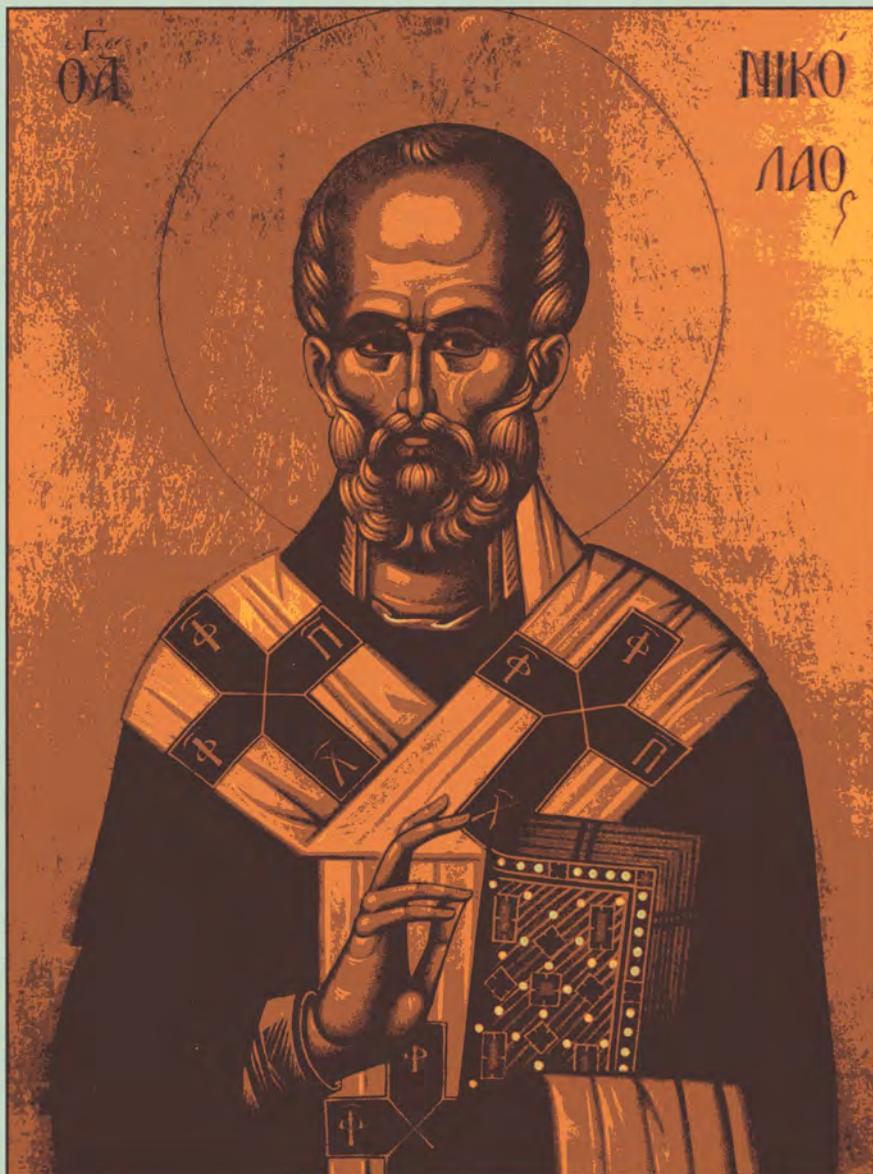


TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE



Icon of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker -- December 6th

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this 26th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are again taken from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians and Luke's Gospel. In Paul's Letter he enumerates seven things that should be done in order to "live in the Light" - to live as a follower of Jesus. Paul suggests that these seven behaviors please the Lord. They are: (1) take no part in vain deeds done in darkness; (2) watch over your conducts; (3) make most of the present opportunity; (4) avoid getting drunk; (5) be filled with the spirit; (6) sing praise to the Lord with all your heart; and (7) give thanks to God for everything. Added to these seven is this: "defer to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Paul suggests that if we concentrate on making these behaviors a part of our lives, we will "live in the Light." He again exhorts us to "not continue in ignorance, but try to discern the will of the Lord."

This message is paired with the Gospel story of a rich young man asking Jesus: "What must I do to share in everlasting life?" Jesus' first answer is to have genuine relationships with others by not committing adultery, killing, stealing or bearing false witness against others and, of course, honoring your father and mother.

The rich young man tells Jesus that he already acts in this manner and wants to know what more he must do. Jesus' reply simply put is to focus on becoming a real child of God and bearing witness to God's love in his world. In order to do this, of course, you can't be consumed with the "things" of this world but, rather, with being a genuine human being, treating others as you want to be treated. The challenge was too great for the young man and



so he went away sad. The challenge Jesus gave him, in reality, was to personally change himself into being more focused on developing genuine relationships instead of living for the things of this world.

Things have the power to seduce us into thinking that the purpose of life is to amass a whole lot of *things* with the belief that *things* will bring us happiness. *Things* cannot bring us happiness, plus, *things* quite frequently are obstacles to developing genuine relationships.

How is your life focused? Are people more important to you than your *things*? Let us focus our efforts on living like Jesus lived!

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

The Orthodox Ukrainian Church reached its highest development under Metropolitan Petrus Moghila (1633-46). The Kievan Academy founded by him (1633) was under great West-Catholic influences. After the annexation by Russia of that part of the Ukraine that was east of the Dnieper River, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was submitted to the Muscovite patriarch (Metropolitan Gedeon Chetvertynsky, 1686), and it accepted the discipline of that patriarchate.

In the canonical field other sources of Byzantine origin appeared in Slavic translations during the 16th and 17th centuries. In Serbia the *Syntagma* of Blastares (1335) was translated from the Greek original. Another potential work, called in Ukrainian *Zinar*, commonly was added to the former the peculiar Ukrainian collections of the canons, were issued at first in Kiev (1620, 1624, 1629) and then published by Arsenius Zheliborsky in Lviv (1646).

The numerous pontifical constitutions and decrees of the Congregation for Propagation of the Faith, as well as charters of the Polish kings, the synod of Zamost in 1720, and the general chapters of the Basilian Order (1617-1788) were the main sources of the ecclesiastical Catholic discipline of the Ukrainian Church enacted in this period.

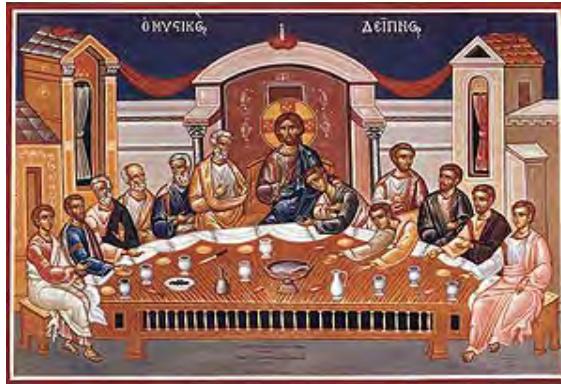
The destruction of Union under Russia (1839). At the end of the 18th century the union in the Ukraine was



endangered by the interference of Russia in dismembering Poland. Russia made use of the Haydamak Rebellion (1768), a social revolution, to persecute the union. To suppress the rebellion, the Russian armies invaded the Ukraine and carried out a purge against the union. The partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, 1795) placed under Russian rule all the parts of the Ukraine and White Ruthenia inhabited by Catholics of the Ukrainian Church, except Galicia, which passed under Austria and Carpatho-Ukraine. The suppression of the union under Russia was started by Empress Catherine II. Metropolitan Rostotsky was taken to Petersburg, other bishops were expelled from their sees, except the bishop of Polotsk. Heraclius Lisowsky, famous for his initiation of liturgical reforms (1785-95). After the death of Catherine II (1796), two Catholic eparchies were restored for the Ukrainians in Lutsk and Brest and in general an alleviation of persecution existed under Czar Paul I (1796-1801) and his successor Alexander I (1801-25). A new and decisive suppression of the union in the Russian Empire was carried out by Czar Nicholas I (1825-55) using several bishops. *(To be continued)*

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

For the early Christians, the ritual act of *anamnesis*, truly made Christ present to them. For the Christ who was present as the invisible celebrant of the rite, and who gave himself to the participants as the bread which came down from heaven, was himself in heaven. Eternally he presented the sacrifice which was himself at the heavenly altar. It was not inappropriate that when St. John the Divine described the vision of the worship of heaven which he saw when he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day he did so in terms of the Sunday worship of the church or congregation on Patmos. (This is why the traditional and appropriate icon on the back -



East - wall of the Altar area is the Mystic Supper. It is our belief that the Mystic Supper is eternally happening and we join in this eternal banquet when we work together to celebrate the Divine Liturgy or Eucharist).

If the Eucharist looks back to the Last Supper and the cross and forward to the final consummation of God's purpose, it also looks upward to the realm where the cross is an eternal reality, and where the Kingdom is not a future hope but a present joy. St. John, describing the worship of heaven

in terms of the Sunday Eucharist, can claim to be the forerunner of many a Byzantine preacher and liturgical commentator, explaining the earthly liturgy as an image of the worship of heaven, whereby men and angels join in the common praise of their creator and redeemer.

The Eucharist in the first century was a simple rite with a profound meaning which could be grasped only by those who had been initiated into it. Its significance was to a large extent

expressed by the solemn prayer of thanksgiving over the bread and wine. Modelled on the Jewish barakah, or the prayer of blessing such as Jesus used at the Last Supper, it gave

thanks for God's mighty work in the creation and salvation of mankind. We have no clear idea of the contents of the prayer at this time, though perhaps the Revelation of John reflects its main themes. But the meaning of the service was not exhausted by the content of the prayer, and never has been. The Church has always seen more in the Eucharist than could be expressed in one prayer.

God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that those who believe in Him might not perish



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

SCHEDULE FOR FEAST DAYS

Sunday, December 17th

Decorate the Church after Liturgy

Sunday, December 24th

Christmas Eve Liturgies

Holy Ascension's Liturgy - 5 PM

St. Michael's Liturgy - 10 PM

Monday, December 25th

Christmas Day Liturgy

St. Michael's Liturgy - 10 AM

Tuesday, December 26th

Synaxis of Mary

St. Michael's Liturgy - 8 AM

Wednesday, December 27th

Protomartyr Stephen

St. Michael's - 8 AM

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30th

Holy Ascension Divine Liturgy @ 5:30 PM

Sunday, December 31st

St. Michael's Divine Liturgy @ 10 AM

Monday, January 1st

St. Michael's Divine Liturgy @ 10 AM

Hopefully this combined schedule will allow all an opportunity to celebrate these feasts.

We must let go of the life we have planned, so as to accept the one that is waiting for us

CALLED TO HOLINESS

A lot of things get in our way of responding to God's call to holiness. One of the things that seem to afflict people who are attempting to respond to the call to holiness is the



weakness of our human spirit. We have good intentions and then just the press and struggle of life seems to get in the way and we stop making an effort. When we stop making an effort we then begin to feel guilt and a pattern of defeat develops. I've heard this over and over again from people: Father, I've tried but just seem to always fail and so I give up.

One of the first steps that we must take when attempting to spiritually grow is forgiving ourselves for not being consistent and failing. We don't want patterns of defeat to define our lives. We want to change, we have tried to change, but we have failed so many times and start to think that we can't change. This is a huge blow to our self-esteem, which means that a pattern of defeat usually signifies the beginning of some form of self-loathing.

We stop thinking about the best version of ourselves now and avoid anything that reminds (Continued on page 8)

A Prayer-A-Day for St. Phillip's Fast

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3rd

Today we remember, O Heavenly Father, Your prophet Sophonias. He was shown to be illumined by the Divine Spirit, proclaiming God's manifestation. He preached this: Rejoice greatly, O People of God, for behold your King comes, bringing salvation. You sent him, Father, as a herald of what was to come through Your incarnation as a human being in the Person of Jesus. Help my belief! Help me to truly believe, with my whole mind and soul, that You became man to help me understand the meaning and purpose of my life. This is my constant prayer. Help me Father to become the very best version of the person You created me to be. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4th

Heavenly Father, as I continue my preparation for the great winter feasts, I would, today, honor the great martyr Barbara and John of Damascus with the Church. Both were true witnesses to the power of faith. By their faith that many came to know God through His Son Jesus and to come to the fullness of life. Like them, Heavenly Father, I truly desire to become a real witness to Your love for humankind. Help me, by the way that I live and interact with others, manifest Your love to others. Make me, O Master, an instrument of Your love for humankind. I make this prayer to You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit not only now but forever. AMEN.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5th

Heavenly Father, today I join with the Church in remembering our righteous and God-bearing Father Sabbas the Sanctified. With his stream of tears, he cultivated the barrenness of the desert and, by his sighings he became a luminary, being the instrument of God's miracles in this world. By his teachings, which are captured in abundance in our divine services, he has enlightened us all. Help me, O Lord, to be like Barbara and John and bear witness to You in my world. Help me to unconditionally love others so that they might come to see that You unconditionally love them. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Spirit, now and forever. AMEN

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6th

O Heavenly Father, I join with the Church today in celebrating the memory of the person of Nicholas of Myra. He laid down his life for his flock. He achieved the heights of holiness by his meekness and temperance and achieved the heights of humility. He is truly a model of someone who tried to imitate Your Son, Jesus. He lived a life of true commitment to the Gospel message and gave himself to making the Gospel real in his life and in his world. Help me, O Master, to see through his example that it is also possible for me to imitate Christ. It only requires my desire and intention. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

As a part of your preparation for these Great Winter Feasts, why not reach out and touch someone and share with them the joy of being alive.

A Prayer-A-Day for St. Phillip's Fast

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7th

Today, Heavenly Father, I recall, together with the Church, the memory of our Father Among the Saint, Ambrose. He was an icon of meekness and a teacher of temperance and for this reason he achieved the heights by humility. I ask him to intercede with You, Father, that I might gain the strength and courage to change myself so that I might become more like Christ. I realize, Heavenly Father, that this is the real purpose of my earthly existence. The life You have given me, O Father, is designed to help me spiritually grow and become the best possible version of myself, to become, like Ambrose, ever more like Christ. I ask this of You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8th

Today I remember our Righteous Father Patapius who took up his cross and followed Christ. He taught us to overlook the flesh and attend to the soul since it is immortal. I ask, O Heavenly Father, that You might, by Your Spirit, give me the strength to genuinely place my hope and trust in You and to intentionally give me self to spiritually growing as Your child. Since Father Patapius did with the help of Your Spirit, I know that I can also personally change and spiritually grow. Give me the earnest desire to accomplish the task of transforming myself, making myself more like Christ. This I ask of You, Father, Son and Spirit, and praise You forever and ever. AMEN.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9th

Today the Church celebrates Anna's conception of the Mary, the Mother of Our Incarnate God, Jesus. Because of the steadfast faith of Joachim and Anna, God promised them that they should bear a child from whom would be born Our Savior. You kept Your promise to Joachim and Anna, O Father, because they placed their hope and trust in You. I beg You to grant me the courage to place my hope and trust in You so that I might fulfill the role You have, from all eternity, called me to play in Your creation. Help me to witness to Your love by the way I live. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Spirit, now and forever. AMEN.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10th

Today I remember our Father Among the Saints, Daniel the Stylite. He was a true follower of Christ. I would ask, Heavenly Father, that You grant me the help of Your Spirit to become like Daniel and give myself to becoming the best possible version of myself, giving You praise and honor. I know that You have, from all eternity, called me to play a part in completing Your Creation, calling me to witness Your kindness and love. Help me, like Daniel, to fulfill my role, becoming a person who brings You into my world by unconditionally loving and forgiving others. Give me the courage to live as Your Child. I make this pray to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever. AMEN.

As you continue your preparation for these winter feasts, ask yourself what God's manifestations of Himself in human history means to you.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday December 3 - 26th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 1
10:00 AM - Intentions of Irene Winek

27th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 2

Monday December 4 - Barbara, Martyr & John Damascene
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, December 5 - Sabbas, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday December 6 - Nicholas of Myra, Archbishop
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday December 7 - Ambrose, Archbishop
No Service Scheduled

Friday December 8 - Patapius, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Saturday December 9 - Maternity of Holy Anna
No Service Scheduled

Sunday December 10 - 27th Weekend after Pentecost - Tone 2
Celebration of the Maternity of Holy Anna & Joachim
10:00 AM + Stephen, Mary & Stephen Michael Mihalko;
Kotlinski Family

(Continued from page 5 - Call to Holiness)

us of it. We drown our sadness in music or television or anything that can distract us from what is really happening inside us.

We are hesitant to make New Year's resolutions because we doubt we have the strength of will to honor them. We start to think and read more about other people's lives as a way of escaping from our own. We drink more, eat more, sleep more, shop more and seek more of every pleasure that can distract us from what is really going on within us. The discouragement of defeat leads us to the place where we don't want to be ourselves at all - let alone the best version of ourselves. This is when *trust* in God is extremely important and the ability to forgive ourselves.



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

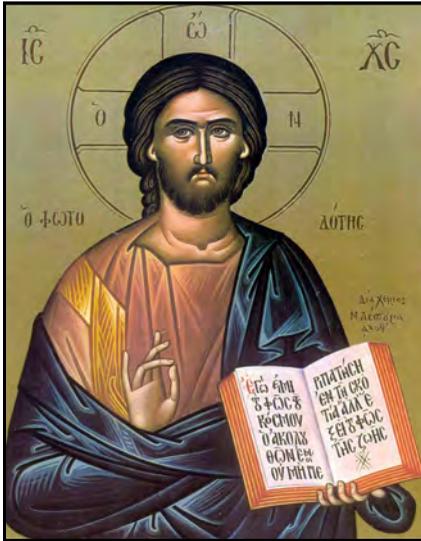
Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

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



As I shared, many of the early Christians, who were Jews that thought of Jesus as the Messiah, were disappointed at His crucifixion. Some three decades later, in the second half of the first Christian century, Jewish Christians must have felt disappointed again. Where was the triumph of Israel? God had justified Jesus' claim to Messianic authority. But persecution of the church by Rome, hostility from fellow Jews, loss of the Holy City and its Temple in the war - all of these must have seemed a sorry reversal of Messianic hopes.

Mark was the first of the Gospels to give the Cross

true perspective. His lesson needed repetition in subsequent Gospels. Jewish expectations had their answer in God's salvific plan, which did not include a politically restored Jewish kingdom. They had to "revise" their way of thinking. Many, and even most Jewish Christians, thought of Jesus as the Messiah and their old expectations of the Messiah were projected onto Him. When things did not turn out in the manner that they anticipated, they were challenged to change the way they thought.

As Christianity swept westward through the Diaspora, the Jewish presence outside Palestine, and on into the Gentile world, they were again challenged to revise their thinking about the "anticipated Messiah. As Christianity spread, it raised questions How were these new Christians to be incorporated into Christ? Were they to observe the Mosaic Law in its fullness? If not, what was the status of that imperishable Law of Moses? What would become of it if everyone, or even large numbers, could ignore it?

When we think about this we realize that it was not necessarily Jesus' intent to "start a new religion." He was desirous of "reforming" the old religion.

Voices could be heard from the right: The Law of Moses stands. Jesus himself said so. Of course, we understand it differently from the Pharisees, as he did, but nevertheless the Law remains. Other voices responded from the left: Salvation is open to all: we are all, Jews and Gentiles alike, equal before God. It is not necessary to observe the Law as our Pharisaic brethren would have us believe.

So we have to realize that the Gospels were formed in this type of environment and were therefore influenced by this environment.

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

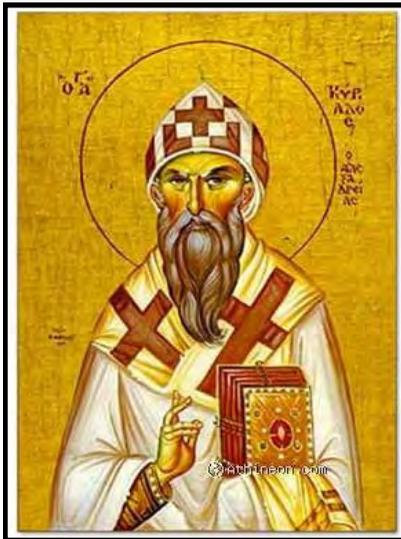
As I shared in the last issue of this article, Cyril's primary antagonist was Nestorius. What was Nestorius teaching that had Cyril so upset? Perhaps we might be wiser to glance at wider issues before addressing the question of Nestorius' teaching itself. Theology is not formed in a vacuum. How had Nestorius been formed and shaped theologically? Moreover, what kind of a person was Nestorius? How might his personality and, indeed, that of Cyril, have fed the theological controversy that erupted between the two? Both had their rough edges. Both were convinced that their positions regarding Jesus Christ faithfully preserved the truth. Consider the following words of Nestorius:

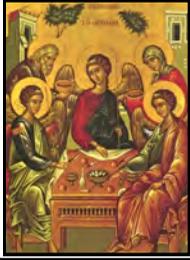
It is truly my earnest desire that even by anathematizing me they may escape from blaspheming God [and that those who so escape may confess God, holy, almighty and immortal, and not change the image of the incorruptible God for the image of corruptible man, and mingle heathenism with Christianity...but that Christ may be confessed to be in truth and in nature God and Man, being by nature immortal and impassible as God, and mortal and passible by nature as Man - not God in both natures, nor again Man

in both natures. The goal of my earnest wish is that God may be blessed on earth as in heaven]; but as for Nestorius, let him be anathema; only let men speak of God as I pray for them that they may speak. For I am with those who are for God, and not with those who are against God, who with an outward show of religion reproach God and cause him to cease from being God.

Whatever we might end up concluding concerning Nestorius' theology, the man we meet in these words is a *great Christian*. Quite often, though, spiritual greatness manifests itself in human weakness and also brokenness. Nestorius' own personality seems to have been abrasive and insensitive. Here was a man too quick to jump to conclusions, too apt to really overestimate his own abilities and perspective.

One early church historian, Socrates, attributes Nestorius' difficulties as bishop and theologian to his own *contentious spirit*. He was ready to hound out heresy soon after his consecration as bishop of Constantinople. Give me the earth purged of heretics, he said, and I will give you heaven as a recompense.





THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 63 No 49

26th Weekend After Pentecost

December 2-3, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

If you have been following this article, I know that you realize that it is my hypothesis that in order to have a real relationship with God you have to first develop the skills necessary to have a relationship. This is accomplished by developing your skills to have true human relationships. I have already shared six skills that we must have in order to have a relationship with someone else.

Another important skill we must develop is the ability to truly be ourselves. You don't need to act or be someone else just to impress your partner. Being in a relationship means being yourself. Everyone is different and being in a relation allows you to celebrate the mutual difference!

Of course in order to be yourself, you must spend some time reflecting on who you are and then accepting who you are. I find that so many people in our modern world have no real idea of who they actually are.

Many try to be someone they are not, unconsciously thinking that they are not really "good enough" as they are. People often try to be someone they are not. When they do this, they cannot have a real relationship with someone else.

Another skill that is necessary is the ability to be the best version of yourself. Being in a relationship means that your partner not only accepts you the way you are, but also inspires you to be the best version of yourself. Most of the successful people owe their success to the daily inspirations provided to them by their partners. The best version of yourself, as I have shared



Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

in another article in this Bulletin, is to be the person God intended when He created you and someone who is trying to be like Jesus Christ.

The best version of you is a version which unconditionally loves and forgives and does not believe that the whole world revolves around you.

Thy Kingdom Come. Thy Will Be Done

Your kingdom come. We pray that God's kingdom will become present for us in the same way that we ask for His name to be hallowed among us. For when does God not reign, when could there be in Him a beginning of what always was and what will never cease to be? What we pray for is that the kingdom promised to us by God will come, the kingdom won by Christ's blood and passion. Then we who formerly were slaves in this world will reign from now on under the dominion of Christ, in accordance with His promise: Come, O blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

However, my dear friends, it could also be that the kingdom of God whose coming we daily wish for is Christ Himself, since it is His coming that we long for. He is our resurrection, since we rise again in Him; so too He can be thought of as the kingdom of God because we are to reign in Him. And it is good that we pray for God's kingdom; for though it is a heavenly kingdom, it is also an earthly one. But those who have already renounced the world are

made greater by holding positions of authority in that kingdom.

After this we add: Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven; we pray not that God should do His will, but that we may carry out His will. How could anyone prevent the Lord from doing what He wills? But in our prayer we ask that God's will be done in us, because the devil throws up obstacles to prevent our mind and our conduct from obeying God in all things. So if His will is to be done in us we have need of His will, that is, His help and protection. No one can be strong by his own strength or secure save by God's mercy and forgiveness. Even the Lord, to show the weakness of the human nature which He bore, said: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me, and then, by way of giving example to His disciples that they should do God's will and not their own, he added: Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.

St. Cyprian of Carthage

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