

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FIRST SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of the Mother of God and Saint Thecla -- September 24th

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this 16th weekend after Pentecost our assigned readings are taken from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and Luke's Gospel. Paul's second letter to the Church in Corinth contains his reflections on events that occurred after his first letter had been sent. He had changed his plan to stay with that community and was then criticized by the Corinthian Christians for this. This caused him anxiety and strained the relationship he had with the community he founded. As a consequence his ministerial work at Troas was impeded.

He responds by writing: *In an acceptable time I have heard you; on a day of salvation I have helped you. Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!*

In effect Paul is reminding the Christians at Corinth that salvation is at hand and to be critical of him and others breaks the bonds of love and diminishes their ability to truly understand that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

The message to us is to attempt to become fully aware that "now" is the time of "salvation" and that we live "right now" in the Kingdom of God. This awareness should hopefully help us to live like Jesus lived. To live with love and forgiveness for all who are a part of our lives because "now" is the time to be like Jesus.

The passage from Luke's Gospel that we hear today is the "calling of



Jesus' first disciples." Jesus begins calling His first followers but asking them to "trust" Him. He also calls them to "put out into the deep."

The message to us is that "now" is the time for us to "trust" God and to "put out into the deep" of our own hearts and minds. Do we believe that God is favorably disposed towards us and that He will never allow life to challenge us with something that is too great for us to handle? Do we truly believe that He is with us in our life's struggles? Are we willing to actually look deeply into our lives and really challenge what we believe and think about life?

What does it mean to "put out into the deep" of our own minds and hearts? It means to honestly reflect on what we say we believe, how we act and how we think. It calls for an honest assessment of "who we are" without any attempt to camouflage who we really are at this moment. For without doing this we cannot grow and become more like Jesus.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

During the past several weeks I interrupted this article to share thoughts about several very important feasts in our Church. I would now return to sharing more about our Church.

Eastern Catholics - in contrast to Western, or Latin, Catholics - trace their origins largely to the failure of the ecclesiastical authorities at the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1439 to unite Christians of the East and West. Stimulated by this unsuccessful beginning, however, and encouraged also by the later missionary activities of such monastic orders as the Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans and Capuchins, the proponents of the goal of the eventual reunion of Eastern and Western Christians began to achieve some elements of success.

The Union of Brest-Litovsk in 1596 - under which all but two Ukrainian Orthodox bishops accepted, at the demand of their Polish Catholic king, the primacy of the pope - in a substantial way signaled the effective advent of Eastern Catholic Churches. Other smaller groups had united with Rome in previous centuries, but the Ukrainians who were united with Rome at this time were the largest branch of Eastern Catholics to move in that direction.

The Union of Uzhhorod in 1646 brought many Ruthenians (or Rusyns) into the Roman Catholic Communion when 63 Ruthenian and Orthodox priests, who represented Ruthenians



living in union with the Catholic Church, accepted the authority of Rome while being allowed to maintain their liturgical language (Old Church Slavonic) and customs.

Prior to this event, Eastern Catholics had been limited to Italo-Albanians in southern Italy and Sicily, a large number of Maronites, that is Lebanese Christians, who became associated with Rome in the 12th century, and some Armenians in the Syria-Lebanon region who also traced their relationship with Rome to the 12th century. A number of Nestorians (followers of Nestorius, the 5th-century patriarch of Constantinople who was declared a heretic) were united with Rome in 1551, some Ruthenians in 1595, Romanians of Transylvania in 1698, and Melchites (Syrian Christians using the Byzantine ritual) in 1724. Political factors also played a role during the reunion process; Eastern Christians have been greatly influenced by nationalistic loyalties in their respective regions. As these various groups of Eastern Catholics grew in number, Rome established ecclesiastical hierarchies.

To be continued

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

As I shared in the last issue of this article, the Divine Liturgy cannot be a “passive experience”, like watching TV or a movie. It calls for the participation of all. It truly calls us to be CHURCH, that is the Body of Christ, that is the true followers of Jesus, the Christ.

From the very beginning it calls us to become aware of being in God’s Kingdom right now. It then tells us quite clearly that PEACE is the true characteristic of His Kingdom and that we must strive to do everything in our power to bring PEACE to the portion of His Kingdom that we are living in. It suggests clearly that we must be the promoters of peace.

There are two very essential processions that take place before we enter into the Anaphora - that special part of the Liturgy where we explicitly pray over bread and wine as Jesus did in order to be more deeply in His presence.

The first process, call the Small Entrance, begins in the Altar Area, proceeds through the nave and then reenters into the Altar Area. This is meant to remind us that God came into our world as His Word, Jesus, to lead us back to Him by becoming like Jesus whose teachings and behaviors are shared with us in the Gospels. This Small Entrance reminds us of the journey of life. We have come from the spiritual dimension and our life’s journey is meant to lead us back to the very source of our life, God, before



Whose very Throne we are called to stand.

The second procession is the GREAT ENTRANCE. Again, this procession begins in the Altar Area, proceeds through the nave which is the world of faith, and returns to the Throne of God. Bread and wine, as you might know, represent life since they are food. So again we see that LIFE comes from God and hopefully leads us back to God.

As I have suggested on a number of different occasions, the FOOD that we use in our worship is meant to not only represent Jesus but also us. We must join with Jesus, since we share the same human life that He did, and approach God’s very Throne to offer our lives back to Him in Thanksgiving for the gift of life. We do this because this is exactly what Jesus did - He offered His human life back to His Father, the SOURCE OF ALL LIFE.

So again our worship calls us to actively participate by remembering that we, together with Jesus, are offering our very lives back to the Father in Thanksgiving for the gift of life.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



A JOB VERY WELL DONE

I would, on behalf of the entire Parish Family, offer a word of thanks to all those who worked so hard to make our RUMMAGE SALE a big success. There were so many who give themselves completely and totally to working on this fundraiser. They literally spent hours upon hours to set the sale up and then to work the sale. I would list the names of those who worked but I fear that I might miss someone. I know that Janet, Corrine, Esther, Mary, Greg to just name a few, worked untold hours to make it a success. I know that there are many others and to all of you I would say:

JOB WELL DONE! THANK YOU!

I would also add a work of thanks to all who donated items to the Sale. We sincerely appreciate your generosity. As you know, without anything to sell you can't have a sale. I would also thank those who got others to contribute to the sale. Your help is appreciated.

As all probably know, these funds will help to defray the cost of our church window renovation

The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As I suggested in the last issue of this article, I believe people have so many "distorted" ideas about what comes after this earthly life. Why? Because we really have never had an experience of knowing anyone who has come back to tell us about what is on the other side of death. Although we may believe that Jesus rose from the dead, we have not had the opportunity to personally encounter Him and, therefore, are hard-pressed to understand what comes after earthly death. In fact, I would suggest that most people dismiss even thinking about what comes after this earthly life.



I would have you think about this. To what purpose would God create us, who He created in His image and gave us the potential to grow in His likeness as seen in the Person of Jesus, if there was nothing more after this earthly life. Are we just an accident in time which has no future? Is all this experience on earthly just limited? I cannot believe this, especially when I look at God's creation. To what purpose and end? This is the question.

FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

By Len Mier

This is a continuation of the essay shared in the last Bulletin

Len shared in the previous portion of his essay, that the creedal statements we have about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not explicitly contained in Sacred Scriptures but are the result of the Church reflecting upon the Person and life of Jesus.

Scripture gives no explanation of this. It is only from holy Tradition does such an understanding arise.

Visual arts and symbology play an important role in the life of man. The church and early Christians used this media in their expression of their faith experience. The frescos of the catacombs were used to depict stories from scripture. The use of animal symbols, like the peacock, represents concepts of incorruptibility and everlasting life. This symbology developed along with the understanding of the belief as the Christian community grew.

Iconography developed out of the spiritual understanding of realities. One example is the use of color. The colors of earthy reds and heavenly blues found in the icons of the Virgin and of Christ, convey the notion of earthly flesh wrapped in the nature of the heavens, with the ideal that within the virgin's flesh the whole of heaven was contained. In Rublev's icon of "The Hospitality of Abraham", the three angels depicted represent the story of

the three visitors to the patriarch Abraham. The icon's meaning deepens when you contemplate the artistic details using holy Tradition. Other realities of faith the nature of the Trinity is being shown. Three spiritual beings equal in authority and

stature gaze on each other, clues to their identity are given in their tradition coloring. The red and blue of the Son, the gold representing the glory of the Father, and the green of the life giving spirit. This is the role that holy Tradition plays, it enriches our understanding of spiritual realities beyond that found in Sacred Scripture.

God's revelation to man in Sacred Scripture is one of the foundations of the faith for Catholics both Eastern and Western, along with the Orthodox. This foundation is also something we have in common with our fundamentalist brothers. It is not, however, the only way our faith is revealed to us. Faith is manifested and revealed to us in the living community of believers from the time of Christ to the present day. This is done by holy Tradition, by the writings of the Fathers of the Church, the development of creedal statements, debates in councils, expressions of our beliefs in liturgical actions and prayers, and visual representations in iconography. All these



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FROM OUR DEACON CANDIDATE

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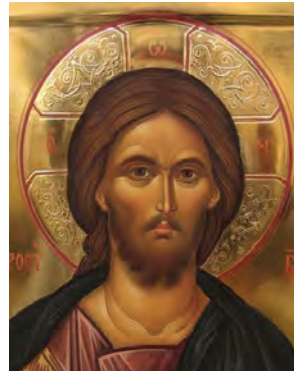
living expressions of the faith are part of holy Tradition.

The following is an essay that was submitted for Len's class on the Divine Liturgy

Saint Paul in his first letter to the church in Thessaloniki encouraged its members to "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) The Acts of the Apostles also describes how the apostles went up to the temple to pray daily in accord with Jewish prayer practices. The admonishment of Saint Paul and the example of the apostles led to the development of the Christian practice to sanctify the day with prayer.

In the Byzantine tradition two major forms of offices or daily prayer developed over time. These are generally referred to as the cathedral office and the monastic office. Like two different streams both developed separately but eventually crossed and developed into a hybrid form used in the modern parish and parochial life.

The monastic office has very distinctive elements that made it much more conducive for use in the life of monks, monasteries, and those living the ascetical life. This office was native to non-urban areas such as the deserts of Egypt and the remote areas of Cappadocia. This office only came into contact with urban areas when urban monasteries were formed due to the rise of Islam in the Middle East, and dissolution of the desert monasteries. The primary dimension of the monastic office is one of private and personal prayer; it does not rely on an ordained person to lead the prayers, since this daily prayer structure is outside of



the Diving Liturgy. It allowed the monk or participant the ability to reflect on the psalms and scriptures. This office has a characteristic feeling of a quiet meditation used for personal growth. It orientates the participants to focus inward, as if the office is direct instruction from God.

This inward focus allows the participant to pray without ceasing, focusing only on God. The day is sanctified by many intervals of prayer. The day begins in the evening with vespers, then moves to an all-night vigil for many of the holiest days. The morning is sanctified by matins and the rest of day by the small hours, spaced throughout the day.

One of the most interesting elements of this office is the way the psalms were used. The psalms are read in sequence, one after another. This is done by grouping the psalms

(Continued on page 8)

Schedule of Services

**Sunday September 24 - 16th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 7
10:00 AM + Bohdan & Olga Piurko; Ken Reaume; Liz Reaume**

17th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 8

Monday September 25 - Euphrosyna, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

**Tuesday, September 26 - Passing of John, Apostle & Evangelist
7:00 AM - Special Intention**

Wednesday September 27 - Callistratus & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

**Thursday September 28 - Chariton, Venerable-Confessor
7:00 AM - Special Intention**

**Friday September 29 - Cyriacus, Venerable
7:00 AM - Special Intention**

Saturday September 30 - Gregory Illuminator, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

**Sunday October 1 - 17th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 8
10:00 AM + Special Intention**

(Continued from page 7 - Miere)

per service in small groups in the hours of the day and then by day of the week. There is no attempt to assign special psalms to specific hours of the day.

In contrast to the monastic office a different form of prayer developed in urban areas of Byzantium. The cathedral office is not just the daily prayer of the cathedral, but the prayer life found in all public churches or parishes. It takes the name "cathedral office" because it tries to mimic the prayer practices found in the Great Church of Constantinople, or the Hagia Sofia. This office, along with the Divine Liturgy, make up the spiritual life of the average Byzantine Christian.

*We look forward to a continuation of this article by
our deacon candidate*



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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

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313.624.9867

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Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

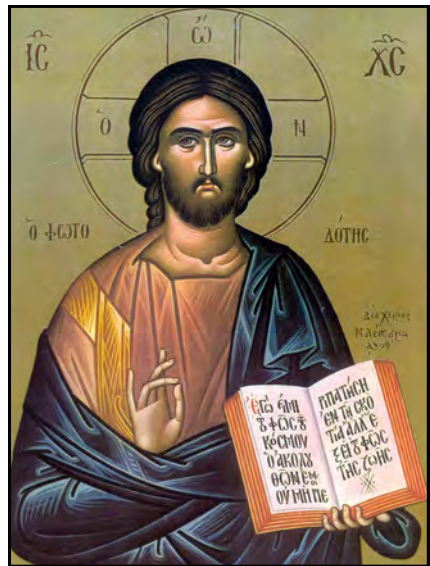
I have been sharing thoughts about canonicity, that is the ideas that have gone into Catholics accepting certain books as “inspired by God” and, therefore, included in the New Testament (NT). There are many more writings that we have that are from the early Church. Some were chosen to be a part of the NT, others not included. I would hasten to share that I am speaking of the Canon recognized by the Roman Catholic Church which finalized its canon of the NT in the Council of Trent (1545-1563).

Everything in the Catholic canon is included in the Eastern Orthodox canon, but they have some additional parts:

- 3 & 4 Maccabees
- Psalm 151
- The Prayer of Manasseh in Chronicles
- 1 Esdras

The reason for this is that while the NT canon was essentially universally agreed upon by the fourth century, minor variations in the Old Testament persisted through the Great Schism (c.1054). These differences, as you can see, were relatively minor and nothing close to the later difference between the Protestant Old Testament and the Catholic/Orthodox Old Testament.

Another reason for the difference is that the Eastern Orthodox do not hold the same legalism as the Catholic Church when it comes to inspiration and canonical status. For them, it is a bit more fluid of an understanding, Canonical simply means that something is acceptable to be read in liturgy. Even today there are some slight differences between the Eastern Orthodox Churches in regard to what each Church considers canonical (i.e. to be used in liturgy). For example, some Eastern Orthodox Churches do not read from the book of Revelation at divine



liturgy. Hence they would not call it canonical, but they would still consider it to be divinely inspired and morally binding. In this fluid approach the Eastern Orthodox are very similar to ancient Judaism.

In Western Christianity the Catholic Church makes no distinction between canonical and inspired. It has with exactness defined what books and parts of books are accepted. In Eastern Christianity the Orthodox Churches have not made such exact definitions and see the differences amongst themselves as minor.

More to follow.

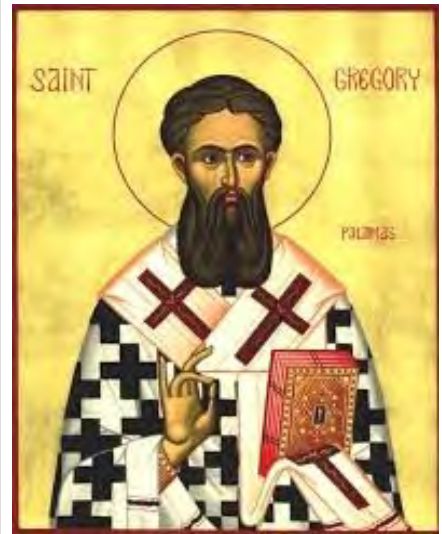
Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

I would continue sharing Gregory's thoughts about the Holy Spirit. He was one of the Fathers who helped formulate the Church's dogma about the Holy Spirit and the Trinity.

Gregory reminded his audience of the beliefs of the Sadducees, who "denied the existence of the Holy Spirit, just as they did that of angels and the resurrection." The Greeks, at least those who "are more inclined to speak of God," have "some conception of him, though they differed as to his name, and have addressed him as the mind of the world, or the external mind, and the like." Even "the wise men among ourselves," Gregory admits, disagree regarding the Spirit. Some "have conceived of him as an activity, some as a creature, some as God; and some have been uncertain which to call him, out of reverence for Scripture, they say, as though it did not make the matter clear either way."

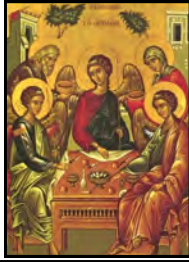
This confusion leads to the unhappy state of neither worshiping the Spirit nor dishonoring him, the "miserable" state of neutrality. Some are so confused as to separate Father, Son and Spirit "so completely as to make one of them infinite both in essence and power, and the second in power but not in essence, and the third circumscribed in both; thus imitating in another way those who call them the creator, the co-operator, and the minister.

Is the Spirit a self-existent substance, a created substance, or an accident or divine activity? If the Spirit is merely "an accident, he would be an activity of God" and not substantially related to the Godhead. This model does not really work. As an activity or accident of God, the Spirit would cease to exist the moment the divine activity was finished and could not be said to experience the emotions attributed to



Him such as grief or anger. If not an activity, what kind of substance is the Spirit, created or uncreated? If created, "how do we believe in him, how are we made perfect in him? For it is not the same thing to believe in a thing or to believe about it. The one belongs to deity, the other to - anything." Hence, the Spirit must be a self-existent substance and thus divine. And "if he is God, then he is neither a creature, nor a thing made, nor a fellow servant, nor any of these truly lowly appellations.

Hopefully you can see how the Fathers struggled to understand Who God Is
TO BE CONTINUED



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 39

16th Weekend After Pentecost

September 23-24, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

I ended the last issue of the article with a very important statement: “Christian teaching is a total stranger to the tendency of pantheistic identification of man with God.” This tendency is to assert that humans are the “same as God” or are actually components of God.

Nevertheless, Christianity asserts with courage the possibility of a “union” of man with God, of a direct “vision” of Him, of a “participation” in Him, through grace. Human “union with God” and “participation in Him” does not result in humans being “equal with Him” or “Him.” We are not God, even though we have His life-force within us.

Protestant theologians don’t see, however, how such a “union” with God can be conceived or how it can be understood except as a more or less total identification.

So, what is the Christian meaning of “union” with God and of an unmediated “vision” of Him, as well as the possibilities of this mystical fact. It’s anticipated, albeit somewhat less intensively, even on the first steps of the Christian life lived in a spirit of piety. So it is important to point out just the meaning and possibility of a direct contact with divinity. Once the possibility of such a contact is proven in principle, regardless of its intensity, the possibility of “union” with God on the peaks beyond the limits of human powers is implicitly proven.

Christian teaching adopts a middle position between mysticism of identity and the irreducible



Life’s Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

separation between man and God. The justification of this position will be made clear from a description of these two extremes. This I will address in the next issue of this article.

Needless to say, we believe that the work of this earthly life is to advance in our ability to enter into an ever greater “union” with our Creator. He became incarnated in the Person of Jesus to reveal this to us.

The Holy Martyr Thecla

According to a popular second century tale, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, St. Thecla was a native of Iconium. She was so impressed by the preaching of St. Paul on virginity that she broke off her engagement to marry Thamyris to live a life of virginity. When Paul was ordered to be scourged and banished from the city for his teaching, Thecla was ordered burned to death. When a storm providentially extinguished the flames, she escaped with Paul and went with him to Antioch. There she was condemned to wild beasts in the arena when she violently resisted the attempt of Syriarch Alexander to kidnap her, but again escaped when the beasts did no harm to her.

She rejoined Paul at Myra in Lycia, dressed as a boy, and was commissioned by him to preach the Gospel. She did for a time in Iconium and then became a recluse in a cave at Meriamlik near Seleucia. She lived as a hermit there for the next seventy-two years and died there (or in Rome, where she was miraculously transported when she found that Paul had died, and was later buried near his tomb). The tale had tremendous popularity in the early Church but is undoubtedly a pious fiction and was labeled apocryphal by St. Jerome. It is possible that St. Paul had a disciple named Thecla who was martyred. Some scholars are of the opinion that this is in fact the case.

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