

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FIFTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of Saint Pancratios -- July 9th

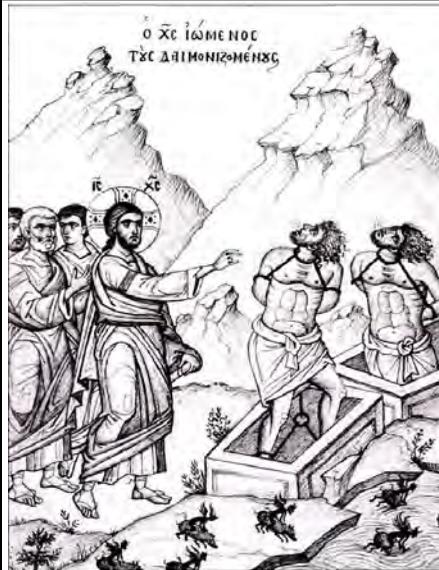
Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

Our first reading this weekend is again taken from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans. In the portion we hear, Paul is considering Israel's failure to accept Christ from the standpoint of God: it does not mean that God's promises have failed, nor that this was not foreseen by Him in His gratuitous election of Israel.

Israel, Paul states, has failed to recognize that uprightness comes through Christ, the **END OF THE LAW**. He then adds that "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" - that is the word of faith in Jesus.

This conveys the major idea that Jesus is God's revelation to humankind about the way to live. It requires persons to think and behave like Jesus. Instead of trying to keep "a written law," humans need to try and imitate Jesus. Its all about having a relationship with God.

Our second reading, the Gospel, conveys the story of Jesus expelling demons from two men. It is in the section of Matthew's Gospel wherein he shares ten miracles of Jesus. In the ancient world, Jewish and Gentile, ailments which exhibited some unusually repulsive features or for which there was no explanation, were often attributed to demons. It is rarely possible to define the ailment that is explained in this way. The important feature of this and other exorcisms Jesus performed is not whether he accepted this common belief. Those who formed the Gospel traditions could not have represented him speaking in terms other than those familiar to the people. The important fact is that the exorcisms show that Jesus liberates men from the fear of demons. Demons have no real power and are instantly subdued by a word from Him. The power of God overcomes any other power. The significance of exorcism is not



Miracle of the Gadarene Demons that the Christian should or should not believe in demons or their power, but that they should, because of their belief in Jesus, treat demonic power as absolutely nonexistent. If we focus our lives on believing and living with Jesus as our Savior and Lord, and embrace His way of living, nothing else matters. We must make Jesus, and His way, the absolute rule of our lives. We must be sure to keep our "eyes fixed on Jesus", as St. Paul would say.

The message I received from today's readings is: Keep your life focused on trying to actualize your potential to be more like Jesus.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

As many know, our Church embraces an Eastern Christian tradition that is ancient. SS Cyril and Methodius came to the Slavic area, now known as Bulgaria, and brought with them the Christian traditions of the Byzantine Church, the Church as it found expression in Constantinople, present day Istanbul. Rusyns embraced this tradition. The center that supported the development of Christianity in the area now know as Ukraine was Kyiv. That is our tradition. There are, according to one author, two icons that are essential to understanding ourselves who worship in this Kyvian tradition and are members of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Those two icons are the Annunciation, which relates the Incarnation of God as Jesus and Mary of the Sign or the Oranta.



The Annunciation icon is traditionally placed on the Royal Doors of the iconostasis. It is the mystery which opens the Kingdom of God to us. The real significance of the encounter of Mary with the Archangel Gabriel is that she is asked to place her trust in God. It was truly a very thoughtful act. It was a challenge to her humanity which she met with maturity. Intelligent and personal commitment is what was expected of her and is also expected of each one of us. Our entire relationship to God has to come out of the precept that an intelligent being makes thoughtful decisions on all major aspects of human existence. Anything less than that does not befit our Creator and His Holy Wisdom. Western Christian tradition has a

Українська Греко-Католицька Церква

Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church



tendency to overplay the Mother of God's virginity and in doing so distorts the essence of humanity in general and womanhood in particular. In Western Christianity, Mary is pictured alone. In Eastern Christianity she is never pictured without Christ.

At a recent ecumenical Marian conference, Fr. Robert F. Taft, S.J., the theologian and major author on Eastern Christian worship, decried the Western reductionist approach to Mary. He thinks it is endemic to Mediterranean Catholic culture resulting in "machismo" only to be followed by more distortions and even abuse. Defining the Mother of God and her womanhood in the sexual context by glorifying female chastity ignores her intelligence. In the Western world her immaculate status seems to signify only abstention from sex, rather than expressing the sublime doctrine of the divine origin of the Only-begotten Son and Word of God, and the saving action of the Holy Spirit in Christ's absolutely divine "Incarnation" to which the Mother of God agreed with great personal discernment.

The Eastern approach seems to highlight the fact that salvation is a cooperative act between God and man. It takes a person to commit themselves to the actualization of their potential to grow in their likeness of God as made manifest in the Person of Jesus.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

As I have previously shared with my readers, although the Divine Liturgy has several distinct parts, nevertheless it is a single, though multifaceted, sacred rite, a single sacrament, in which all its “parts,” their sequence and structure, their coordination with each other, the necessity of each for all and all for each, manifests to us the inexhaustible, eternal, universal and truly divine meaning of what has been and what is being accomplished.

Such in any case is the tradition of the Church, such is her living experience, in which the sacrament of the eucharist is inseparable from the divine liturgy. For its setting, its entire sequence, order and structure consist in manifesting to us the meaning and the content of the sacrament, in bringing us into it, in converting us into its participants and communicants. It is meant to involve all of us into the mystery of God revealing Himself to us through the Person of Jesus and calling us to greater union with God. That is why it is critical that we all, both clergy and laity, own the actions and prayers that we perform together. It is **OUR WORSHIP** of God as Church, that is the gathering of those who believe in Jesus, the Christ.

Meanwhile, it is precisely this unity, this integrity of the eucharist, the indissoluble link of the sacrament with the Liturgy, that requires us not to think just of one moment or action in the Liturgy, like the transformation of



the Gifts, but rather to embrace the entire ritual action. The entire Liturgy speaks to the question: *what is accomplished in the eucharist?* If for the Church not only the answer to this question but also the question itself, (i.e., its correct “context,” is rooted in the liturgy), it is because for her, the Church, the eucharist is the crowning and fulfillment of the liturgy, just as the liturgy is the crowning and fulfillment of the entire faith, the entire life and the entire experience of the Church.

What I am trying to say is that the Eucharist, which is the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in our midst, is a part of the entire liturgy which calls us to be one with all the past events of God breaking into history and showing us how to live. This real and truthful remembrance of these past events is meant to “transform” as well as the Gifts that we pray over and offer to God. It is through the Eucharist that we truly become Church, that is real believers in God-Incarnate, Jesus. It calls us to unity in the Lord! It highlights the meaning of life, that is real, personal transformation.



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

STRATEGIC PLAN

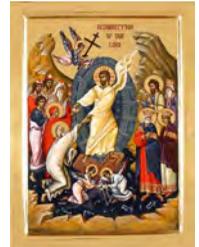
In our first meeting with Bishop Benedict, we heard about “planning for the future”, both on the Eparchy and Parish levels. I have already started that we the other parish I serve, anticipating that this might be something we have to do. I would like to begin a similar process with St. Michael’s Parish. My thought is to first develop certain questions with the Parish Council that need to be asked and then having them reach out to each and every person who sees themselves as a part of the parish. It is important that each and every one of us involved.

More Later!



CALLED TO HOLINESS

If you have been following this article, you already know that it is my belief that the call to holiness is many, very different things. It is, of course, a call to “change our hearts and minds” - to change the way we think and live - so that we more fully actualize the potential that God has planted within us to become more like Jesus.



The reason why we remember the life of Jesus and all that He did and accomplished, is so that we might become deeply immersed in the process of changing our thinking and living. Personal change is the goal. This goal is closely connected by discovering the meaning and purpose of life. The meaning and purpose of life is intimately and intrinsically connected with Jesus because He is God’s revelation to us about the purpose of human life.

Given all this, it is important that we understand that God created us with an intellect and free will. He calls us to use your intelligence to understand these things. In the process of understanding this, we cooperate

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FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

TOPIC: CHRISTOLOGY

By Len Mier

The God-Man Jesus Christ and Kenosis

Jesus was the God-Man and He revealed an extreme humility in His earthly life. This is key our understanding the goal of humankind's salvation. This is also exemplified in the life of the Theotokos. While Jesus' incarnation had a kenotic dimension of His own volition, His mother's life was kenotic by the grace of God. ("*Kenosis*," has become a technical term for the Son's emptying Himself of certain divine attributes, especially of omniscience).

Jesus Christ was both God and man. He had a nature that was Divine and a nature that was human, but He was one person. Having both natures in one person was the most important debate in the early Church, taking several Ecumenical Councils to define this teaching of the person of Jesus and His relationship with the Father, along with the nature of Jesus' relationship with the Holy Spirit.

One question that theologians explored was, how the incarnation of Jesus saves mankind. If He was Divine, did this divinity reside in fullness before His death and resurrection? If so, how does that set an example for us to copy since we are not divine by nature. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, may help mankind understand this question. I am referring to the following passage in chapter two:

...though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human form (Revised Standard Version, Catholic Translation).

This passage refers to Jesus' kenotic

life and His life of extreme humility. Father Dumitru Staniloae states, "The kenosis consists in the fact that the Son of God assumed, made His own, the human nature and its weaknesses not imprinted with sin" (Staniloae, Ionita & Barringer, 1944). This kenosis is what makes it possible for Jesus the God-Man to assume our sufferings and our limitations - it is in putting aside His glory that He can show us how to live. It shows us the way of *Theosis*. By his being empty of the glory of God, but still fully God, man is shown the way to obtain that divine image that resides within us. It is as St. Maximus explains, Christ achieved our salvation because He was able to share in our bodily sufferings as a man, and through signs of His Divine powers in the miracles He performed. It was through His resurrection we are saved from sin and given deification through His grace.

Father Dumitru Staniloae also states "[Kenosis is] to facilitate the direct participation of the Son of God in the strengthening of human nature, in order to make it an active medium of divine love through the manifestation of power and through the bearing and overcoming of suffering" (Staniloae, et al., 1994).

It is important to understand that in His kenosis and the weakness of human nature He was sinless. Jesus' human nature was so in tune with His Divine nature in the one person that He could not sin or have sin. It is also true that His Divine nature was so much in tune with the will of the Father

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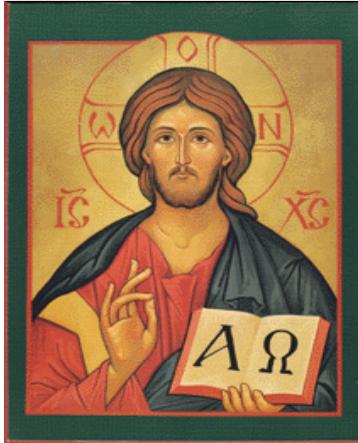


FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

(Continued from page 6 - Christology)

because they are of the same essence, that sin would be impossible. It is important for us to know that the Church insists that the Savior must be without sin as Saint Cyril of Alexandria states, "that one can enter into God's presence only in a state of pure sacrifice, and no human being could do this on his own because of sin. Only Christ, as man without sin, was able to enter into God's presence as a pure sacrifice, and only in Him can we do the same." Without His sinlessness, our redemption and salvation would be impossible.

Jesus' virginal birth by the Theotokos is a necessity in God's redemptive plan. Her vocation is to be a vessel in which the incarnation of Jesus Christ took place, without her God could not take on flesh as a human and become man. She is the means along with the actions of the Holy Spirit by which the Son of God saves mankind. This is important because one's nature is not born, but only that one's person or physical existence comes into reality. As Staniloae states, "The Person born of the Virgin Mary is identical with the Person of the divine Word, Who also becomes through the Incarnation the Person of the human nature" (Staniloae, et al., 1994), thus bringing about God becoming man. The miraculous and virginal birth is important to the teaching of the Church because this birth does not occur by natural means. Instead, the birth of Jesus happens because God, in the Person of



the Holy Spirit, takes over natural events in the same way that, in the creation narrative of Genesis, God's Spirit gives life to Adam, the first man of creation.

Jesus, as man, comes into existence as a divine creative act in the same way that Adam was created in an act of Divine Love, making Him the new Adam. He does not come into existence through worldly desires or sensual desire or pleasure. It is His outgoing love for mankind that causes this to happen.

The Theotokos has a kenotic life also. Her kenotic life, however, differs from that of Jesus' kenotic life in one very important aspect. In Jesus, kenosis happened of His own doing. He emptied Himself as St Paul says. The Theotokos, however, could not do this on her own. It is through Divine grace and the incarnation of Christ within her that she was able to accomplish this. The emptying of Jesus paved the way for Him to take up what He gave up in His life, death and resurrection.

This is salvation for us, in the same way that the Theotokos emptied herself with God's grace, accepting her vocation as the bearer of God, achieving *Theosis* and salvation. This is the example we Christians must follow. To be self-emptying of those things foreign to the life in Christ and by following the example of the Theotokos, we too gain salvation in living a kenotic way of life.

I would again compliment Len on his essay and thank him for sharing it with 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 9 - Fifth Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 4
10:00 AM + John, John Jerome & Joel; Mary Krill

SIXTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 5

Monday July 10 - Anthony of the Caves, Venerable
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday July 11 - Euphemia, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday July 12 - Proclus & Hilary, Martyrs
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday July 13 - Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel
No Service Scheduled

Friday July 14 - Aquila, Apostle
8:00 AM - Special Intention

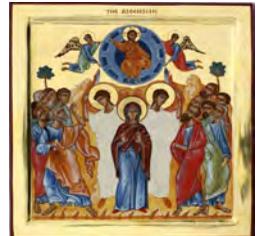
Saturday July 15 - Vladimir the Great, Equal to the Apostles
No Service Scheduled

Sunday July 16 - Sixth Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 5
10:00 AM + Walter Kizel; Mary Krill

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

with God in gaining salvation and achieving eternal life. This process begins now in the present moment. We are called to try to do good and avoid evil not because we are afraid of being punished but because we see that this way of living can bring us to a deeper understanding of life. Living this way makes us more and more like Jesus, the revealed likeness of God.

When we develop the habits of (1) accepting all others; (2) not judging others; (3) treating all others as we want to be treated; and (4) unconditionally love others, we become more like Jesus. As we attempt to become more like Jesus, life changes. We begin to see the beauty of the life that God is sharing with us and the wonder of His creation. In living this way, we come to understand that we are God's children.



<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
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Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

In this article I have currently been presenting information about the Canon - collection of books - that are included in the New Testament (NT). In the last issue I started sharing information about ACTS, a history of the works of Jesus' disciples. A work such as Acts, which gives prominence to the Twelve, holds them up as a standard of apostleship and shows a continuity from them to Paul.

We are uncertain when ACTS was put on a plane with the Gospels, an account of Jesus himself; but such an evaluation shows a mature understanding of the role of the church in continuing the role of Christ. There is every evidence that Acts was accepted as canonical from 200 CE on; but from 150 there were also in circulation various apocryphal acts of individual apostles (i.e., *John, Paul, Thomas and others*). Generally, they were writings of heretical tendency and highly romantic. Tertullian tells how sometime before 190 the priest who fabricated the *Acts of Paul* was caught and punished. The Lat list (ca 300) in the Codex Claromontanus includes the *Acts of Paul*, but seemingly puts it on a questionable basis along with *Hermas* and *Barnabas*. Eusebius lists it as spurious.

The Apocalypse or Revelation is a species of prophecy and was familiar to

the early Christians as part of their Jewish heritage. Yet it is interesting that Revelation is prefaced by the letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor - an innovation in apocalyptic literature, and perhaps an indication that Christians were more accustomed to epistolary writings. Presumably, Revelation was written in the 90's; it belongs to the Johannine school of writing.

The Muratorian Fragment (Rome, before 200) mentions two apocalypses one of John and one of Peter, with a notation that some do not wish to read the latter in church. This *Apocalypse of Peter*, written ca 125-150, seems to have been accepted as canonical by Clement of

Alexandria. It appears in the Lat list, seemingly marked as questionable; and ca 325 Eusebius places it among the spurious books, stating that neither in the earlier days nor in his time had any orthodox writer made use of it. Jerome also rejected it, but in the 5th century it was still being used in the Good Friday liturgy in Palestine.

As you may or may not know, there is a vast amount of religious writing from the early Church which has not been recognized as "canonical" or as excepted as authentic or inspired. Many of these writings are just being translated into modern languages and made available to people.



Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

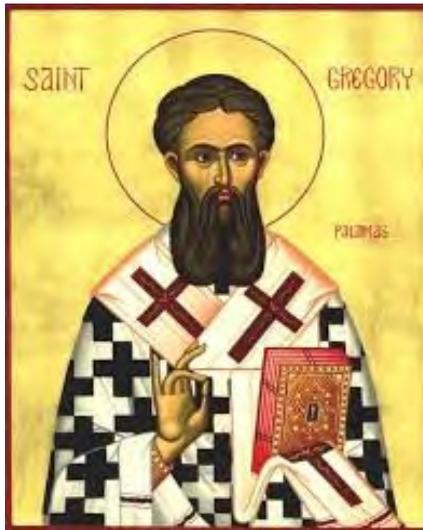
It is obvious, if we consider Trinitarian language, that we are stretching the capabilities of human reason and also language. God's begetting of the Son is indescribable or "ineffable." Just as the Son's "generation according to the flesh differs from all others - for where among men do you know of a virgin mother? - so does he differ also in his spiritual generation. Or rather he, whose existence is not the same as ours, differs from us also in his generation.

"Who, then, is that Father who had no beginning?" Gregory asks. Well, for one thing, he is a father unlike any other. For while other fathers must first be born, grow into maturity and then father children, this Father has always been a Father. It is his nature to be Father, to generate the Son and to emit, spirate or breath the Spirit. In addition, the Father is Father as distinct from the Son. He is neither the Son nor the Spirit, just as the Son and Spirit are not the Father. While a human may occasionally function as a father or a son, within the wonder of trinitarian relationships, the Father is Father in an absolute sense, as is the Son as Son and the Spirit as Spirit. Thus the fatherhood of God, while

occasionally analogous to human fatherhood, is utterly unique.

Gregory rebukes the tendency in all of us to reject that which we cannot comprehend. Gregory's theological opponents insist, for instance, that the Son could not be "begotten," because such a generation fits no reasonable categories. Part of the problem, Gregory responds, is that the model these theologians use to picture the divine generation is itself faulty.

Gregory first advises that we must cast away any notions of flow or concepts of immaterial as if it were material birth and then we may perhaps worthily conceive of the divine generation. And what is a worthy conception of such a mysterious generation? Who can say? "The begetting of God must be honored by silence. It is a great thing for you to learn that he was begotten. But the manner of his generation we will not admit that even angels can conceive, much less you." Only the Father, Son and Spirit could possibly comprehend it. "It was in a manner known to the father who begot, and to the Son who was begotten. Anything more that this is hidden.





THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 28

Fifth Weekend After Pentecost

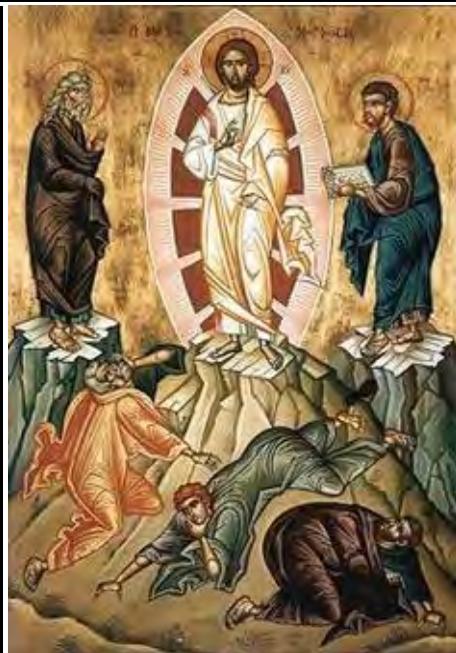
July 8-9, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

What does it mean to be in the image of God? Often enough, we find the Fathers giving an answer in terms of human qualities, and these turn out to be qualities of the soul. The “according to the image”, says John Damascene, is truly manifest in intelligence and free will. Being in the image means being a rational, or intelligent, being with free will. Sometimes the answer is more complex. Athanasius, for instance, talks about God’s creating us and our being ‘given something more’:

...creating human beings not simply like all the irrational animals upon the death, but making them according to his own image, and giving them a share of the power of his own Word, so that having as it were shadows of the Word and being made rational, they might be able to abide in blessedness, living the true life, which is really that of the holy ones in paradise.

Being in the image is not for Athanasius simply a matter of being rational, for otherwise the angels would be in the image too, something that he denies: being in the image is a gift to humanity, body and soul, which grants rationality to the human, but must mean more than this. The more is for Athanasius tied up with the fact that the image of God is Christ, the Word of God, whom we cannot understand apart from the Incarnation. It is in some way



according to the image of God, understood as the Word of God Incarnate, that human-kind was fashioned. This more complex notion unfolds in two ways, which I will deal with in the next issue.

God became man in the Person of Jesus so that we might have an understanding of the image in which we have been created.

The Holy Bishop Martyr Pancratius

Sicily was home to many early Christian saints, and the arena of their martyrdom. One of the first saints of that ancient island is the Holy Martyr, Pancratius of Taormina.

St. Pancratius, Bishop of Taormina, was born when our Lord Jesus Christ still walked upon the earth. The parents of Pancratius were natives of Antioch. Legend has it that hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, Pancratius' father took his young son with him and went to Jerusalem in order to see the great Teacher. The miracles astonished Pancratius, and when he heard the divine teaching, he then believed in Christ as the Son of God. He became close with the disciples of the Lord, and during this time the young Pancratius got to know the holy Apostle Peter.

The legend continues that after the Ascension of Our Savior, one of the Apostles came to Antioch and baptized the parents of Pancratius together with their entire household. When the parents of

Pancratius died, he left behind his inherited possessions and went to Pontus and began to live in a cave, spending his days in prayer and deep spiritual contemplation. The holy Apostle Peter, while passing through those parts, visited Pancratius at Pontus. He took him along to Antioch, and then to Sicily, where the holy Apostle Paul then was. There the holy Apostles Peter and Paul made St Pancratius Bishop of Taormina in Sicily.

St Pancratius toiled zealously for the Christian conversion of the people and the numbers of believers quickly grew with almost all the people of Taormina and the surrounding cities accepting the Christian Faith. St Pancratius governed his flock peacefully for many years. Non-believers, however, plotted against the saint, and seizing an appropriate moment, they stoned him. Thus, St Pancratius ended his life as a martyr.

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