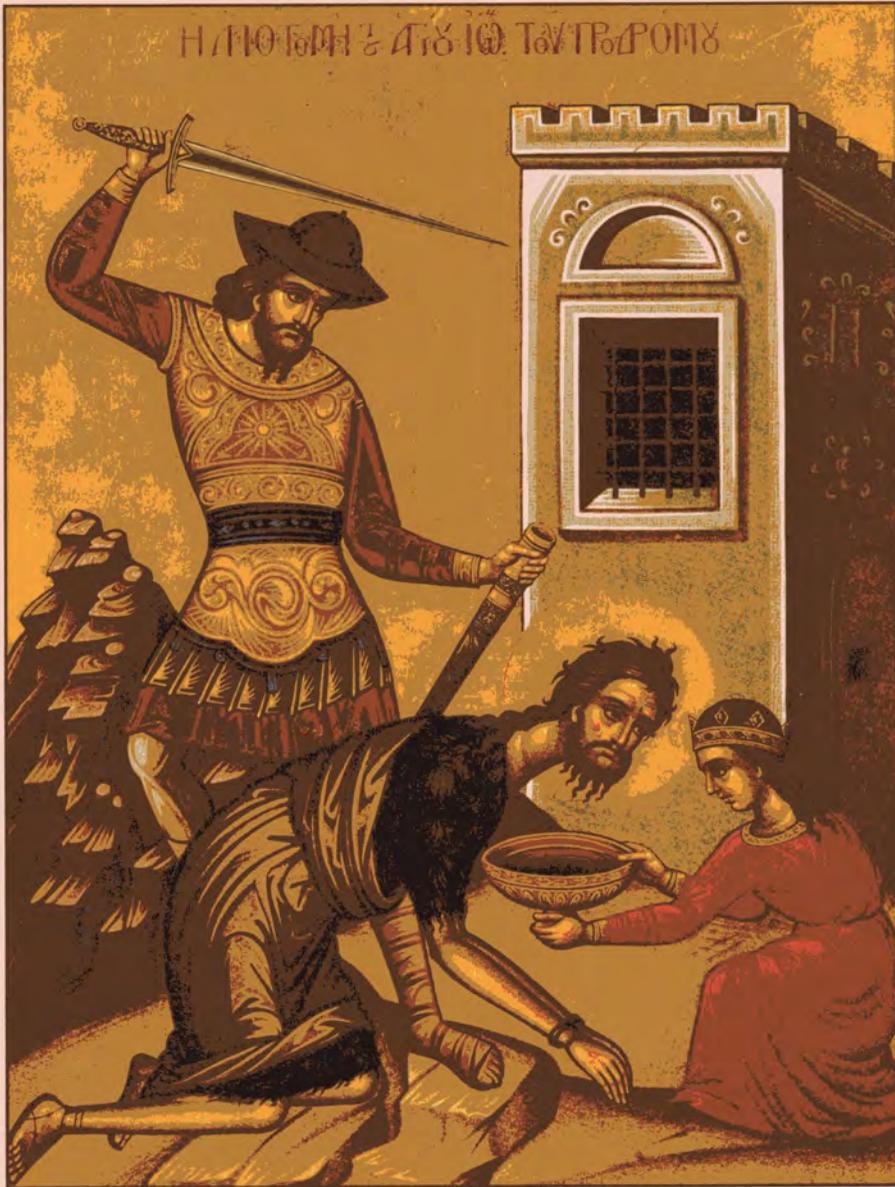


TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
TWELFTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



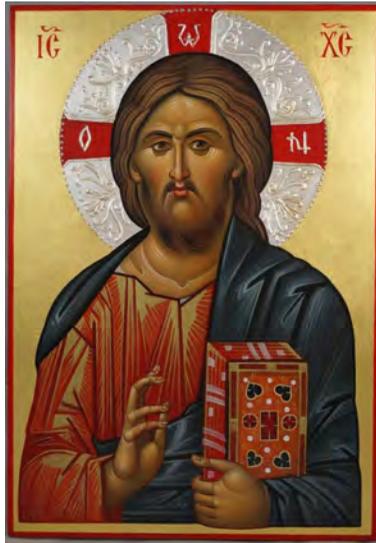
Icon of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist -- August 29th

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

Our first reading this weekend is again taken from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In the passage we hear, he again reminds the Corinthians and us that he has preached the Lord crucified and risen from the dead. He also states that he himself saw the resurrected Christ. He then states this: "by God's favor I am what I am. This favor of His to me has not proved fruitless".

I believe that this has a very important and poignant message for us. We must be able to look at ourselves in a mirror and say exactly what Paul said - I am what I am by God's favor.

I is critical, I have found, that we have a true appreciation for who we are. Why? Because it is by the grace of God that we are who we are. In some mysterious way, God chose us to be who we are in order that His creation could be complete. We must



have a true respect for this fact and feel in our heart of hearts that we are His creation and that what He created He found good. I would remind my readers that if we find that we cannot love ourselves, we cannot love others.

Our second reading, taken from Matthew's Gospel, relates what Jesus said to the man who asked Jesus this question: "what good must I do to possess everlasting life?" After Jesus states several of the commandments and the young man says: "I have kept all these; what do I need to

do further?" Jesus then says, "If you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven".

The clear message is that the things of this world can become true obstacles to spiritual growth since they seem to have the power to seduce people into becoming attached to them. When we become too attached to things of this world, we see to forget the things of the Kingdom. It seems that "things" have a natural impact on many people and it is easy to become true "slaves" to the things that we own.

Often attachment to the things of this world bespeak of a person desire to control life since they realize, at some level, that life is unpredictable and, of course, uncontrollable. We quickly forget that we can't take the things of this world with us when we die.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

During this coming week, Tuesday, August 29th, our Church celebrates the "Beheading of John the Baptizer." Why does the Church give such veneration to St John the Baptist, even fixing a strict fast day in his honor? Some reasons.

Our Lord Himself said that St John was the greatest prophet 'among those born of women'. Some hearing these words are surprised. They ask: Surely, Christ Himself is the greatest man born of women? However, Christ was not born of a married woman, he was born of a Virgin. Therefore, in obedience to our Lord's words that St John is the greatest born of women, the Church duly honors him. In fact, there are no fewer than six feasts of St John in the Church Year. The first is his Conception on 23 September. Then comes his commemoration on 7 January, the day after the Feast of the Baptism of Christ. The third is the Second Finding of his head on 24 February. His next feast is the Third Finding of his head on 25 May. The fifth is his Birth, or Nativity, on 24 June, and finally today's feast, the last in the Church Year, his Beheading on 29 August.

The parents of St John were great and holy people in their own right and their child was a gift in answer to prayer made to them in their pious old age. His father was St Zachariah, Prophet, Priest and Martyr. His mother, St Elizabeth, was the sister of St Anna, that is the sister of the mother of the Mother of God. This relationship between the



Mother of God and her kinsman, St John, is expressed in the icon which typically hangs over the holy doors in Eastern Christian churches. This shows Christ in the center, the Mother of God on His right and St John on His left. This icon is called the **Deisis**, and signifies how our salvation is related not only to Our Savior, but also to His Holy Mother and St John.

St John has the special title of the 'Forerunner', in Greek 'Prodromos', which in is a common Greek Christian name. St John alone can claim to be the Forerunner of Christ, therefore the pioneer of our Faith. How can we fail therefore to give him special honor?

The Holy Foreunner is also given the title of 'Prophet'. In fact it can be said that he was the last Prophet of the Old Testament.

Because St John is so important in our Christian history, I will continue to share more in the coming Bulletins.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

The Divine Liturgy - the continual ascent, the lifting up of the Church to *heaven*, to the throne of glory, to the unfading light and joy of the kingdom of God - should be the focus of our experience. As one author has put it: "Standing in the temple of God's glory" we are called to think and imagine that we are in heaven. In fact the area defined by icons representing Christ and Mary is considered, in our Church, to be a symbol of the Kingdom of God. These words are not just pious rhetoric, for they express the very essence, the very purpose both of the Church and of her worship as above all precisely a *liturgy*, an action in which the essence of what is taking place is simultaneously revealed and fulfilled.

But in what is this essence, in what is the ultimate meaning of the Divine Liturgy if not in the manifestation and the granting to us of this divine good? From where, if not from our "Lord, it is good for us to be here," comes its simultaneously otherworldly, heavenly and cosmic beauty, that *wholeness*, in which *all* - words, sounds, colors, time, space, movement, and the *growth* of all of them - is revealed, realized as the renewal of creation, as ours, as the ascent of the entire world on high, to where Christ has raised and is eternally raising us?

I wonder if this makes any sense to my readers? What I am trying to express is that if we truly enter into the essence of our worship - Divine Liturgy



- we are called to be transported out of time and space and glimpse the world to come. In our Divine Liturgy we actually address our God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - and, for the short time that we pray, we can, if we allow ourselves to think about what we are really doing, encounter Him.

We are asked in the Divine Liturgy to "lay aside all earthly cares" so that we can truly allow ourselves to be focused on the kingdom of God. We say in the very beginning of the Liturgy, "Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit". We desire a glimpse of God's Kingdom and we have to allow ourselves to imagine being in God's Kingdom where all "earthly cares" are put aside.

The Liturgy encourages us to also "stand aright" and to "stand in awe" before our God. If we sincerely pray the prayers of the Liturgy, it is easy to be transported psychologically and spiritually into His presence. This is what we must allow ourselves to do when we celebrate the Liturgy - to be transported into His presence where He can praise Him and ask Him for help to live our lives.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



COMING THIS FALL

PLEASE NOTE: This year our Rummage Sale will not include *clothing* or *shoes!* Also, please do not offer items that are not clean or not in working order.

RUMMAGE SALE DATES

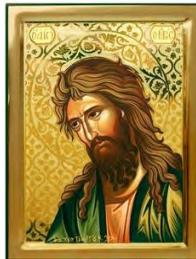
September 15-16, 2017

We are already accepting items for the sale. Please bring them directly to the Social Hall. ALSO, there is a sign-up sheet in the Vestibule for workers. We need people to help set-up the sale and also to work the sale.

BEHEADING OF JOHN THE BAPTIZER

Tuesday August 29th

This coming week our Church celebrates the Feast of the Beheading of John the Baptizer. It is our tradition to observe a strict fast on that day. John is considered one of the great saints of our Church. If you can, abstain from meat and dairy products on that day. This tradition is held because that is how John lived.



Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized. In the first, it is ridiculed. In the second, it is opposed. In the third, it is regarded as self evident

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As many can tell if they have regularly read this article, this comes as a "stream of conscious" article. The call, in my estimation, is diverse and multidimensional. I



really don't think that this call to holiness can be simplified into just one approach.

I do think that the call is a call to becoming an authentic human being - a human being that is focused on becoming all that God has created him to be. This is, in my estimation, the "goal" of life - to become all that God has created us to be. When we strive to become all that God has created us to be, we find the true meaning and purpose of our life.

We are here to complete God's creation. We need to be who we are in order for God's creation to be complete. When we are no longer needed to fulfill this need, we pass on to the next realm of existence.

Since life is eternal, this life on earth is only a part of an eternal progression that is designed to help us grow in a greater likeness of Jesus, the Christ. (Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

Introduction to Dogmatics

By Len Mier

In this first essay I will be discussing the ways in which we can know God as summarized from Metropolitan John Zizioulas' Lectures in Christian Dogmatics. The goal is to address the understanding of knowledge of God and that of knowing God.

To start, what is knowledge, or how do we know? What we are talking about is how we have knowledge about something. A simple example is when we see an object we have never seen before, we identify, through our senses, that it has a specific shape and physical characteristics. We start a process of matching it to images of things familiar to us, so that through a process of saying what the object is or is not, we reach a conclusion saying that we have knowledge of what that physical object is.

This is fairly easy to do for objects that are perceivable or inanimate, and is easy to gain knowledge through use of our senses. But is this the same as saying we know these things? The problem comes when an object we want to know or gain knowledge of does not have a physical manifestation. How can we have knowledge of these things or can we know them?

When we talk about knowledge of God we talking about the ability to ascribe to Him relatable, identifiable

attributes. Or through a process of negation, saying what He is not. We can say God is all good, all powerful, and all loving. But is this the same as saying we know God? Identifying attributes can describe Him, but do we know Him in the same way we know an object or another person? Is knowing and recognizing what a chair is the same as knowing God?

Many theologians go into great depth on how we know God. The primary idea in knowing God is that it is done freely. We are free to know or reject God. God does not force this knowledge on us. This freedom is based in love and in the community of believers. As Metropolitan Zizioulas tells us, this love is the communion, or relationship, created by the community of the Church and its members. This love is not the emotion that is so popularly talked about in modern society, but is that mutual relationship or bond between members of a community. Knowing someone is also identifying with that person, if we lose our identification with that person we lose knowing them.

How can we identify with something we have not seen? We can say that although we have only seen Christ in the eyes of our faith we can still use Him

(Continued on page 7)



FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

(Continued from page 6 - Dogmatics)

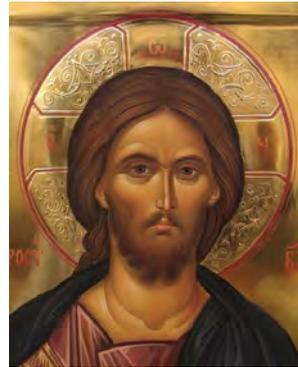
to gain knowledge of God. Maximos the Confessor tells us that Christ is the Logos of God, and that it is through this Logos we can come to know God.

It is the personal relationship of love, the Father has with His son, which we can start to have knowledge of God. Only in this most intimate relationship, of the Son identifying himself with the Father, can we then start to know God. It is this loving relationship that makes the Father truly known to us. The Gospel of Matthew gives some insight to this relationship:

All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him." (Matthew 11:27)

It is in this relationship of the Father and Son that the knowing of God is revealed to us. Knowing God cannot be gained in isolation but only through engagement with the Son. Knowing the Son cannot be done in isolation but only in engaging our neighbor. It is in this experience of engaging the Son do we gain knowledge. How does the Son reveal this to us? He revealed it by charging us to follow his example, do unto others as I have done for you.

For knowing to be real, it has to be based on our experience. Knowing becomes real when we freely start to imitate that person we want to know. We have to identify, or take on, Jesus' identity. In taking on this identity, God and his Son should become real to us. Jesus freely revealed the personal relationship of



God as our Father. Jesus imitated the Father by doing his will. When we imitate Jesus in word and action we place ourselves in a relationship with Him and by extension in a relationship with the Father.

In summary we can say we have gone beyond having knowledge of God to knowing God when the following happens in our lives. We freely accept God's love. We build up this bond of love with Him through imitating the actions of Jesus - His love being expressed in the community of believers and society. This knowing of God becomes truly real by our actions becoming the same as actions of Jesus. The revelation of the Father's love for us, manifested in our actions and interactions, makes real for us God and thereby we can truly know Him.

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 August 27 - 12th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM + Eva Sikora; Son Taras and Friend Peter Petish

13th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 4

Monday August 28 - Moses the Ethiopian, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday August 29 - Beheading of John the Baptizer
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Wednesday August 30 - Alexander, John & Paul, Patriarchs
No Service Scheduled

Thursday August 31 - Deposition of the Cincture of Mary
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday September 1 - Simeon, Venerable - The Indict
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday September 2 - Mammas, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Sunday September 3 - 13th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 4
10:00 AM + John Krowicky; Luba Bluj

(Continued from page 7 - Sermon)

I truly do think that one of the unfortunate things that has arisen in Western Christianity is the thought and idea, as I see it played out in Western Theology, that this life on earth is all that there is to life and that we either make it or break it during this lifetime. There seems to be an attitude that the way you live during this brief period on earth either results in reward or punishment. This, in my estimation, eliminates the possibility of an eternity of possible growth as human beings. The reason this thinking has come into existence, I firmly believe, is that if people have the thought that they have other lifetimes to grow in their likeness of Christ, they will make no efforts during this life time to become more like Christ. I reject this estimation of humankind. I refuse to sell humans short.



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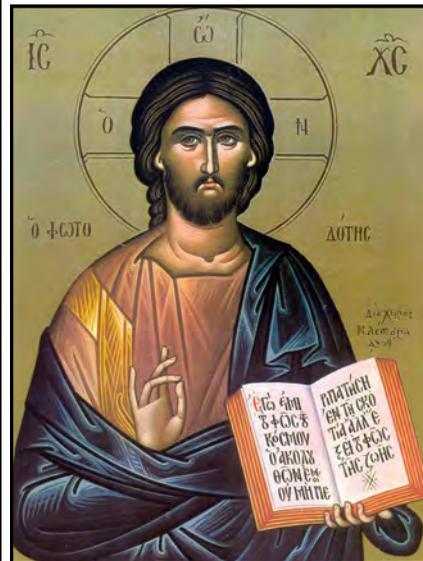
Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

While I realize that this might be a challenging article, I continue it because it is my hope and prayer that the people who read my Bulletin might be as well-informed as possible. I also truly believe that my readers can gain benefit from such information.

There is truly value in the early lists of books that the Fathers quote. If patristic citations tell us nothing about canonicity in the strict sense, but only that a book was thought worthy of respect, the lists are more helpful. The formation of a list implies acceptance of a book, so listed as a particular type of book, and, since the lists of New Testament (NT) books are at time coupled with lists of Old Testament (OT) books, acceptance as Scripture. We must always remember that the early Christians help the OT books as sacred and inspired by God. We must also remember that the OT was translated into Greek, the language of the NT.

Past discussions of the Canon have sometimes neglected to consider that a list may represent no more than the author's own judgment or the custom of his local church. The fact that lists do not agree from area to area weakens their witness to universal Church practice.

What is thought to be our earliest list, the Muratorian Fragment, considered representative of Roman usage in the late 2nd century, does not include 1-2 Peter, James and one Johannine epistle; but it does include Wisdom (and OT book considered as a NT book) and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, about which, it admits, there was certain controversy. Some authors have questioned the usual dating of this fragment and suggested that it belongs in the 4th century. This would mean that an incomplete canon perdured at Rome



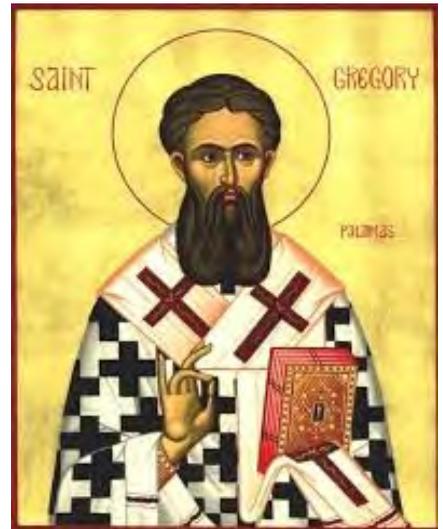
even later than formerly thought. Origen's list in the 3rd century raises doubt about 2 Peter and two epistles attributed to John. In the early 4th century, we have two Eastern canons from Eusebius and Cyril of Jerusalem and two slightly later Latin canons and these do not agree.

Eusebius explicitly distinguishes between recognized, disputed and spurious books. He lists epistles by James and Jude as disputed yet states that they have been regularly used in many churches, thereby testifying that his list does not represent universal usage.

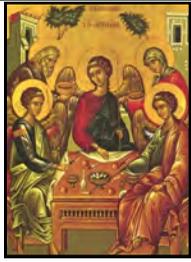
Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

Gregory closes his fourth oration by analyzing the actual titles of the Son. While the being of God “cannot be expressed in words,” Gregory does believe it is possible to “sketch Him by His attributes, and so obtain a certain faint and feeble and partial idea concerning Him. Gregory’s catalogue of 15 divine names and attributes includes the following:

- 1 *He Who Is, and God.* Both are “the special names of His essence.
- 2 *Father, Son and Holy Spirit.* Within the Godhead itself, “the proper name of the unoriginate is ‘Father,’ and that of the unoriginately begotten is ‘Son’, and that of the unbegottenly proceeding or going forth is ‘the Holy Spirit.’ More particularly, the Son is called “Son because He is identical with the Father in essence; and not only for this reason, but also because He is of Him.
- 3 *Only Begotten.* When the son is called Only Begotten, both His uniqueness as “the only Son” and “the manner of His Sonship” are in view. This is an incorporeal, eternal and timeless generation, one “not shared by bodies”
- 4 *Word.* The Son is called Word in relationship “to the Father as word to mind; not only on account of his passionless generation, but also because of the union, and of his declaratory function.” In a manner of speaking, the Son is the definition or “demonstration of the Father’s nature, as everything that is begotten is a silent word of Him that begot it.”
- 5 *Wisdom.* The Son is “the knowledge of things divine and human. For how is it possible that He who made all things should be ignorant of the reasons of what He has made?”



I would only present the first five of Gregory’s 15 in this issue of the Bulletin since I would invite you to take time and “think about” each of these five. Each, I know, presents a challenge since they represent the mystery that is our God. All Three Sacred Persons have existed for all eternity. They exist separately but only comprise one Godhead. There is truly a dynamic relationship between the three of them. They each have a specific “role” or “function” to perform and each compliments and completes the other. When did Gregory live? In the fourth century - born in 329 CE. Think about this!



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 35

12th Weekend After Pentecost

August 26-27, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

St. Paul gives us his doctrine of the “two laws” at work in the life of man.

For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members.... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.... For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (Romans 7:14-8:17).

Every human being is confronted with these two possibilities of human existence. Either a person chooses life by the grace of God and the power of the Spirit - the “abundant” and “eternal life” given by God in creation and salvation through Jesus Christ - or the person chooses death. The whole pathos of human existence consists in this choice, whether a person is aware of it or not. Christian spiritual life depends on the conscious choice of the “way of life.” To “choose life” and to walk in the “way of life” is the way that man shows himself to be in the image and unto the likeness of God.

For by the hands of the Father, that is by the Son and the Holy Spirit, man, and not merely a part of man, was made in the likeness of God... for the perfect man consists in the commingling



**Life's Journey is an Ascension
to the Heavenly Father**

and the union of the soul, receiving the Spirit of the Father and the fleshly nature which was also molded after the image of God...the man becomes spiritual and perfect because of the outpouring of the Spirit, and this is he who was made in the image and unto the likeness of God.

***Ask yourself, do I realize that
I have been made in the image
and unto the likeness of God?
If you don't, why don't you?
Think about it!***

The Passion of John the Baptist

Today while the virtue of John and the ferocity of Herod are related to us, our innards were shaken, our hearts trembled, our sight grew dim, our mind became dull, our hearing deserted us. For is there anything within human sensation that remains undisturbed when a large amount of vice destroys a large amount of virtue?

Herod, it says, apprehended John, and had him bound, and put in prison (Mt 14:3). John was the school of the virtues, the instructor of life, the model of sanctity, the pattern of morality, the mirror of virginity, the epitome of purity, the example of chastity, the way of penitence, the pardon of sins, the discipline of faith. John was greater than a human being, equal to the angels, the apex of the Law, the seed of the Gospel, the harbinger of the Apostles, the silence of the prophets, the lamp of the world, the herald of the Judge, the forerunner of Christ, the

preparer for the Lord, the witness of God, the mediator of the whole Trinity.

But Herod is the very one who desecrated the Temple, ruined the priesthood, disturbed its proper order, profaned the kingdom, corrupted anything that had to do with religion, the Law, life and morals, faith, and discipline. Herod was ever an assassin toward his fellow citizens, a brigand toward people of any distinction, a ravager toward his allies, a robber toward those of his own household, a killer of the common folk, a murderer of his children, a slayer of foreigners, a murderer towards his own, drenching the land with gore in his bloodthirstiness. And, so it is that he gulped down the hallowed blood of John from his enormous cup of cruelty.

St. Peter Chrysologus

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