

SUNDAY OF THE
FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS



Icon of the First Six Ecumenical Councils

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

The readings assigned for this sixth weekend after Pentecost are interesting indeed. On the one hand we hear the words of Paul which exhort us to “fraternal charity,” and on the other we hear of a cure for “paralysis”, that inability to truly function in any positive way to our brothers and sisters. This stark contrast, I believe, is the message I received.

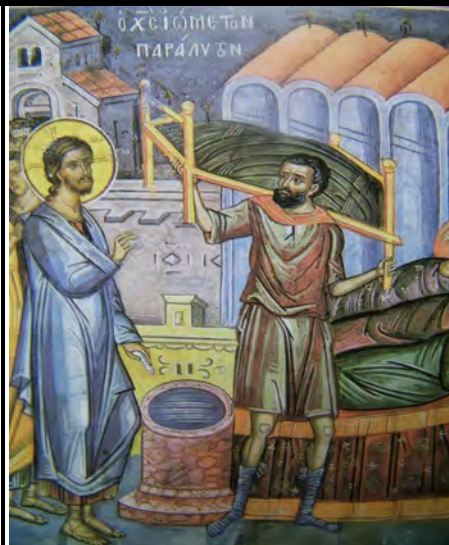
Paul exhorts us saying:

Your love must be sincere.... Love one another with the affection of brothers. Anticipate each other in showing respect.... Bless your persecutors; bless and do not curse them.... Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.

In contrast to Paul’s exhortation, we hear the story of Christ curing paralysis. In this story we hear that the scribes believed that Jesus had blasphemed because He told the man that his sins were forgiven. They harbored evil thoughts about Jesus and His thoughtfulness toward the paralyzed man.

As I listened to these readings, I thought of the fact that it often is extremely difficult for us humans to be “loving” toward others. It seems that we are paralyzed in our efforts to unconditionally love others because we need others to positively respond to us before we can love them unconditionally. We seem paralyzed to respond in an unconditional manner. We seem to base our response to others based on how they respond to us. This, of course, negates any efforts we make to actualize the potential we have to be like Christ.

Christ’s message to us is: Base your way of living not on how others treat you BUT on how you want to be treated. This means that you love your neighbors as yourself, regardless of



how they treat you. We do not spiritually grow if we base our way of living on how others treat us. I know that in our modern world this does not seem to be the approach. We base our treatment of others on how they treat us. Which, I would hazard to say, makes us no different than them.

Christ called us to a higher standard. He exhorts us to treat us in the manner that we want to be treated, regardless of how they treat us. Why? If we live this way, then we become children of God - we actualize our potential to be like Jesus, the Christ.

We cannot live this way, as you might guess, if we don’t believe in God’s coming into the world - His incarnation.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

As stated in the beginning of this article, there are two icons of the Mother of God which are essential to understanding ourselves who worship in the Kievan tradition. The first of those icons is that of the Annunciation. The East deals with the whole person. To make that point, our Church observes the Feast of Annunciation even when it coincides with Good Friday. Making an exception to the solemnity of Christ's burial, we celebrate the Divine Liturgy. By doing this, the Church liturgically stresses the importance of our personal thought process and commitment. Through the liturgy we should understand the Mother of God as THE type *par excellence* of human fulfillment in Christ, regardless of gender. The Annunciation as an icon and a holy day is pivotal in understanding the Eastern Christian approach to holiness in general and Kievan spirituality in particular.

The second image is that of Mary of the Sign. Here is the Mother of God with a medallion positioned over her chest. Inside the medallion is an image of a very mature for His years Christ Child with His right hand raised in the gesture of blessing. It summarizes the Mother of God's life from the moment of the Annunciation to eternity. She was not just the Mother of Jesus. The Mother of God needed salvation as any one of us. Her life was Christ centered and Christ filled. Mary was and is the Mother of God because she internalized Christ's message throughout her entire life. The icon of the Sign is a constant reminder that the source of all holiness is Christ, the Son



of God and our Savior.

We are called to carry, just as Mary did, the Lord Jesus within our hearts and to allow His blessings to come forth from us by the way that we treat our fellow humans. We are called to be Christ-bearers and bring His message of hope and love into the world in which we live. Our lives, like hers, must be Christ centered. That is the spirituality of our Church.

Our Church espouses a life which is not based on "keeping rules," but, rather, on bring the peace and love of God into our world but living like Jesus. Our spiritual efforts must be placed on become more like Jesus - like God as expressed in human form.

This type of icon is also sometimes called the **Platytera** (Greek: Πλατυτέρα, literally *wider* or *more spacious*); poetically, by containing the Creator of the Universe in her womb. Mary is *Platytera ton ouranon* (Πλατυτέρα των Ουρανών): "More spacious than the heavens". The *Platytera* is traditionally depicted on the half-dome that stands above the altar.

The term *Virgin of the Sign* or *Our Lady of the Sign* is a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14) "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."

One additional icon to come!

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Over the course of the centuries, especially in the Western world, much theological debate has been focused on trying to answer the *when* and *how* of the Eucharist. The **WHEN** deals with at what moment are the bread and wine transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. The **HOW** refers to the causality by which this transformation is accomplished? Literally hundreds of books have been written to answer these questions and even to this day they constitute the subject of intense disputes between East and West. But one need only to attempt to *refer* all these conjectures and theories to the immediate experience of the liturgy, to that *service* that is performed in church, and it become obvious to what degree these explanations turn out to be external to this experience, falling outside it and thus not only not really explaining anything but in the end simply *unnecessary*.

What, in fact, does the distinction of *essence* and *accidents*, which goes back to Aristotle and which the scholastics (i.e., Western theologians) made use of to answer the question of **HOW** the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is accomplished, mean - not philosophically, not abstractly, but really - for our faith, our communion in the divine, our spiritual life, our salvation? Does transubstantiation consist, according to this experience, in the change of the “substance” of bread



into the essence of the body of Christ, while the “accidents” of the body remain the accidents of the bread? To faith, which confesses every time we celebrate the Liturgy, in the fear of God and with love, that “this is truly Thine own most pure Body ... this is truly Thine own precious Blood,” this explanation is unnecessary, and for the mind itself it remains an equally incomprehensible violence to those very “laws” on whose foundations the explanation is supposedly constructed.

When we participate in this wondrous and mysterious ritual which the Lord promised would make Him present in our midst, we don't think about such things as “substance” or “accidents” of the gifts. We think about His presence and all that He did in order to make Himself present to us. We remember Him and His call to us to “change our hearts and minds for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” We remember how He worshipped God, our Father, and we join ourselves with Him in offering our own body and blood in thanksgiving for the gift of life. So when we truly worship, we don't think about *when* and *how*!



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 PLANNING

When I announced last week that I would begin to try and formulate a **Strategic Plan** for the Parish, I was asked why we should do that. My simple response is: *if we are to have a future, we must plan for it.* It is not enough to just think that we will go on until we are so small that we must be close or be closed.

A Strategic Plan also includes what we want to do in order to truly be a Christian Church - a group of people who bear witness to and support the message of God through Jesus. It is not enough to just want to maintain the status quo.



CALLED TO HOLINESS

The call to holiness is, as I have been trying to articulate, is call to real and true union with God. And, as I have tried to suggest, this must be an unending process since God is infinite. We believe that this union is realized by the working of the Holy Spirit, but until it is reached man is involved in a prolonged effort of purification - an effort of personal transformation.



This growing in our union with God is achieved by our efforts, which are reinforced and facilitated by the help of God's Spirit, to bring our human powers of knowledge, love and behavior into ever greater unity with the knowledge, love and behavior that Jesus manifested.

Jesus is our model. The call to holiness is a call to genuinely try to imitate Him. This requires, as one might guess, an active effort to increase our knowledge of how Jesus thought and lived.

Knowing that human behavior is driven by human thinking, we discover how Jesus behaved by how He thought. His thinking is clearly expressed

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FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

TOPIC: Theology of Liturgy

By Len Mier

Thy Kingdom Come:

Social Justice and Salvific Outlook in the
Anaphora of St. Basil the Great

Liturgy literally means "the work of the people" in the view of Christian worship of God. It can also be taken to mean "public service" in secular terms as the view of ancient Athenian culture. The second meaning seems to have no connection to the first meaning until you start to look at the thought processes of the Cappadocian Fathers and the social justice homilies of St Basil the Great. Once you connect the thoughts of St Basil and look at the Basilian Anaphora you can see that liturgy is the work of the people to praise God and of the called to a life of service to one's neighbor, transforming the worshiper into the same kind of being that they are worshipping.

The ancient world view on care for the poor

In the late Roman Empire the care for the poor was seen as a civic duty. It was to be based solely on what Romans paid to the state. Resources were allocated not only on the basis of need but also by the belonging to a specific group, for example a citizen of the city or member of a family unit. After the Christian faith took hold there was a change in attitude toward the poor and how people react to them. Christian bishops looked to the Semitic or Jewish notions of care for the poor.

This new outlook can be characterized love of the poor and the bishop as the lover of the poor since they had at their disposal the resources of the church. In his book "Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire." Peter Brown describes

this role of the Christian bishop:

The Bishop was presented, above all, as the *oikonomos*, as the 'steward' of the wealth of the Church. This wealth was to be used by the clergy for the benefit of the poor. In some circles, even private almsgiving was discouraged: ideally all gifts to the poor were to pass through the Bishop and his clergy, for only they knew who needs support. (Brown, 2002)

The Cappadocian Fathers were much more sensitive to the plight of the poor. This sensitivity is probably due the physical environment in which they lived. The area of Central Anatolia in present day Turkey is an environment that if the seasonal rains did not happen, drought and famine were very real occurrences. St Basil and the Cappadocian fathers lived and ministered during one such drought and famine. This gave rise to St Basil's social justice sermons. This also gave rise to the Basiliad, a new form of monastic life within the Christian community.

[The] Basiliad is not primarily a new kind of charitable institution, but rather a new set of relationships, a new social order that both anticipates and participates in the creation of 'a new heaven and earth where justice dwells.' In the Basiliad, people living together involuntary simplicity and service to create a new kind of community with the involuntary poor.... The new city is present wherever people live together in this way, waiting for the Kingdom of God even as they constitute a sign of its presence in our midst. (Schroeder, 2009)



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FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

(Continued from page 6 - Christology)

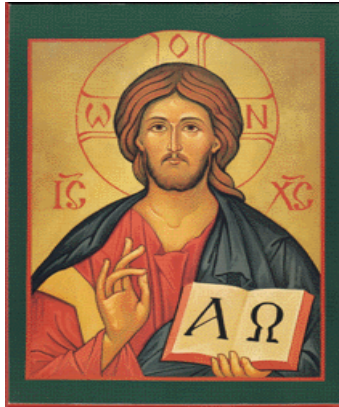
It is said that Basil's invention, in his years as a priest and bishop in Caesarea, was to harness the new monastic form to a new socially useful aim. (Brown, 2002)

St Basil in his preaching gave the church several homilies that deal with our call to Christian social justice along with his anaphora that stems from his thoughts on Christian living. The themes and titles of his sermons give us much insight to St Basil's thinking on living a Christ centered life. "To the Rich", a homily which is a call to the rich to become more philanthropic, it provides a good overview to his thinking. "I Will Tear Down My Barns", a discourse on the rich man who has an abundant harvest tears down his barns to build larger ones, only to be called to God before enjoying the fruits of his labors. One passage from that homily that sticks with me is "Wells become more productive if they are drained completely, while they silt up if they are left standing. Thus wealth if left idle is of no use to anyone, but put to use and exchanged it becomes fruitful and beneficial to the public." (Schroeder, 2009)

"In Time of Famine and Drought", a Basilian call to social action in Christian life, St Basil so appropriately says: "We should be put to shame by what has been recorded concerning the pagan Greeks. For some of them, a law of philanthropy dictates a single table and common meals, so that many different

people might almost be regarded as one household. But let us dispense with those outside the Church, and proceed to the example of the three households mentioned in the Book of Acts." And again "Do not enrich the present life while leaving the other naked and clothed in rags (Schroeder, 2009).

This common meal resonated with that of the Eucharistic table and links St Basil's social justice with that of liturgy. This common meal resonated with that of the Eucharistic table and links St Basil's social justice with that of liturgy.



His final social justice themed homily is based on the psalms, "Against Those Who Lend at Interest," a discourse that puts the plight of the poor front and center against those who fail to help

the poor by placing extra burdens on them preventing them from relief of their situation.

What is most interesting in St Basil's social justice homilies is that they are just as relevant to modern man as they were in the time that they were written. St Basil lays out the timeless message of the Gospels in a way that makes them livable and helpful in obtaining salvation. His teachings give rise to the idea of "possess with justice and dispense with mercy."(Schroeder, 2009)

St John Chrysostom also spoke of this new imagery of the poor and service to the poor in the late Roman Empire, as seen in several of his homilies, his homily on the last judgment being most prominent.

(To be continued)

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

SEVENTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 6

Monday July 17 - Marina, Great Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday July 18 - Hyacinth & Emilian, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday July 19 - Macrina, Venerable
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday July 20 - Elijah, Great Prophet
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday July 21 - Simeon & John, Venerables
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday July 22 - Mary Magdalene, Equal to the Apostles
No Service Scheduled

Sunday July 23 - Seventh Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 6
10:00 AM + John Kushnir; Mary Krill

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

in His teachings. Perhaps the one summary teaching that best describes his thinking and, therefore, His behavior is that which has become known as the *Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have others do unto you!* This simple statement sums

up the way that Jesus lived. It states clearly that you don't base how you treat others on how they treat you. It implies quite clearly that everything we do is UNCONDITIONAL. We love, forgive and treat others unconditionally, that is we don't treat others on the basis of how they treat us. Living this way is truly transformational - it changes us in the deepest and profoundest manner.



So the call to holiness is the call to live in a manner that is based on our beliefs and not on how others treat us!

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

I presented in the last issue that there were several writings in the early Church that were labeled Apocalypse. The other apocalypse, that of John, attained canonical status only with some difficulty. At first it seems to have been accepted; it is the only apocalypse endorsed by Origen. Some attached the Apocalypse of Peter as well as John on theological grounds - the only true indication of opposition to the Apocalypse in the Western Church. In the Greek Church, Dionysius of Alexandria (ca. 250) maintained that John, son of Zebedee and author of the Gospel, did not write Apocalypse (Revelation). Dionysius did not reject the book but was worried

about the use being made of it by the heretical chiliasts (i.e., a sect deemed heretical). His critical judgment distinguishing two different writers for John and Apocalypse was certainly correct, but his denial of apostolic authorship to Apocalypse had the effect of weakening the acceptance of Apocalypse as a biblical book in the Greek Church. Eusebius wavers in whether to list Apocalypse as genuine or spurious. It is not included in the list of Cyril of Jerusalem (350) or in the list of the 60th Canon of Laodicea, or in the list of Gregory Nazianzen that was accepted in Trullo II (692). The Apocalypse was not accepted in the

Syrian Church.

Next I would take up the Epistle to the Hebrews, attributed to Paul. This epistle probably was composed in the 80's or 90's by a Jewish Christian well educated in the Greek oratorical techniques of Alexandria. Although the work is in epistolary form, it is essentially a highly literate theological disquisition on the relation of Christianity to Jewish institutions. There is little evidence of clear citations of Hebrews in the 2nd century. The discussion of the acceptance of Hebrews is centered around its attribution to Paul. If Apocalypse was accepted in the West and rejected in the East, the reverse holds true for



Hebrews. In the West, Hebrews is not mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment or in the Lat list of the Codex Claromontanus, or in the African Canon of 360. In the East, Hebrews is mentioned in Origen's list, but he admits doubt as to whether Paul wrote it by his own hand. Eusebius himself accepts Hebrews, even though he knows that the Roman church denies that it is the work of Paul. Its acceptance in the East is attested by the canons of Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and Gregory Nazianzen. In the West, in the latter part of the 4th century, Hebrews won acceptance through other Fathers of the Church.

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

I have been sharing St. Gregory's thoughts about the "mystery and wonder of the Trinity." Indeed it is the one dogma - the Trinity - that makes our Christian religion so very different from other religions. It is an idea about God that retains the idea of ONE GOD Who is also THREE DISTINCT PERSONS. And, as I have repeatedly stated, it is the one understanding of God that directly connects us humans to God since the Son, the Second Person, was incarnate as a human person and still retains a glorified body. He did not stop being the GOD-MAN after his death and resurrection.

Because of this great mystery, we have a real and intimate connection with our God. He is our model of how to live this earthly life and to gain a real and true understanding of the meaning and purpose of this earthly life.

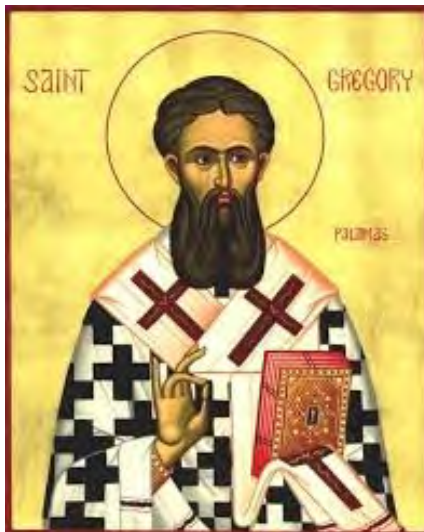
Gregory continues in this fashion. A further question presents itself. If the Father as unbegotten and the Son as begotten are indeed distinct from one another, they are obviously not the same. How can they both be the same God? Gregory poses the question as follows: "For if to be unbegotten is the essence of God, to

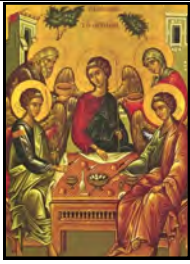
be begotten is not that essence; if the opposite is the case, the unbegotten is excluded. What argument can contradict this?

All depends. Gregory argues, on what we mean when we say that the unbegotten and the begotten are not the same. Certainly, he agrees, "the unoriginate and the create are not of the same nature." Is such the case with the Father and the Son? "But if you say that he that b begot and that which is begotten are not the same, the statement is inaccurate to say the least. For it is in fact a necessary truth that they are the same. For the relation of father to child is this: that the offspring is of the same nature with the parent. Think, Gregory coaches,

of Adam. "Was he not alone the direct creature of God," created in a unique manner by God? Does this mean that Adam was the only human being? Hardly. Other humans "begotten" by normal procreative means are clearly also human. What is Gregory's point? "Just so neither is he who is unbegotten alone God, though he alone is Father."

*I present Gregory's arguments to stimulate you, my readers, to think about **Who God Is For You!***





THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 29

Sixth Weekend After Pentecost

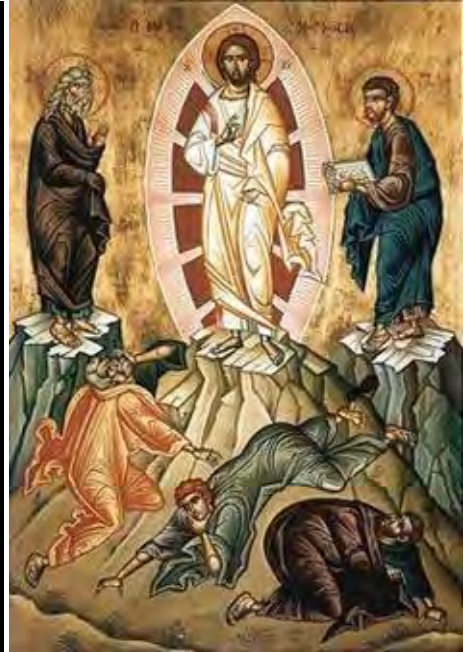
July 15-16, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

What does it mean to be created in the image of God? To be human is to be in the image, and being in the image, according to the image, entails a relationship to Christ, who is the image. Remember, the only image of God that we have is Jesus, the Christ. Certainly He is an image in virtue of being the Word of God, God's self-manifestation; but this is something we can only fully understand through the Incarnation. Humankind is created according to an image - the Word of God - that we only truly know through the Incarnation. It is only through the Incarnation that we can truly understand what it is to be human. It is only in the light of Christ that we can grasp what is truly meant by being human.

What we know from our experience of being human is what it is to be "limited" in our understanding of humanity. To be in the image is, at the very least, to bear some trace of true humanity, unlimited humanity. We see the fullness of what humanity is in the Person of Jesus, the Christ. For the Word of God, in becoming man, became what we are meant to be! To be human is to have a nature with capacities, faculties, that are never properly realized in our present existence. We have a glimpse of these faculties in Christ.

There is an illustration of what this might mean in an essay on the Gospel miracles. In



An essay the author argues quite convincingly that it is a mistake to see the miracles as simply evidence of Christ's divinity (though that is the way in which they are taken by the Fathers, as a rule. They are evidence of the potentialities of the human, cooperating with divine grace. If we want to know what it means to be human, we look at Christ.

Elijah's (Elias') Journey

When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, he and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please. The LORD has sent me on to Bethel." Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. The guild prophets who were in Bethel went out to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take your master from you?" He replied, "Yes, I know that. Be still."

Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please. The LORD has sent me on to the Jordan." Elisha replied, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two went on together. Fifty of the guild prophets followed and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood next to the Jordan.

Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up and struck the water: it divided, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. When they had crossed over,

Elijah said to Elisha, "Request whatever I might do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha answered, "May I receive a double portion of your spirit." He replied, "You have asked something that is not easy. Still, if you see me taken up from you, your wish will be granted; otherwise not." As they walked on still conversing, a fiery chariot and fiery horses came between the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind, and Elisha saw it happen. He cried out, "My father! my father! Israel's chariot and steeds!" Then he saw him no longer. He gripped his own garment, tore it into two pieces, and picked up the mantle which had fallen from Elijah. Then he went back and stood at the bank of the Jordan. Wielding the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, he struck the water and said, "The LORD, the God of Elijah - where is he now?" He struck the water: it divided, and he crossed over. (2 Kings 2:1-15)

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