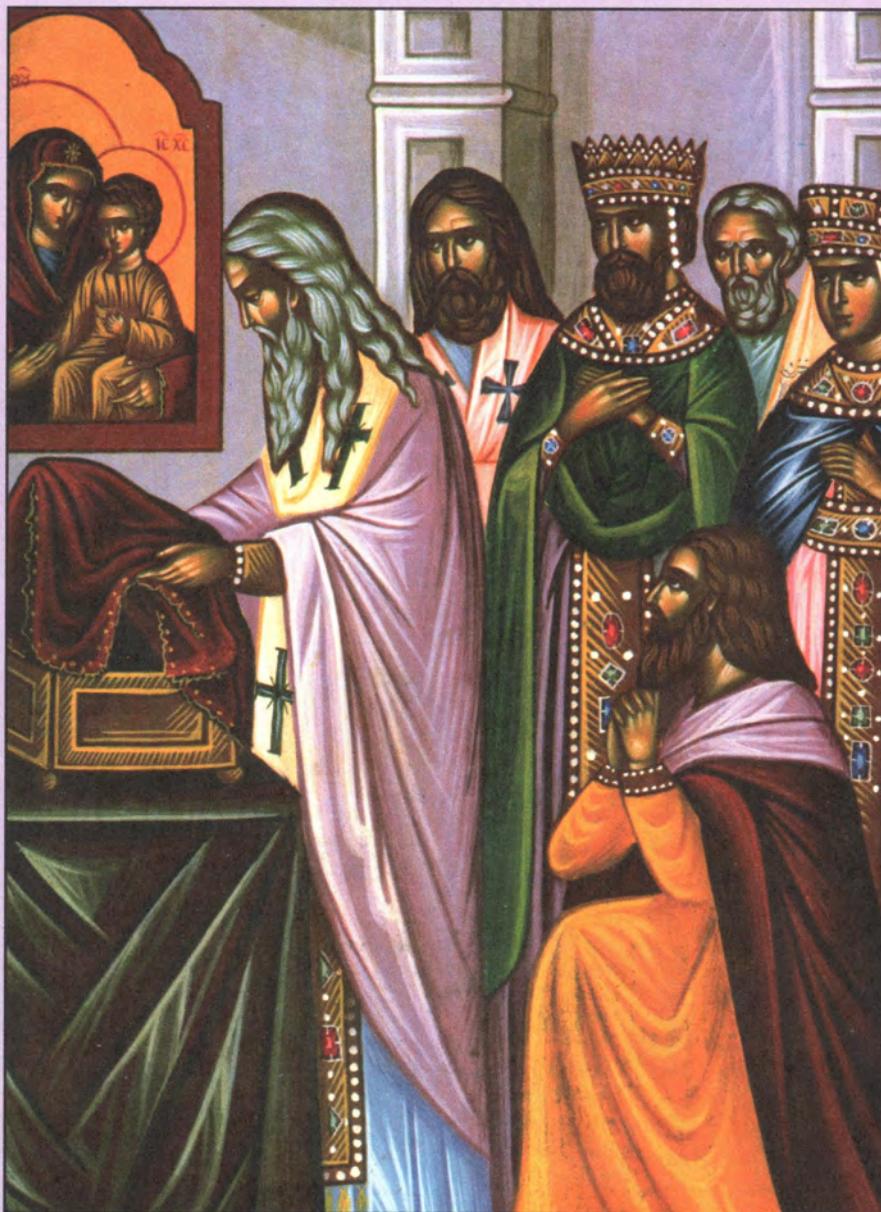


FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FOURTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Robe of the Theotokos

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

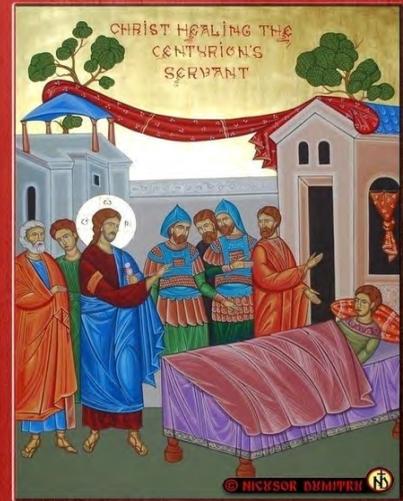
This weekend our readings are taken from Paul's letter to the Romans and Matthew's Gospel. Paul states at the end of Chapter 6, "the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Think about this! God became man in the Person of Jesus, in order to reveal to us our true nature as human beings. If, of course, we don't believe this to be true, we cannot understand this or be disposed to experience this. This is one reason why Paul exhorts the Romans and us to believe in the Person of Jesus, the Christ. God revealed the meaning and purpose of life through the Person of Jesus.

Matthew, in relating the story of Jesus curing the Centurion's servant, stresses the type of disposition we are called to cultivate in order to truly develop a relationship with God. The appropriate disposition is expressed both in the words of the Centurion and in the words that Jesus directed at him.

The Centurion is quoted as having made this wonderful statement: "I am not worthy to have you under my roof. Just give an order and my boy will get better." It is a statement that conveys absolute and true humility. It also is a statement that expresses complete confidence, belief and trust in Jesus.

Jesus' response to the Centurion confirms that the disposition of genuine humility is very important if we are to have a real relationship with God. Jesus simply says, "It shall be done because you trusted."

Real "trust" in God and "humility" are key dispositions that we must cultivate if we truly wish to spiritually grow. The cultivation of these dispositions is a real challenge. The thing that stops us from cultivating these two dispositions is, of course, self-centeredness and our desire



to have life a certain way instead of accepting the life that comes to us. Why do I say this? Because if we trust in God then whatever comes to us in life is meant to help us spiritually grow and become God's children. We may have to face things that we would rather not face but, because we trust in God, we see all of life's challenges as truly opportunities given to us, out of love, to grow.

In order to truly trust, we must have a certain degree of humility. A proud person cannot trust anyone. Pride makes us self-centered and causes us to believe that we, and only we, know what is best for us.

Much to think about.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

As I have shared, the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church came into union with the Catholic Church of Rome through the Union of Brest-Litovsk. A Papal Bull was issued by the pope that recites the events which led to the union, the arrival of six Ruthenian bishops at Rome, their abjuration, and the concessions made by the Roman Church. The Ruthenians were to retain their own rite, saving such customs as were opposed to the purity of Catholic doctrine and incompatible with the communion of the Roman Church. From the 9th century, the "land of the Rus", which was known later as Kievan Rus, was known in Western Europe by a variety of names. From the 12th century Rus was usually known in Western Europe by the Latinised name Ruthenia. In their broadest usage, Ruthenians were used to refer to peoples now called Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians.

On February 7, 1596, Pope Clement VIII addressed to the Ruthenian episcopate the Brief "*Benedictus sit Pastor ille bonus*", enjoining the convocation of a synod in which the Ruthenian bishops were to recite the profession of the Catholic Faith. Various letters were also sent to the Polish king, princes, and magnates exhorting them to receive the Ruthenians under their protection. A second Bull, "*Decet Romanum pontificem*", dated 23 February, 1596, defined the rights of the Ruthenian episcopate and their relations in subjection to the Holy See.

It was agreed that the "*Filioque*"



should not be inserted in the Nicene Creed, although the Ruthenian clergy professed and taught the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son. The bishops asked to be dispensed from the obligation of introducing the Gregorian Calendar, so as to avoid popular discontent and dissensions, and insisted that the king should grant them, as of right, the dignity of senators. This union was strongly supported by the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, Sigismund III Vasa, but opposed by some bishops and prominent nobles of Rus, and perhaps most importantly, by the nascent Cossack movement for Ukrainian self-rule. The result was "Rus fighting against Rus," and the splitting of the Church of Rus into Greek Catholic and Greek Orthodox jurisdictions.

By the end of the 18th century, the modern Ukrainian language had been codified and so the name for those connected with Kiev were no longer called Ruthenian. There did remain a portion of the area, Carpathian Ruthenia, which retained the name Ruthenians or Rusyns. Many in the Byzantine Catholic Church are Rusyns.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Someone asked me once, why do you Ukrainian Greek-Catholics sing so very much? My response was two-fold. First we like to sing and second when we approach Almighty God, Who is greater than any king or emperor, we show Him honor by communicating in the greatest form possible, musical prayer.

Man's ability to sing and create music is one of his greatest abilities. We use this great ability to make our interaction with God special. Of course there are prayers that are recited just because they are more difficult to sing and, some prayers, like the Creed, are so important that we want to make sure that all feel comfortable praying them. There are several of the priestly prayers that are recited so that all may truly find it easier to understand them. But in general we sing our prayers of worship to honor our great King.

I have also been asked why we don't genuflect. In the East, kings and emperors were never genuflected to but rather a bow was made to them to show respect. So we bow our heads to show respect to our God and then we also cross ourselves, praising the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Someone recently asked me: When is it proper to cross ourselves? We cross ourselves whenever we hear the names of our God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Should we cross ourselves when the priest turns and blesses us? It is



personal preference. Traditionally a priest's blessing is received by simply bowing to him in thanks. He, you will notice, bows to you when you sing: "and with your spirit." This tradition is followed because the names of our God are not said at that time. But again, the Eastern Church does not hold uniformity sacred.

Another person asked me, When are we supposed to stand, kneel and sit. The books don't always give us the directions. Again uniformity is really not important. We must remember that "pews" with kneelers only became popular here in the states and that it was Protestantism that introduced pews. The true Eastern tradition was to stand throughout the Liturgy and, if one was tired or older, to sit at seats against the side walls. Even the major Western Catholic churches in Europe don't have permanent pews.

I think that it is important that we feel we can respond to the various parts of the Liturgy the way that we want. Of course if you are sitting and someone in front of you is standing, it blocks your view. We should be guided by courtesy and the Spirit.



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.

RUMMAGE SALE DATES

September 15-16, 2017

You can start bringing your items to church

SUMMERTIME

Summertime is always financially a difficult time for parishes financially. People go on vacations and trips and so attendance typically is decreased. The problem is that summertime also brings increased heat, requiring air conditioners to work overtime. If you have been following our "Collection Basket News", I know that you will marvel at the generosity of our membership. I would like to truly thank all those who so generously support our parish. Your dedication to our parish is greatly appreciated.



CALLED TO HOLINESS

Another understanding of the "call to holiness" is a call to grow in our "likeness of Jesus" - to actualize our potential that God has given us to truly be His Children.



It is our faith-based understanding that God had a definite purpose in creating humankind. Humanity was not an "accident". Creation would not have been complete without the creation of human beings. Why do I say this? Because humans exist. Nothing exists that was not meant by God when He brought all things into existence.

I believe that one clue about why human beings exist can be found in our Christian understanding of God. We Christians believe that God is Three-In-One and that the power that binds the three into unity is LOVE. True love is creative and needs to be expressed. True unconditional love doesn't exist if there is no one to whom that love is directed. The Father loves the Son and this love, which is the Spirit, is expressed by the Son returning the love of the Father. God unconditionally loves His creation

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

TOPIC: CHRISTOLOGY

By Len Mier

Continuing the Subject of the Arian Heresy

The Nicæan Creed states our belief the Jesus Christ is eternally begotten of the Father before all ages and not created. It also describes Him in the philosophical terms and poetic imagery that the one Lord Jesus Christ is Light of Light, very God of very God. And being of one essence with the Father. This places Jesus as equal to the Father as God.

This issue did linger on for several more centuries due to intervention of the emperors imposing their beliefs as well as their courtiers' beliefs on the Church regarding this issue. Eventually a strict Arian belief did disappear in the Church.

There are several Semi-Arian belief systems that are still present. The Jehovah Witnesses are said to be Semi-Arian in that they believe Jesus is not truly God but is His only-begotten produced by Him Alone and the first born in creation by which other things were made. The Jehovah Witnesses give the same divine prerogative to Jesus and do not pray to Jesus but see him as the prime mediator to God.

It can also be said that Islam has some Arianism in its teaching. Jesus is in Islam a prophet of God but does not believe that there is any divinity present in Jesus. The Koran explicitly states in verse 112, "God neither begets nor is He begotten". This leaves the nature of Jesus to a purely human state.

It is one of the triumphs of orthodoxy that through the use of Scripture, Tradition and philosophical language the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council created a

framework of understanding and a creedal statement of belief was formed. The framework stating that Arius' beliefs were not the true beliefs the Church professes as in who and what Jesus is in relation to God the Father and that Jesus is equal to the Father.

If you have followed Len's presentation, you will see that the seminary is truly challenging him to think about what it is that we actually believe. I would exhort those who are following the essays that he has to submit, to think about the topic he is writing about. Who do YOU say Jesus is?

I believe the only thing that we can truly say is that we believe that Jesus is equally God as are the Father and the Holy Spirit. How this is possible, since Jesus is also equally human, is a mystery and truly beyond human comprehension. It is, however, something that we say we believe. Our faith tells us that Jesus was and is FULLY GOD and FULLY MAN and that His existence as God did not dictate how His existence as a human being thought or acted. His thinking and acting as a human being was completely and totally free since He had a FREE WILL as all humans do. If this wasn't true, He could never be a MODEL to us humans as to how we should think and act if we want to gain the fullness of life.

When God created us, He provided us with a way to freely grow in our "likeness" of Jesus and to fulfill the purpose of human life, namely to become spiritual, adopted children of God.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?



A POTPOURRI OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS

The true goal of Eastern Christian spirituality is a mystical life of union with God, then the path to it includes the ascent that leads to this peak. As I have said so many times, "Life's journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father". As such, this path is different than the peak; yet it is organically connected to it, in the same way as the ascent of a mountain it to the peak. Only by prolonged effort, by discipline, can a greater union with God be reached. Efforts that don't contribute to this crowning, this final greater union with God, seem to be without purpose.

Indeed the real connection between spiritual discipline and greater union with God is closer than that between the path and the goal. Even though the living of that union is realized at the final end of spiritual efforts, its aura begins in the soul beforehand, along with them

Christian growth requires a whole series of efforts until it is attained. The Apostle Paul compares these strivings with the training that athletes employ to get in shape in order to win. Without referencing the particular word asceticism (*i.e., the manner of life, practices, or principles of an ascetic; the doctrine that a person can*

attain a high spiritual and moral state by practicing self-denial, self-mortification; rigorous self-denial; abstinence) St. Paul used the image of the ancient physical exercises to characterize the efforts made by the Christian to reach greater spiritual growth. Also, St. Clement of Alexandria and Origen later introduced the terms of asceticism and ascetic. Little by little in the East they gained



a monastic coloring. Monasteries are called *askitiria*, places for physical training. The ascetic is the monk who strives to obtain greater spiritual growth by observing all the rules of restraint or temperance through cleansing from the passions. Origen calls zealous Christians ascetics; persons who discipline themselves to

mortify the passions and develop good habits that lead to greater union with God.

St. Nilos the Ascetic gives us a detailed comparison of the spiritual ascetic with the athlete in the arena. Asceticism then is that part of spirituality that deals with the rules and efforts that bring a person to the first step of the ascent to perfection, to contemplation and union with God. It is the active part of the spiritual life, the self-coercion and cooperative that God requires of us.

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 July 2 - Fourth Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM + Olga Halushka; Liz Reaume

FIFTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 4

Monday July 3 - Hyacinth, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday July 4 - Andrew of Jerusalem, Archbishop
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Wednesday July 5 - Athanasius of Mt Athos, Venerable
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday July 6 - Sisoës the Great, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

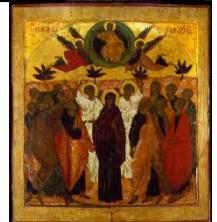
Friday July 7 - Thomas & Acacius, Venerables
No Service Scheduled

Saturday July 8 - Procopius, Great Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Sunday July 9 - Fifth Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 4

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

and calls His creation to return His love. His love is returned when His creation exists in a manner which He intended when He created it. This is why we say there is a “natural law” that governs all creation. All things that are brought into existence by God have a natural pattern of existence. Humans, because God has given us “free will”, can choose not to live the way that God intended us to live when He created us. He took the chance of giving us a free will because He desired us to “freely” return His love. Much like the love that exists between Him and the Son, which is freely given and received, that is the type of love He has extended to us. This is why we experience the fullness of life when we freely return His love and live and think in a manner which is in the likeness of that of Jesus, the Christ.



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Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

A fascinating instance of how this exclusive position was attained by the four Gospels that are a part of the Canon of the New Testament (NT), is presented in the story of Serapion, bishop of Antioch (ca 190 CE). Serapion discovered that in Rhossus people read the *Gospel of Peter*, but he forbade them to use it because he found Docetist heresy in it. This story illustrates two things: First, the public reading of the Gospels, particularly in the Liturgy, was one of the factors that won acceptance for them in the Church, and church authorities became very sensitive if a gospel not known to them was being read. Second, the use of apocryphal gospels by heretics was a factor in narrowing the canon to four gospels. Also, the attitude of the archheretic Marcion in accepting only Luke, may have been influential in causing the Church to preserve the four Gospels. From ca 200 the four Gospels had an assured place in the Greek and Western churches. As Oregin puts it, there are four Gospels, "which are undeniably authentic in the Church of God on earth." The Syrian church, however, preferred the use of the *Diatessaron* in the 3rd and 4th centuries, adopting the four Gospels only in the 5th century.

As I have attempted to present, the Pauline letters and the Gospels - two separate bodies of early Christian

literature, were included in the Canon of the NT for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the thought that both types of literature stemmed from apostolic witnesses was a factor in causing them to be joined in the canon of the NT. The first instance of such a joining appears in the work of Marcion, who made ten epistles and Luke the basis of his theology.



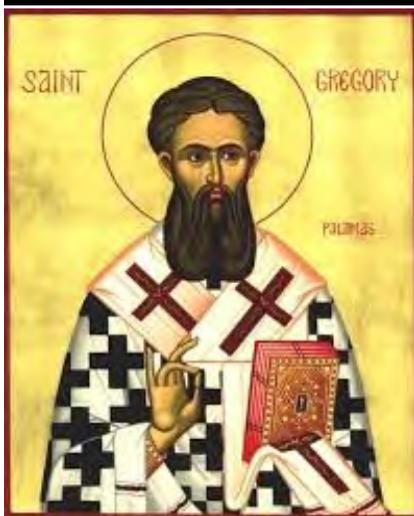
We are fortunate to have at least some knowledge, however sketchy, about the formation of the Pauline and Gospel collections, but we are very poorly informed about the collections of the remainder of the NT works. This lack of information presents a difficulty similar to that presented by the third group of Old Testament (OT) works - the writings - in the study of the OT canon (*this refers to the Wisdom Literature*).

But let me continue with the NT canon. The first work considered is ACTS.

The traditional view of ACTS is that Luke composed the Gospel and ACTS at the same time (i.e., 80's CE - though some scholars prefer the 60's). However, Luke and ACTS were not preserved as a unit. Marcion accepted only the Gospel, and it is interesting that ACTS really came into frequent use after Marcion's error. Some scholars believe that ACTS was written much later than Luke's Gospel.

More to follow!

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church



Gregory states about the Persons of God: There was never a time when there was not a Father, A Son and a Holy Spirit. The Father has always been unbegotten, the Son always begotten and the Spirit always proceeding from the Father together with the Son. Gregory describes this unique relationship of love using the special technical theological vocabulary of *unbegotten*, *begotten*, and *proceeding* and states that these processes are beyond the sphere of time and above the grasp of reason.

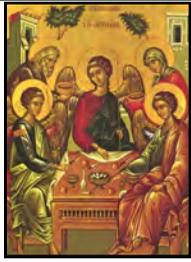
If this relationship is above time, how are Father, Son and Spirit “not alike unoriginate”? Further, that is, the very language of

begetting and proceeding seems to demand some kind of beginning for the Son and the Holy Spirit. Here Gregory turns to the well-known patristic illustration of the sun and its rays.

Yes, the Son and Spirit find their origin in the Father, who is “unoriginate.” Yet the “origin” of the Son and Spirit is eternal and timeless without beginning and without end. Neither comes into existence after the Father. The analogy of the sun and its rays illustrates this point. Can one image the sun as existing apart from the light rays it constantly emits? The rays find their source, their origin, in the sun. Still, the rays and the sun came into existence at the same time. The rays are not “after” the sun. They are part and parcel of what it means to be the sun. Granted the analogy does break down when referring to Trinitarian relationships, for the Trinity has always existed outside of time. Still, the analogy serves well in illustrating what the church means when it teaches that the Son and Spirit find their origin in the Father. The Father *must* beget the Son and *spirate* the Spirit, just as the sun *must* shed light.

All this exhorts us to decide how we see God. Have you ever thought about how you see God? Who is He? What is He like?

The doctrine of God as Trinity is truly a major advance in mankind’s understanding of God - of the Supreme Being Who is the Creator of all creation. Prior to Jesus Christ, mankind saw this Supreme Being as Creator but not connected to His creation in any significant manner. The one God of Judaism and Islam is a God Who is completely separate from His creation. The God of Christianity is intimately connected with His creation. The life-force of God, according to Christian thought, vivifies all of creation, calling and sustaining it in existence. We are joined to our Creator.



THE EASTERN HERALD

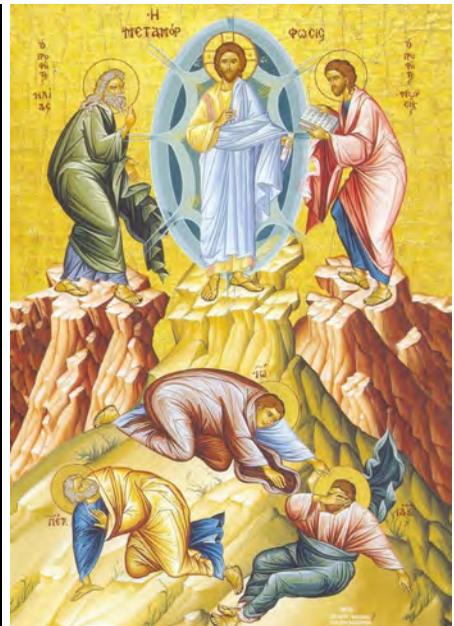
СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 63 No 27 FOURTH WEEKEND AFTER PENTECOST July 1-2, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

Genesis states that humans were created in the image of the Creator and, as the original text states, “according to the likeness of God.” The word translated ‘likeness’, *homoiosis*, suggests something more precise in Greek: the ending, *-osis*, implies a process, not a state (the Greek for likeness as a state would be *homoionia*). The word *homoiosis* would moreover have very definite resonances for anyone who had read Plato, who envisages the goal of the human life as *homoiosis* - that is *likening, assimilation* - to the divine. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates remarks in a phrase very popular among some of the Fathers: ‘flight [from the world] is assimilation to God so far as is possible’. So, to be created according to the image of God and according to His likeness suggests that we have been created with some kind of affinity for God which makes possible a process of assimilation to God, which is, presumably, the point of human existence.

This idea chimes in very well with the few uses of the language of image in the New Testament (NT), for it is in the context of saying something about the goal of our being disciples of Christ, that the NT resorts to such language: we are being changed into his image from glory to glory. Even without using the language of image, there are passages in the NT that suggest much the same idea: for



instance, in the first epistle of John we read, ‘Beloved, we are God’s children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.’ The language of image is the language of sight; the suggestion of these passages is that being in the image means there is a likeness between humankind and God.

The Holy Robe of the Theotokos

During the late fifth century, two brothers who were associates of Emperor Leo the Great, left Constantinople for Palestine to venerate the holy places. In Nazareth, they stayed in the home of an old Jewish woman. They noticed in the house a room where many lamps were lit, incense burned, and sick people were gathered. When they asked her what the room contained, the pious woman did not want to give an answer for a long time. After persistent requests, she said that she had a very precious sacred item: the robe of the Theotokos, through which many miracles and healings had occurred. It seems that before her Dormition the Theotokos had given one of her garments to a pious Jewish girl, an ancestor of the old woman, instructing her to leave it to another virgin after her death. And so, the robe of the Mother of God was preserved in this family from generation to generation.

The jeweled chest, containing the sacred robe, was brought to Constantinople. Saint Gennadius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and Leo the Emperor, hav-

ing learned of this sacred treasure, were convinced of the incorrupt state of the holy robe, and they certified its authenticity. On June 2, 458, Patriarch Gennadius transferred the sacred robe into the church at Blachernae, near the city gates at the seacoast, placing the relic within a new reliquary.

In the years following, the great veil or outer robe of the Theotokos, and part of her belt were also put into the reliquary with her robe. This event also influenced the iconography of the feast, in connecting the two events: the Placing of the Robe, the feast day of July 2nd, and the Placing of the Belt of the Mother of God, the feast day August 31st in Blachernae.

“O Pure One, full of the grace of God, you have given your sacred robe as a garment of incorruption to all the faithful, with it you covered your holy body, O divine protection of all mankind. We celebrate its enshrinement in Blachernae with love and we cry aloud with awe: ‘Rejoice, O Virgin, boast of Christians.’” (Kontakion)

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