

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
TENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of Saint Maximos the Confessor -- August 13th

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

The first reading this weekend is taken from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (4:9-16). In this passage Paul contrasts, with biting irony, the humiliations and sufferings of the apostles with the smugness of the Corinthians who, in forming factions, make pretense of a spiritual superiority over their fellow Christians.

Every supernatural and natural quality by which they may be distinguished is God's gift. The Corinthians have lost the sense of their own indigence and spiritual poverty that is the basic disposition of the true Christian. They behave as though they have already reached the summit of perfection and are reigning in the Kingdom of Heaven. The apostles, on the contrary, have been made a spectacle of all the universe, like the basest of men, criminals condemned to die in the games of the arena.

From biting sarcasm Paul turns to tender pleading. He spoke sharply to bring about the amendment of the faction-split community. A father has a duty to correct his children and Paul has a relationship to the Corinthians not shared by any other preacher. He

has begotten them in Christ.

Our second reading, taken from Matthew's Gospel, retells the story of Christ curing a possessed boy whom His apostles were unable to cure. It is important to note that the boy's father first brought the child to the Lord's Apostles, believing that they had the power to cure the boy.

After the Lord cures the boy, the apostles ask Him why they could not cure the boy. Jesus' response was: "Because you have so little trust.... I assure you, if you had faith the size of a mustard seed.... Nothing would be impossible for you."

Trust is the most important sentiment we must develop if we are to have a true relationship with God. We must trust that He will never do anything

to hurt us or punish us and that He will always be there to help us go through the struggles of life.

How do I learn how to trust God? By refusing to think of Him as a God who is without compassion for me in my struggles - by refusing to believe that His love is conditional. Our God unconditionally loves us and there is nothing we can do that will change His unconditional love.



Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

On Tuesday of this coming week, our Church celebrates the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God - Her Falling Asleep. Tradition tells us that when the apostles opened the grave for St. Thomas to pay his respects (*You will recall that he was absent when Jesus first appeared to the apostles after His death*), her body was not there, only the funeral clothes in which the body had been wrapped. The Apostles realized then that Mary had been taken up body and soul into heaven.

From the beginning of the sixth century, it was believed by many that the tomb of the Mother of God was to be found in the Church of the Dormition in Gethsemane, while the Church on Mt. Sion was regarded as the site of her dormition. However, historians, to this day, cannot prove anything certain concerning the place of her death and burial. Some believe that she died in Jerusalem, others claim that she died in Ephesus where St. John was believed to have taken her after Jesus' death. Even today a house in Ephesus is pointed out as the one where the Mother of God allegedly lived. (*If you take a tour of the ruins of Ephesus, guides will always point out a house where they believe she lived with John*).

The liturgical cult of the Mother of God began with the Council of Ephesus (431), which defined the dogma of her Divine Motherhood. In the words of the holy Fathers prior to the fourth century, no mention is made about the

Українська Греко-Католицька Церква

Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church



Dormition. It is not until after the fourth century that, on the basis of tradition, church writers began to write about the final moments of the life of Mary. Among those Fathers of the East that wrote about her are Andrew of Crete (+712) and John Damascene (+749).

Toward the end of the seventh century, and at the beginning of the eighth century, church writers began to direct their attention not only to Mary's wonderful Dormition but also to her ascension into heaven body and soul. John Damascene clearly believed in the assumption of the Most Holy Mother of God body and soul into heaven.

This feast is one of the oldest of Marian feasts. It began in Jerusalem shortly after the Council of Ephesus. In the sixth century this feast received its present title. Originally, Theodosius prescribed that the Dormition be kept on January 6th and the Assumption on August 9th. Emperor Mauricius commanded it be celebrated on August 15th and extended it throughout the empire for on that day he gained a brilliant victory over the Persians.

Flowers are blessed on this feast!

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

During this coming week our Church will celebrate one of the 12 major feasts of our Church, namely the “Dormition of the Mother of God.” We will also celebrate it, since it is within the octave of the feast, next weekend as a community.

As you may or may not know, while the six major feasts in honor of the Mother of God have special prayers, especially the Hymn to the Mother of God, they do not have special Antiphons but only the other moveable prayers.

The Hymn to the Mother of God, which is prayed during the Anaphora, is most beautiful. It reads:

Seeing the dormition of the Most Pure one, the Angels were filled with awe at how the Virgin went from earth to heaven. In you, O Pure Virgin, the laws of nature were overcome: in giving birth you remained a virgin and in your death heralded life. You remained a virgin after giving birth and remained alive after death, always saving your descendants, O Mother of God.

I would call upon you to reflect upon what we pray on this feast. First, we claim again our belief that her body did not suffer decay but, rather, that she was taken body and soul into the next life after her death. Second, her life-long virginity is again declared, which is one of our solemn beliefs. And last, that physical death is only a



proclamation that life is eternal and without end.

The Tropar and Kondak for this feast also is filled with what we believe about life.

TROPAR

O Mother of God, in giving birth You still preserved virginity; and in your falling-asleep you did not forsake the world. You are the Mother of Life and heaven transferred to life, and through your prayers have delivered our souls from death.

KONDAK

The grave and death did not detain the Mother of God. She prays perpetually and is our unfailing hope of intercession; for He Who dwelt in the womb of the Ever-virgin, transferred to life the Mother of Life.

Hopefully my readers can see how our liturgical worship also presents again and again the basic “dogmas” of our religion. We pray what we believe, or at least what we are called to believe by our Church. When we do celebrate this feast next weekend, ask yourself what you truly believe!



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

CELEBRATING THE FEAST

Tuesday, August 15th is the feast of the Dormition. Make sure that you make this day special, especially through your prayers. We will celebrate this feast day also on Sunday 20th so that our entire community can have an opportunity to observe this feast.



I would encourage you to think about the meaning of this feast. The dormition of Mary reminds us that all of us must face physical death. Our faith reminds us, however, that physical death is only a transition to a different way of living.

The only person you should try to be better than is the person you were yesterday

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As I think about the two great feasts that our Church celebrates in August, I am reminded that the call to holiness is a call to embrace a belief in (1) the fact that human life is a sharing in the life of God Himself, and (2) human life is eternal. The Fathers of the Church based their belief in the Jesus message because of His wondrous Resurrection from the dead. Why? Because it helped them wipe out one of humankind's greatest fears, the fear of death.



So the call to holiness is a call to not fear death but, rather, to truly see it as a means of experiencing eternal life and growing in our union with our Creator. People only fear death because they don't know what comes after earthly life. We know, through faith, that there is life after death and so, if we believe, we do not fear it as people do who have no faith.

People ask me how I can believe in life-after-death when I have no proof. If I had proof, I wouldn't need to believe. I have something greater, FAITH IN A LOVING GOD.

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

A SERMON on the Transfiguration

By Len Mier

This sermon is based on Luke's account of the Transfiguration. Since we are still within the octave of the feast, I thought I would present his second sermon.

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 (Morning Prayer) 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 miracles 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's 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 Saint. Paul evangelized. His perspective of what happened on Mt. Tabor was written to reaffirm the faith of those who were not deeply rooted in the Jewish mind-set. St. 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 wakened as Jesus enters into His glory.

As I have said, one of the most striking statement of Luke is that eight days have passed. For early Christians the idea of eight days has a cosmic reality for them. The eighth 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.



(Continued on page 7)

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

(Continued from page 6 - Sermon)

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

It is 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, Moses' face 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 of the greatest prophets of 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 readers, 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. 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 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

(Continued on page 8)

Schedule of Services

Sunday August 13 - Tenth Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 1
10:00 AM + Noah Patrick Semak - 6th Anniversary
+ Glenna Semak; Robert & Jane Semak

ELEVENTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 2

Monday August 14 - Translation of Theodosius' Relics
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday August 15 - Dormition of the Mother of God
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Wednesday August 16 - Translation of the Icon of Our Lord
Service Scheduled

Thursday August 17 - Myron, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday August 18 - Florus & Laurus, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Saturday August 19 - Andrew & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Sunday August 20 - Eleventh Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 2
10:00 AM + Mary Jane Pipta;

(Continued from page 7 - Sermon)

comes and shadows the people experiencing a vision of the Divine, a Divine affirmation of the event is given to partakers.

What do Christians today need to take away from this event present to us? We need to wake from our slumber to the realization that if we truly believe that the glory of God dwells within 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 through Moses and Elijah.

The feast of Our Lord's Transfiguration is an image of the journey of life. We are called to live like Jesus so that God's life within us can show forth to our world.

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

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

I realize that this article becomes, at times, very technical. What I am trying to present is the idea that the books we now see as a part of the New Testament (NT) were only gradually chosen from a number of writings that were extant in the early Church. We have seen that by 200 CE the Gospels, the Pauline epistles, Acts, 1 Peter and 1 John had come into general acceptance; and that by the end of the 4th century in the Latin and Greek Churches there was general acceptance of the 27-book canon of the NT. However, this development cloaks some difficulties that should be understood.

Although in the 2nd century the Pauline epistles and then the Gospels came into acceptance, just when did this acceptance mean that Christian writings were being put on a *par* with the Jewish Scriptures? Why did the concept of the NT emerge? In 2 Peter 3:16, we find writings of Paul put on a *par* with “the other Scriptures,” but we are not certain that this indicates total equality with the Old Testament (OT). (*You will recall the that the OT was considered to be the inspired word of God*). By the mid-2nd century, Justin witnesses to the fact

that the Gospels and the writings of the apostles were being read in conjunction with the OT at Christian liturgical services. About the same time Clement cites Isaiah and then Matthew as “another Scripture.” Probably, however, it was Marcion, with his rejection of the OT in favor of a

truncated collection of 10 Pauline epistles and Luke, who brought to the fore the belief that the Christian writings form a unity with the OT. In listing the Jewish Scriptures, Melito of Sardis speaks of them as the books of the OT, seeming to imply the idea of the NT. Tertullian, ca 200, is the first one to use the actual phrase “New Testament.” This coincides with the



appearance of lists of NT books and Origen’s list - a sign that the concept of a collection of Christian Scriptures has taken hold.

Remember, the early Church saw itself mainly as “reformed” Judaism, since Judaism was called into existence by God Himself. The original intent was not to build a “new religion,” but, rather to reform the “old religion” that they felt was the “true religion.” Remember also that Jesus was seen as the fulfillment of Judaism!

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

Although I realize that this article might seem to be very dense for many, what I do hope happens, if you read this, that you may gain a deeper appreciation of what has gone into the formulation of our religion through the efforts of many great persons. The dogmas that we believe in are truly complex. They are, however, beliefs that connect us directly to God and express our connection to Him in a very unique and marvelous way.

As you might guess, other questions arise when we seriously think about those things we believe in, especially that God as Three-In-One.

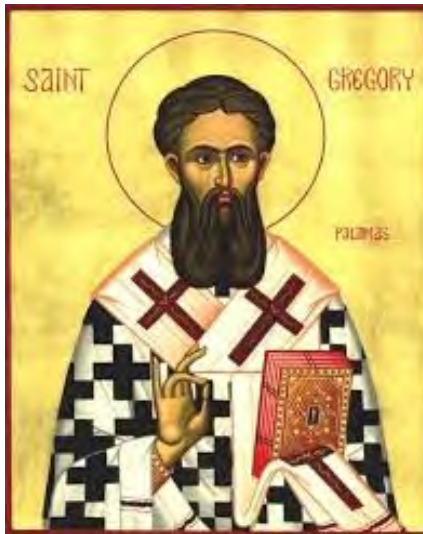
How are we to make sense of those biblical texts that seem to picture the Son as inferior to the Father?

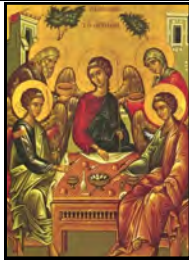
The Son sleeps, hungers, struggles in Gethsemane and dies on the cross. At times Jesus' knowledge seems limited. For instance, in speaking of the last day and hour, Jesus comments that, "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." If the Son's knowledge is less than the Father's, how can he share a common nature with Him? Is the possibility of a trinitarian model undercut by texts such as these?

These are significant questions regarding the incarnate Son that must not be sidestepped, yet Gregory dares to answer them in one sentence. "What is lofty you are to apply to the Godhead, and to that nature in him which is superior to sufferings and incorporeal; but all that is lowly to the composite condition of him who for your sakes made himself of no reputation and was incarnate - yes, for it is no worse things to say - was made man, and afterwards was also exalted." The key to these difficult biblical texts is learning "to know which passages refer to his [divine] nature, and which to his assumed human nature.

Of course, the Son was not always incarnate. "He who is now man was once the uncompounded. What he was he continued to be; what he was not he took to himself." In his saving descent into our world, human nature is "united to God, and became one [person]." In a series of vibrant shining contrasts Gregory highlights the dual nature of Christ's person and actions.

Remember, the Church believes that Christ is truly and fully God and truly and fully Man and that one of His natures does not rule the other.





THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 33

Tenth Weekend After Pentecost

August 12-13, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

Jesus Christ is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6). He speaks the words of God. He does the work of God. The person who obeys Christ and follows His way and does what He does, loves God and accomplishes His will. To do this is the essence of spiritual life. Jesus has come that we may be like Him and do in our own lives, by His grace, what He Himself has done.

A person can abide in Christ, accomplish His commandments and be in communion with God the Father only by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in his life. Spiritual life is life in and by the Holy Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and is sent into the world through Christ so that human persons can fulfill God’s will in their lives and be like Christ. The spiritual fathers of the Eastern Church say that the Holy Spirit makes people to be “Christ’s,”

that is, the “anointed” children of God. This also is the teaching of the apostles in the New Testament writings:

But you have been anointed by the Holy One and you know all things... and the unction [charisma] you have received from Him abides in you... His anointing teaches you about everything and is true and is no lie, just as it has taught you, abided in Him.... And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He has given us.... By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His own Spirit (1 John).

The teaching of St. John is, of course, the

same teaching as that of St. Paul. It is the classical teaching of the Eastern Church, made popular in recent times by St. Seraphim, that the very essence of Christian life, is the “acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. Without the Spirit there is no life.



Life’s Journey is an As-

The Lord's Love of Sinners

God's will is to save us, and nothing pleases Him more than our coming back to Him with true repentance. ... It was precisely in order to show that there is nothing closer to God's heart than the divine Word of God...lived among us in the flesh, and did, suffered, and said all that was necessary to reconcile us to God the Father, when we were at enmity with Him. ... He also taught us in many different ways that we should wish to imitate Him by our own kindness and genuine love for one another.

So it was that Christ proclaimed that He had come to call sinners to repentance, not the righteous, and that it was not the healthy who required a doctor, but the sick. ... To give the same lesson He revived the man who, having fallen into the hands of the brigands, had been left stripped and half-dead from his wounds; he poured wine and oil on the wounds, bandaged them, placed the man on his own mule and brought him to an inn, where he left sufficient money to have him cared for, and promised to repay any further expense on his return.

Again, He told of how that Father, who is goodness itself, was moved with pity for his profligate son who returned and made amends by repentance; how he embraced him, dressed him once more in the fine garments that befitted his own dignity, and did not reproach him for any of his sins.

So too, when He found wandering in the mountains and hills the one sheep that had strayed from God's flock of a hundred, He brought it back to the fold, but He did not exhaust it by driving it ahead of Him. Instead, He placed it on His own shoulders and so, compassionately, He restored it safely to the flock.

Accept my yoke, He said, by which He meant His commands, or rather, the whole way of life that He taught us in the Gospel. He then speaks of a burden, but that is only because repentance seems difficult. In fact, however, my yoke is easy, He assures us, and my burden is light.

St. Maximos the Confessor

Visit www.ecpubs.com for more publications.