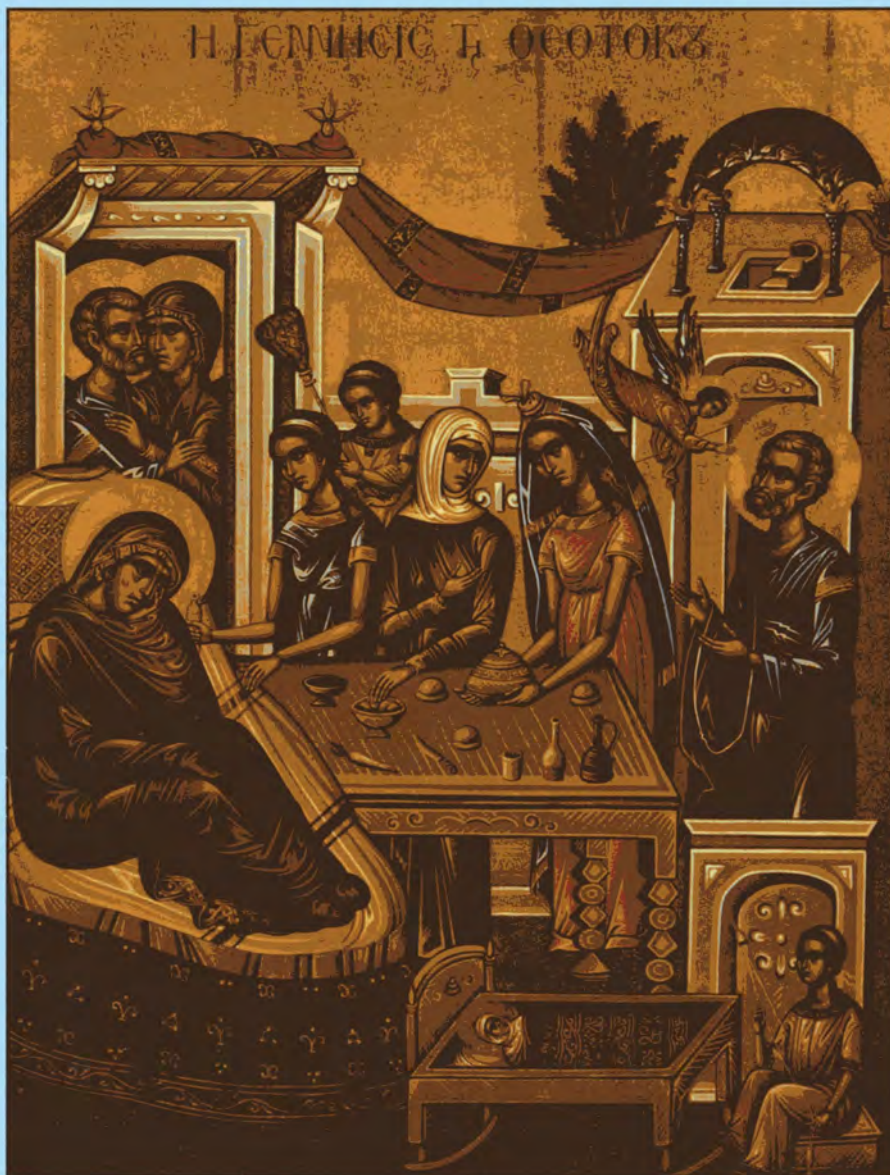


THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW



Icon of the Nativity of the Mother of God -- September 8th

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

Our first reading this weekend is taken from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians wherein he tells them and us: "Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith... In a word, be strong. Do everything with love." He clearly states a way of living that is based on the teachings of Jesus. A Christian is ever watchful so that when life presents challenges he can respond to them in a manner similar to that way Jesus met the challenges in His life. If we base our response to the events of life in the manner that our faith tells us, then we will have peace and will grow in our likeness of Christ. It is our job as Christians to support and to encourage one another to live in the manner that Jesus did.

Our second reading, taken from Matthew's Gospel, presents the parable of the "tenants". It is one of Jesus' parable of which we should all be aware. This parable also goes by the name of the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen.

Matthew has somewhat expanded this parable in order to make the point entirely clear, although the parable is not obscure in Mark. The description of the vineyard is given in words that closely echo Isaiah 5:2., where the vineyard symbolizes Israel. The parable of Jesus has allegorical features. The owner is an absentee landlord, and in the New Testament (NT) such disputes between landlords and tenants were not unknown.



Matthew increases the number of the slaves so that their allegorical significance may be completely clear; the slaves represent the prophets. The allegorical significance of the son is not equally clear. No Old Testament figure can be intended and the death of John the Baptizer cannot be attributed to the Jews. If the son is an allegorical figure, he can represent no one but Jesus; and one would expect more to be made of this feature of the parable. As a suggestion that Jesus himself is the son who is killed, this passage is extremely delicate; that it is an ecclesiastical expansion inserted in the primitive Church seems unlikely because it is a part of the climactic structure of the parable.

So as we think about both of these readings we hear an exhortation to be aware that the message is that we must be on guard to maintain a way of responding to the challenges of life that is in accord with the Jesus way. The parable also tells us not to take advantage of any of the situations in life that we think might benefit us as the tenants did. To benefit at the expense of others is not the way.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

While I realize that some of this may be redundant, I continue to try to present in different ways what is unique about our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. I would begin by saying that our official title, as a Church, is Ukrainian Greek-Catholic, which distinguishes us from Roman-Catholic.

The Greek Catholic church (Греко-католицька церква) is the historical name given to all churches in the eastern half of the Roman Empire, or in lands culturally dependent on the Byzantine Empire, that gave allegiance to Rome but, at the same time, maintained their traditional Eastern religious customs. Some of these emerged in the early centuries of the Christian era, although most arose after the split between Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism in 1054.

Ideally, the Roman church was a universal cultural and religious entity without any national connotations whereas the Slavic and churches in the East (Russian, Ukrainian-Belarusian, Bulgarian, Romanian) were culturally and administratively dependent on Byzantium and were thus viewed as 'Greek' churches practicing the Greek rite. Ukrainian Christians in the 16th and 17th centuries called themselves 'people of the Greek-Eastern Rite.

The Union of Berestia (1596), with



unity, attempted to overcome the divisions between East and West by creating a number of 'Greek' eparchies united administratively and by Creed to the Roman Catholic world. The term *Graeci catholici* was coined by the Vatican to distinguish this new entity from the rest of the Eastern world - the *Graeci schismatici* or simply *Graeci*. However, as early as the 1620s, the term *Rutheni catholici* began to be used to characterize Ukrainian and Belarusian Catholicism, thus recognizing at least a nascent national character in these churches. These same terms were used to describe the ritual of the Ukrainian churches.

Similarly, the names *Rutheni uniti* and *Rutheni non uniti* or just simply *uniti* and *non uniti* were used especially by Polish religious as well as lay circles in order to underline the singularity of Ukrainian Catholicism and to imply its inferiority vis-à-vis their own Roman Catholicism. The Orthodox in Eastern Europe also used the name 'Uniate' pejoratively.

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Again we ask, what is the Divine Liturgy all about? As I think about it, it is the means that we have to make real the promise of our Lord to be always with us! He found a way to make sure that He would always be in the presence of those who believed in Him. That way was by His transformed Body and Blood.

We must ask ourselves: What does it mean that the bread and wine we offer as gifts is transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ? It truly means so very much.

By the transformed gifts, which are symbols of human life, Christ is in our midst. He is with us, trying to help us live a life in accord with His teachings. He is present to us, and interestingly within us, to help us understand that God is always with us.

With we join with Christ and see the gifts that we offer as not only representative of Him but also of our own human lives, we begin to see how God is with us and within us.

Our Divine Liturgy is a symbolic way that we can join with Christ and offer our lives back to God in true and real "THANSIGIVING" for the gift of life. This is why our Divine Liturgy is called an Eucharistic Service - a service of true and real thanksgiving for the gift of life.

Are you thankful for the life that has been given to you? That is a very important question that all of us must truly ask ourselves each and every



time we celebrate the most holy and Divine Liturgy.

What is it that we do during the Divine Liturgy? We bring Christ, our true Savior, into our presence. He promised that whenever we truly remembered what He did on the day before He died, namely the Last Supper, He would, like He was then, in their presence not only in His divine nature but also in His divine nature. He would be in our presence.

We, as Christians, count on this in a real and true manner. In order to strengthen our resolve in the Lord, we need to live like people who trust in the Lord. We must need Christ to be present in our confect's to support us and help us.

Christ does for us. He This He not only supports us in His response to the challenges to our faith, but also provides with an opportunity to respond to these challenges with a True and Authentic Manner.

I encourage my readers to think about these challenges to our faith in a real a true manner. We call upon all to believe that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer and Lord!



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



ITS ALMOST HERE

Our Rummage Sale is quickly approaching. It is a good fundraiser for the Parish and, since we continue to make improvement to our church building, it is very necessary.

Running a Rummage Sale is not an easy job. Please think about giving some time to help us either set-up the sale or run the sale. PLEASE CHECK the sign-up sheet in the Vestibule. If you can just donate one hour, it will be appreciated.

NEXT WEEK

September 10th

As you are aware, Len Mier is studying to be a Deacon. His course work requires that he perform certain tasks. One of those tasks is to provide to the parish several reflections on Scripture. Next week at the end of the Liturgy he will be giving his first reflection (*I will not give a sermon on that day*).



He will also be presenting another reflection in November. I am delighted to support him in his studies.

CALLED TO HOLINESS

It is truly my hope that as I ramble around the “idea” of the “call to holiness” that I truly believe we have been given by God, that it will inspire my readers to also “ramble around” about this very profound idea. I truly believe that we are all called to “holiness”, which, as I see it, is the calling to truly come to a true understanding of the meaning and purpose of life and to actively attempting to engage in behaviors that can help us actualize our very real potential to be like God – to be like God as seen in the Person of Jesus Christ.



I do believe that many of us Christians, myself included, can be distracted from coming to a real understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. We are people who live in a world that exerts great influence on us. It seems that everything in our modern world militates against coming to a real understanding of the meaning of life. Ask yourself this: *What is the meaning of life? Why are we here?* I am sure that it will be difficult to come up with a reasonable answer.

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

INTRODUCTION TO DOGMATICS

By Len Mier

With regard to Zizioulas' presentation on the doctrine of creation, why is it necessary to maintain that the creation was created by God *ex nihilo*, i.e., "out of nothing." Describe some of the aspects of the relationship between God and his creation?

With almost every religious, philosophical or scientific system of thought there is a given explanation of the origin of the cosmos. Each system tries to explain man's relationship with the cosmos. In every explanation, a relationship between man, nature, and God (*or lack of God*) is revealed. Of what importance is this to a person of faith?

The scientific explanation tries to remove God totally from the equation. This system starts from the point that something already was present and some force of nature acts upon it to start the universe or cosmos we perceive today. It is based purely on the notion of chance without any intervention of forces outside itself. One primary aspect of this school of thought is the world goes from chaos to order, then back into chaos in a never ending cycle.

Many of the ancient religions of the middle and Far East have their own explanation of the cosmos. One of the most prominent is that of the Epic of Gilgamesh. It tells of the creation of the world from things that already existed and how the creator used these things to give us the present world.

The Gnostics, who were contemporaries of the first Christians also had an explanation of the origins of the cosmos. This explanation fought hand and hand for the true beliefs we find in the church today. In the Gnostic explanation of creation there is a separation of roles between that of God and that of the "Creator". Their reasoning was that the world was basically evil and that God could not be the creator of this world.

The early church struggled with explaining the creation of the cosmos and God's relationship to the cosmos. The early Fathers were able to explain the creation of the cosmos and God's relationship to it by boldly proclaiming the notion that God created the cosmos "out of nothing" or "*ex nihilo*". This idea is central to our belief and our understanding of the cosmos' relationship to its creator.

We as a community of believers attest to this at every liturgy when we profess our faith in the recitation of the symbol of faith. "I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." (CCEL.org, 1995). In the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom we receive a more profound explanation during the anaphora and communion rite when the priest prays the words, from nothingness you



(Continued on page 7)

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

from nothingness you have brought all into being.

One implication of creation from nothing is the fact that God exists outside the reality of the created world. God was not dependent on what was available to Him. Since there was nothing He had to will everything to come into existence. There was no need to do something with things already present, since only God is eternal and uncreated.

Secondly God is uncreated and eternal since God was present before the act of creation. He has a direct involvement with creation since he transcends time and physicality. God created something outside himself and through his relationship with creation sustains it. This act was done in freedom because he willed it to be, not because it was a matter of necessity to Him.

The third implication of this creation out of nothing is, it is solely from God therefore it is intrinsically good. The creation narrative of Genesis tells us that God saw what He created was good. There is no conflict between what God created and himself in the beginning. Because man being freely created in God's own image, man was given the freedom to accept or reject Him. Conflict with God was made by man when he exercised his own free will, this freedom a consequence of the free creation out of nothing.

God, because of this form of creation, is free and independent of creation. Thus creation is always moving toward a state of dissolution and death. The cosmos is dependent on God to sustain it, since creation is not eternal. God being eternal is the only



All creation is mortal the only way to overcome this mortality is communion with God. By communion with God, who is eternal, creation can transcend dissolution and death. This communion with God is the sole purpose of man's creation. This communion with God is made present in the incarnation of God in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, through whom the cosmos is created.

It is therefore that we as orthodox¹ believers proclaim and believe that the cosmos is created by the eternal God. This creation was done not by necessity but by His free will. This creative act done by His free will was done "ex nihilo", meaning it was done out of nothing. God transcends this creation and is not part of it. Because the cosmos was created from nothing it has in its own

(Continued on page 8)

Schedule of Services

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

14th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 5

Monday September 4 - Babylas, Bishop Martyr - LABOR DAY
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, September 5 - Zachary, Prophet and Elizabeth
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday September 6 - Miracle of the Archangel Michael
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday September 7 - Sozon, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday September 8 - Birth of the Mother of God
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday September 9 - Saturday before the Exaltation of the Cross
No Service Scheduled

Sunday September 10 - Weekend before the Exaltation - Tone 5
10:00 AM + For the Parish Family

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

(Continued from page 7 - Dogmatics)

existence the seeds of its own dissolution if there is a need for a communion or relationship with its creator God. This communion is made manifest in the Incantation of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Through a relationship with Jesus Christ we are bound to this God who is outside his creation but ever present.

I am using the word orthodox here to mean true or right belief, not a designation of a Church or community of believers as in The Orthodox Church.

Hopefully you have connected this essay by Len with some of the things I have been writing about the Fathers and their struggle to understand Who Christ is which leads to Who God Is.



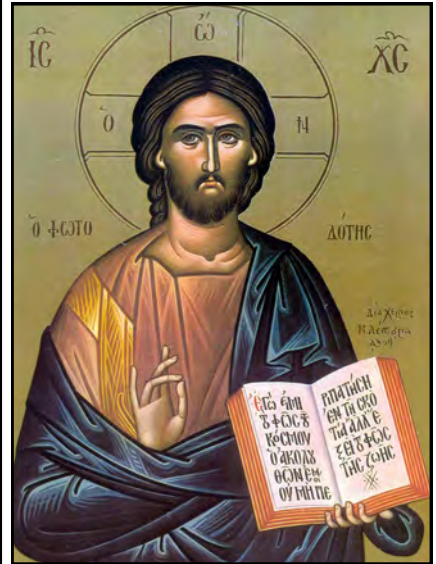
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Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

In this article I have been presenting ideas about the Canon of the New Testament (NT) - that is the officially recognized books that the Church feels are inspired and included in the NT. In the East, the picture remained more complex. In the 4th Century when the Greeks and Latins were beginning to move toward a standard canon of 27 books, the NT of the Syrian church included the *Diatessaron* (not the four Gospels). Acts and 15 Pauline epistles (including Hebrews and 3 Corinthians). Thus a canon of 17 books was used by Ephraem and given as authoritative in the *Doctrine of Addai* (ca 370) at Edessa. In the early 5th century, the four Gospels replaced the *Diatessaron* wherein 3 Corinthians was omitted and three of the Catholic Epistles (James, 1 Peter and 1 John) won acceptance. Then Syrian church, however, never fully accepted the other Catholic Epistles or the Apocalypse (Revelation). At the other extreme, the Ethiopian church seems to have had a canon of 35 books, the additionally eight consisting of decrees, called the Synodus, and some Clementine writings. Moreover, one may legitimately wonder whether such lists represented universal practice in the respective churches.

These considerations should make it clear to the reader just how much one is generalizing when he speaks about the NT canon of the early Church. We must realize that it was not a simple process to come to agreement on which books are truly inspired by God and not just the writings of a follower of Jesus.

The humanists of the 16th Century revised the earlier discussion about certain NT books. Erasmus was censured by the theological faculty of the Sorbonne for repeating without refutation earlier doubts about the apostolic



origins of Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2-3 John and Revelation. Cardinal Cajetan appears to have shared Erasmus' true reservations about these books.

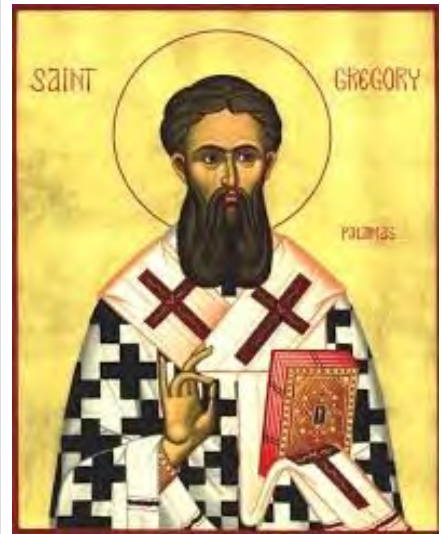
Luther felt that the NT books had to be graded, anticipating the modern discussion of the canon within the canon. He gave secondary rank to Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation, situating them at the end of his translation following those books that he considered "the true and certain, main books of the NT. He did not take into count the Fathers lists of the NT.

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

As you will recall, I presented the first five of St. Gregory's characteristics of Christ. I stated that he developed 15 different characteristics that we should consider. I would continue to share these with you.

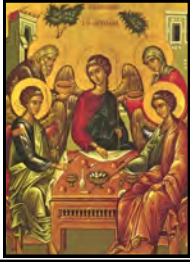
- 6 **POWER.** The Son sustains "all created things and [provides] to them,... power to keep themselves together.
- 7 **TRUTH.** The Son is truth "as being in nature one and not many (for truth is one and falsehood is manifold) and as the pure seal of the Father and his most unerring impress."
- 8 **IMAGE.** Because the Son is of one substance with the Father, he exactly reproduces the "archetype." While normally an image "is a motionless representation," the Son as image of the Father "is the living reproduction of the living one, and is more exactly like than was Seth to Adam, or any son to his father."
- 9 **LIGHT.** The Son is "the brightness of souls cleansed by word and life. For if ignorance and sin be darkness, knowledge and a godly life will be light."
- 10 **LIFE.** As a Life, the Son "is the constituting and crating power of every reasonable soul." The Son provides not only the breath by which we live, but "as many of us as were capable of it, and in so far as we open the mouth of our mind, with the Holy Spirit."

We see that Gregory went to a great extent to come up with ideas to describe Christ because he believed, as we do, that Christ is one of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. But this is a very difficult concept, as I have said before. How do we ever really conceive a Godhead which is Three-In-One - Three distinct Persons who share the same essence and, at the same time, are



one in substance. Our concept of God is that He is One Being that has three separate persons and that the Three Separate Persons does not deny Him being One God.

It is my feeling that you either believe this or you don't. It can't, really, be proved, What it does, however, allow us to believe that Jesus, although fully and completely human, was also God. The Church came up with expressions that allows for Jesus to be truly and fully God and Man. This belief, however, requires God to be Three-In-One. If He is not, then Jesus cannot be God as well as human. ***Think about this.***



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 36

13th Weekend After Pentecost

September 2-3, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

The culminating state of the spiritual life is when the believer is raised higher than the level of his own powers, not of his own accord, but by the work of the Holy Spirit. "Our mind goes outside itself and so unites with God; it becomes more than mind," says St. Gregory Palamas.

It wouldn't be able to see what it sees"... only because it has a mental sense, just as a person's eye wouldn't be able to see without a perceptible light exterior to it and distinct from it." During this vision of God, the mind goes beyond its own self and all its mental operations receive a boost from God.

If the goal of Christian spirituality is a mystical life of union with God, then the path to it includes the ascent that leads to this peak. As such, this path is different than the peak; yet it is organically connected to it, in the same way as the ascent of a mountain is to the peak. Only by prolonged effort, by discipline, can the state of perfection and mystical union with God be reached. Efforts that don't contribute to this crowning, this final moment of ascetic disciple, or to the mystical union with God, seem to be without purpose.

The connection between ascetical discipline and the mystical union with God is also closer than that between the path and the goal. Even though the living of that union is realized at the final end of ascetical efforts, its aura begins in the soul



Life's Journey is an As-

beforehand, along with them. Indeed Christian perfection requires a whole series of efforts until it is attained. The Apostle Paul compares these striving with the training that athletes employ to get in shape in order to win. Without referring the word asceticism, St. Paul used the image of the ancient physical exercises to characterize the efforts made by the Christian to reach perfection.

Think about this!

The Old Has Passed Away: All Things Are Made New

The fulfillment of the law is Christ himself, who does not so much lead us away from the letter as lift us up to its spirit. For the law's consummation was this, that the very lawgiver accomplished His work and changed letter into spirit, summing everything up in Himself and, though subject to the law, living by grace. He subordinated the law, yet harmoniously united grace with it, not confusing the distinctive characteristics of the one with the other, but effecting the transition in a way most fitting for God. He changed whatever was burdensome, servile and oppressive to what is light and liberating, so that we should be enslaved no longer under the elemental spirits of the world, as the Apostle says, nor held fast as bondservants under the letter of the law.

Justly, then, do we celebrate this mystery since it signifies for us a double grace. We are led toward the truth, and we are led away from

our condition of slavery to the letter of the law. How can this be? Darkness yields before the coming of the light, and grace exchanges legalism for freedom. But midway between the two stands today's mystery, at the frontier where types and symbols give way to reality, and the old is replaced by the new. Therefore, let all creation sing and dance and unite to make worthy contribution to the celebration of this day. Let there be one common festival for saints in heaven and men on earth. Let everything, mundane things and those above, join in festive celebration. Today this created world is raised to the dignity of a holy place for Him who made all things. The creature is newly prepared to be a divine dwelling place for the Creator

St. Andrew of Crete

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