might have expected the Gospels to have been harmonized into one - a logical solution attempted by Tatian

around the year 170 CE, which for a time replaced the four Gospels in Syrian church usage. However, the Church at large took the peculiar solution of preserving the Gospel records from four very different communities, doing nothing to attempt to harmonize their differences.

This problem is closely related to the problem of the other gospels that ultimately were not accepted as canonical. Some scholars have held that *four* Gospels were preserved, rather than the others, because these four came down from apostles and apostolic men. Therefore the Church did not feel free to change them by adding, subtracting, or combining. This may well have been the spirit of the *later* Church, even though Tatian apparently was not regarded audacious in his project. However, it was not the attitude of the 1st century Church, if we can judge from the liberty with which the Evangelists like Luke and the author of Matthew handled the pre-Gospel sources (*which had the best claim to being apostolic*) and Mark. In particular, Luke corrected Mark's Greek, changed his sequence, and added material. It should be noted that Papias knew the written Gospel and he was still anxious to improve upon them with oral material of an eyewitness pedigree.

***Getting to know the New Testament!***

## Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



I have been sharing with my readers the thoughts of St. Gregory of Nazianzus on the mystery and wonder of the Trinity. I would continue to share his thoughts with the hope that they stimulate my readers to actually reflect on how they see God, Who we believe is Three-In-One.

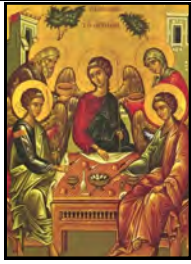
Gregory wonders, can God be *in* the universe? God must either be “in some part” of the universe or “in the whole.” If he inhabits only a part of the universe, however, God will end up “circumscribed by that part which is less than himself,” hardly a satisfactory state of affairs. Problems also accompany placing God within the universe as a whole. For instance, “Where

was He before the universe was created”? If we describe God as being above the universe, what do we mean by “above” ? To describe God as above something seems to demand that we still think spatially concerning where God is, a position Gregory found untenable.

By this time, Gregory, you and I are tempted to scream. Our linguistic and spatial categories are proving incapable of adequately describing God, which turns out to be exactly Gregory’s point: “For my purpose in doing so was to make clear the point at which my argument has aimed from the first. And what was this? That the divine nature cannot be apprehended by human reason, and that we cannot even represent to ourselves all its greatness.” Human beings in their present state are simply unable to gaze directly upon God. As embodied creatures we naturally gravitate to picturing God through the analogies in the visible world around us. Gregory, however, is insistent that the vision of God is an “object of pure thought apart altogether from bodily objects.” Gregory states, “Thus our mind faints to transcend corporeal things, and to consort with the incorporeal, stripped of all clothing of corporeal ideas, as long as it has to look with its inherent weakness at things above its strength.

Still, God has planted reason within us, “reason that proceeds from God, that is implanted in all from the beginning and is the first law in us, and is bound up in all,” the reason that “leads us up to God through visible things.” Yet, our knowledge of God for the present will remain fragmentary at best.

So this is why God became incarnate - became a human being - so that we might have a concrete example of how we are created in His image and have the potential to grow in His likeness.



# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 25

SECOND WEEKEND AFTER PENTECOST

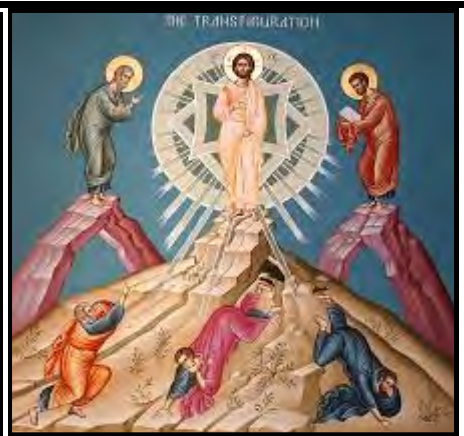
June 17-18, 2017

### The Spirituality of the Christian East

Absolutely critical to our understanding of Eastern spirituality is our acceptance of how the Fathers conceived the nature of humanity. This follows upon the thoughts I shared in the last issue of this article. The Eastern Fathers of the Church clearly set forth the notion that human beings are created in the *image and likeness of God*. This doctrine is central not only to their understanding of human nature, but also to their theology as a whole. A modern theologian has remarked:

Now this theme of the image is, in the theology of the Fathers, above all the Greek Fathers, truly central: there one sees at the same time the meeting of Christology and Trinitarian theology, of anthropology and psychology, of the theology of creation and that of grace, of the problem of nature and the supernatural, the mystery of divinization, the theology of the spiritual life, the laws of its development and of its progress.

The foundation of the doctrine of the image is found, as I am sure all of my readers are aware, in the creation narrative of Genesis (Genesis 1:26-28a). However, in the rest of the Bible little is made of this doctrine. In chapter 5 of Genesis, the events of the creation of man are summarized: "In the day that God made Adam, he made him in the image of God; male and female he made them, and he blessed them". In the New Testament we are told that



Man (not woman) is 'the image and glory of God', but it is Christ, too, who is said to be the image of God. Language of the image is used of our relationship to Christ: we are to be 'conformed to the image of his Son'.

So our Eastern spirituality calls us to seek out a true understanding of Who Christ is so that we might work to grow in our likeness of Him. This requires, however, that we refrain trying to make God and Christ respond to life like we do but, rather, to discover how to respond to life as God does.

### *Called to be Disciples*

Taking Peter with him, Andrew brought his brother to the Lord, thus making him his fellow-disciple. This was Andrew's first achievement: he increased the number of the apostles by bringing Peter to Christ, so that Christ might find in him the disciples' leader. When later on Peter won approval, it was thanks to the seed sown by Andrew. But the commendation given to the one rebounded to the other, for the virtues of each belonged to both, and each was proud of the other's merits. Indeed, when Peter promptly answered the master's question, how much joy he gave to all the disciples by breaking their embarrassed silence! Peter alone acted as the mouthpiece of those to whom the question was addressed. As though all spoke through him, he replied clearly on their behalf: You are the Christ, the Son of the

living God. In one sentence he acknowledged both the Savior and his saving plan.

Notice how these words echo Andrew's. By prompting Peter the Father endorsed from above the words Andrew used when he led Peter to Christ. Andrew had said: We have found the Messiah. The Father said, prompting Peter: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God, almost forcing these words on Peter. "Peter," he said, "when you are questioned, use Andrew's words in reply. Show yourself very prompt in answering your master. Andrew did not lie to you when he said: We have found the Messiah. Turn the Hebrew words into Greek and cry out: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God!"

*St. Basil of Seleucia*

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