

SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS



Icon of the Sunday of the Forefathers

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

Our readings this weekend are taken from Paul's Letter to the Colossians and Luke's Gospel. Both have very poignant messages.

Paul exhorts us to "put aside your old self with its past deeds and put on a new person, one who grows in knowledge as he is formed anew in the image of his Creator". This brief statement indeed captures the very meaning and purpose of this present earthly existence. We are here to grow spiritually, become the very best version of ourselves - ever more in concert with the version that God dreamed from all eternity for us.

In harmony with this message, the Jesus parable presented in the Gospel clearly exhorts us to stop making excuses for not making every attempt to personally transform ourselves. If the purpose of life is to change ourselves to become more like Christ, then why do we keep making excuses to not give ourselves completely to this task.

Perhaps the problem is that we humans don't like *change* and, too often we think that we are good enough as we are and don't need to change. The fact of the matter is that this earthly life has been given to us in order to *voluntarily change ourselves*. Why would God create us this way? It has been His desire from all eternity to receive our voluntary love. He did not want the love of slaves but, rather, the love of free people. He did not



desire the love of robots. Also, He had to create us with a free will since He created us in His image with the ability to grow in His likeness.

True love has to be freely given. If it is coerced, it is not true love. When you think about our human nature, you realize that its greatness rests in the fact that we have free will and have the power to freely love and also freely forgive others. That is truly the richness of this human life.

Freely working to change ourselves to become more like Jesus results in one thing: greater freedom. It gives us greater control over our lives and allows us to truly experience life as God intended it to be. We become, as it were, the masters of our own ship.

Any relationship is destroyed if we "need it". It is only enhanced when we "want it". So too our relationship with God. We must "want" to have a real relationship with Him. This, of course, means freely returning His love as He has expressed it in the gift of life. Of course we have to see life as a true gift of love.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

I would continue sharing information about the history of our Church. As is evident, the Catholic Encyclopedia has much information about our Church.

A provincial synod of Lviv (1891) and two eparchial convocations in Peremyshl (1898) and Lviv (1905) have been celebrated. In 1911 the decree *Ne temere* (on matrimonial form) was extended also to Ukrainians in Galicia and Bukovina. Perhaps the most important part of our Church entering into communion with the Roman Catholic Church is the acceptance of the Roman Church's approach to matrimony. This usually is found in the cases where people seek annulments.

Under the same Austro-Hungarian Empire, Carpatho Catholic life in Carpatho-Ukraine was concentrated in Uzhhorod, to which the bishopric see was transferred by Bishop Andrew Bachynsky (1772-1809). A theological seminary was founded there also. In 1816 in the western part of this diocese there was erected a separate Diocese of Pryashiv in Slovachia from the former separate vicariate.

In Hungary the Diocese of Hajdudorog (1912) for Hungarians and the Apostolic Exarchate in Miskole (1923) for Carpatho-Ukrainians were erected. For Ukrainian emigrants, Croatians and Mascedonians the Diocese of Krizhevtsi (1777) was erected in Yugoslavia.



The destruction of union in Galicia and Carpatho-Ukraine. Russia looked upon Galicia with hostile eyes even during World War 1, and in the temporary occupation of Galicia in 1914 the Russians incarcerated Metropolitan Andrew Sheptytsky in a monastery of Suzdal.

In World War 2 the Communists, after final occupation of Galicia and Carpatho-Ukraine, determined to destroy completely the union in that area. In 1945 the Bolsheviks, after the death of Metropolitan Sheptytsky, arrested his successor Joseph Slipyj and all bishop ordinaries and auxiliaries: Hryhory Khomyhshyn, Ordinary of Stanislaviv; Josaphat Kotsyhlovsky, Ordinary of Peremyshl; Nykyta Bidka, Auxiliary of Liviv; Hryhory Lakota, Auxiliary of Peremyshl; and Mykola Charnetsky, Apostolic Visitor in Volyuna. They all died except Slipyj who was liberated after 18 years of prison in Siberia and went to live in Rome (1963); he was elevated to the rank of cardinal by Pope Paul VI in February 1965. The clergy who refused to accept Orthodoxy were arrested and deported or shot.

More to come!

The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

The 'spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God' which Christians are enjoined to offer (1 Peter 2:5) and which consist in nothing less than a life consumed by love for God and the brethren, may or may not have been explicitly focused on the Eucharist in New Testament times. But it is clear, when evidence has become available, that the Church regarded the Eucharist as the sacrifice of the New Covenant, in which her own responsive self-offering to God, made in the power of the Holy Spirit, was taken into the sacrificial self-offering of her Lord. That sacrifice, offered once for all on the cross, was eternally presented to the heavenly tabernacle, and continually represented in the Church's commemoration of it in the Eucharist. So like all things pertaining to our faith, these ideas gradually emerged as Christians reflected upon them.

From the very beginning, the repetition of what Jesus did with His disciples on the last night of His life made Him present to His followers. Then, as they thought about His actions, they began to realize that the act of the Last Supper not only made Him present but also called to His followers to imitate His offering of self to the Father in thanksgiving. I truly believe that it was this awareness that allow so many early Christians to accept martyrdom. They were doing exactly what Jesus did before them -



they were bearing witness to their belief in a loving God Who brought meaning and purpose to their lives.

The first description of the Eucharist that we have comes from the *First Apology* of Justin, a native of Asia Minor who became a Christian teacher at Rome and a martyr. Writing in defense of Christians about 160 CE, Justin describes both the Sunday Eucharist and the Eucharist which followed baptism. In the latter case, the synagogue service seems to have been replaced by the rite of initiation.

The Sunday Eucharist consisted of readings from the Scriptures, sermon and intercessory prayer, perhaps concluded by the kiss of peace, which was certainly given at the end of baptism before the Eucharist began. This was clearly the Christian form of the Jewish synagogue service. Then bread and wine mixed with water were brought to the president of the brethren.

I shall continue sharing facts about the development of the Eucharist.



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.

Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind

CALLED TO HOLINESS

I would pose this serious question: *Can people substantially change?* This question represents the abyss we all find ourselves teetering on at least once in our lives, and until we are convinced that substantial change is possible, our lives remain little more than a waking dream. The abyss is imagined; it is no more real than a child's nightmare. A new awareness of the power of progress can open our eyes so that we discover that what is before us is not an abyss but a path. The answer lies in taking the first step.



Celebrating progress, therefore, is fundamental in the psychology of change. In our culture we tend to celebrate by eating or buying things, but the celebration I'm speaking of is something that takes place within us. Celebrating progress means giving yourself a psychological pat on the back. There is nothing more powerful than the way you speak to yourself. If you keep telling yourself that you cannot change, you never will. Its called a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you believe you can change, you will begin to change.

(Continued on page 8)

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

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17th

Today I pray with the Church, "Through faith, O God, You justified the Forefathers. Through them You made a commitment to a church with gentiles. These saints are glorified because from them descends the Virgin who gave You birth. Through their prayers have mercy on me." As I recall how so many humans awaited the coming of the Messiah, I thank You, O Father, for coming before my time so that I might know how to live as Your child. I thank You for the gift of life and the presence of Your Spirit within me. Help me to live in such a way that You are aware of my gratitude. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 18th

Heavenly Father, today I honor, together with the Church, the holy Martyr Sebastian. The Church, in her prayer honoring him, declares that He flew into the Heavens as from a bow and there Christ received his soul. He remained steadfast in His belief in Christ despite many horrendous tortures. He was great in zeal for his faith. As I contemplate his life, O God, I would ask that You grant me the same zeal for my faith. Help me to truly believe that You became incarnate as a human being, in the Person of Jesus, to show me how to live. Help me to face the challenges of life with the same steadfastness as Sebastian. I make this prayer to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. AMEN.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19th

Heavenly Father, Boniface voluntarily offered himself up as a spotless sacrifice to Him Who was born of a Virgin Maid. As I prepare for the coming Winter Feasts, I ask You to give me courage like Boniface to respond to the challenges of life. May I never hesitate to call upon Your Spirit to help me meet life's challenges and maintain internal peace. I know that life's challenges are meant to help me spiritually grow. Help me to embrace the goal that You, O God, have established for my life, namely to come to know my life's meaning and purpose and to grow ever more in my likeness of Jesus, the Christ. I make this prayer to You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever. AMEN.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20th

Today I pray with the Church: Bethlehem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all. Ephrata, be alert, for the Tree of Life has blossomed froth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb has become a spiritual paradise wherein the divine Fruit was planted - and if we eat of it, we shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is coming forth to bring back to life the likeness that had been lost in the beginning. I prepare myself to celebrate this great mystery, I remember today the martyr Ignatius who found the way to contemplation through practice and prayer, becoming a perfect teacher of truth fighting for the faith unto the shedding of his blood. I as this of You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

What have you done to prepare yourself for the great feasts that we will be celebrating?

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21st

The Church, O God, now quickens my preparation for the Feast of the Lord's Birth. She prays today: Since we contemplate the One who is the Master of creation now wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem, let me sing hymns to His Mother in advance of the feast. She is quickened with joy like every mother, for she has held the Son of God within her womb. What a wondrous belief we have, O Heavenly Father. We believe You became a human in the Person of Your Son to help us come to an understanding of the meaning of life and learn how to live so that we might share in everlasting life which is an ever-deepening union with You. I offer this prayer to You, my loving God. AMEN

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 22nd

Today I pray with the Church: O Jesus, your lamb Anastasia cries out to you with great love: "O my Bridegroom, I long for You in great pain. I am crucified with You and, in baptism, I am buried with You. I suffer for your sake to reign with You. I die for You to live in You. Accept me as an immaculate victim, since I am sacrificed for your love." Help me, O God, to honor Your martyr Anastasia as an example of how I must live if I wish to share in everlasting life. She and so many others have given-up their lives rather than deny their belief in You. Grant me this same kind of courage, O You Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 23rd

Today, O God, the Church remembers the ten martyrs of Crete. Their noble struggle, the Church declares, "shines forth like the morning star and sheds brilliant light for us on the One who was born in the cave, to whom the Virgin has given birth without human seed. As I think about the people who have given their lives for the belief that God became a human in the Person of Jesus, I am inspired to embrace this belief and the revelation that it has given us, namely, that to share in everlasting life I am called to seize every opportunity that life presents to become more like Jesus. I make this prayer to You, O God, and ask You to guide me by Your Spirit now and forever. AMEN.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24th

Heavenly Father, today the Church prays: "Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth in a manner beyond understanding to the Word who is, in all eternity. Rejoice, therefore, universe when you hear it heralded: with the angels and the shepherds, glorify Him who chose to be seen as a new-born Babe, while remaining God in eternity". I ask You, Father, to help me to believe that this event took place to help me understand the meaning and purpose of my life. Because of Your great love for me, O God, You were willing to become like me to show me how to live. In gratitude I offer my thanksgiving to You, Who I know to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. AMEN.

One of the very traditional ways to prepare ourselves fore the celebration great feasts is by "fasting". Have you tried that yet?

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Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
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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

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday December 17 - Weekend of the Forefathers - Tone 3
10:00 AM + Anastasia Mykytenko; Lesia Florchuk

WEEK OF THE ANCESTORS - TONE 4

Monday December 18 - Sebastian & Others, Martyrs
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, December 19- Boniface, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday December 20 - Ignatius, Bishop-Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday December 21 - Juliana, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Friday December 22 - Anastasia, Great Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday December 23 - Holy Martyrs of Crete
No Service Scheduled

Sunday December 24 - Christmas Eve
10:00 PM + Intentions of George & Irene Durisin; Gloria

Monday December 25 - Christmas Day
10:00 AM - Intentions of the Parish Family

(Continued from page 5 - Call to Holiness)

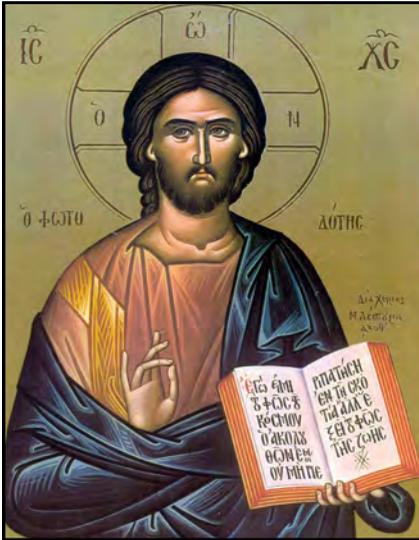
We must always remember that our minds control everything we do. Our beliefs, desires, fears, which are a part of our mind's constant talk to us, govern how our lives will be. *(By the way, this is why hypnotism works).*

So celebrating progress, even though it might be small, is the first secret to breaking those patterns of failure and fear of change. Of course another of the great secrets that we often overlook is that failure is a part of all great achievement and discovery. There will be some "failures" in our efforts to change. The main thing is our desire to change and our willingness to NEVER GIVE UP.



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Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament



Have been sharing in this article information about the formation of the Gospels. We have to always remember that Paul wrote his letters before the Gospels were finally completed. His writings and reflections, we have to believe, probably had an impact on the Gospels. We do know that the original message, which was simple, direct and clear, was sent to Israel, albeit not to Israel exclusively. "It was to you and your children that the promise was made, and to all those still far off, whom the Lord our God calls (Acts 2:39). We must also remember that the Apostles all felt that the message of

Jesus was meant exclusively for the People of Israel. It was Paul who convinced them that the Jesus message was meant for all humankind.

The evangelists gave no thought of writing an extended biography of Jesus or even of composing elaborate instructions for the faithful. If all were to end soon with Jesus' return, there was no need for such writings. Paul wrote letter to the churches that he established to continue sharing the Jesus message, not to document further things about Jesus. In fact when you read Paul's letters, you realize that he theologized and reflected upon the message of Jesus and did not bother to involve any stories about the things that Jesus did.

Acts 10:34-43 has a particularly good summary of early apostolic preaching as the church began to branch out toward the Gentiles. Note especially in verses 328-40 how the barest outline is given of Jesus' ministry and its sequel. Later, four points of this outline appear as a framework for all four Gospels. There is mention of John the Baptizer, of Galilee where Jesus began his work, of Judea and Jerusalem, and of the suffering and death of Jesus and his glorious resurrection. In the next issue of this article I will present a closer analysis of these verses from Acts, which is consider to be a short history of the early Church.

I would again point out that the early church "preached" the message of Jesus and, like I have expressed, did not consider the need to write down a history. They were preparing people for the return of Jesus. Paul himself thought that Jesus would return in his own lifetime. After the people died who knew Jesus was there any need to write things down.

Learning Our Faith From the Greek Fathers of the Church

Three fundamental test questions surrounded the question of Jesus' deity and humanity: (1) Was God born of Mary, or only a man?; (2) Did God die on the cross, or only a man?; and (3) Should the human nature of Christ be worshiped? All three questions are directly related to the dispute between Cyril and Nestorius, for all are related to the question of Jesus' deity and humanity.

That is, in what way or manner does Jesus' deity indwell his humanity? Is "indwell" even a good choice of words, since it seems to imply a blending or mixing of the divine with the human, producing a strange third sort of creation. How can one faithfully, safely and biblically speak of such a mysterious union?

These questions required a lot of debate and reflection and finding the right answers took a lot of time and consensus building.

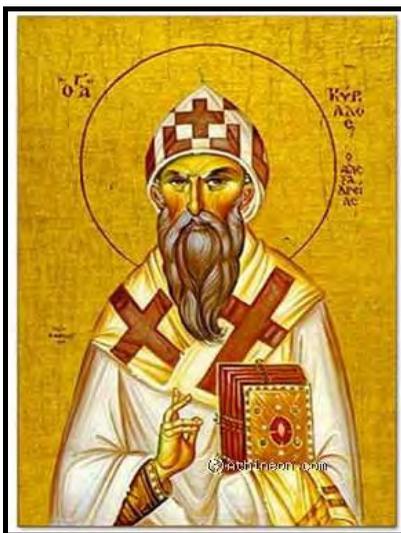
Not only is the question of the relationship of Christ's deity and humanity at issue, but there is the question of Jesus' humanity itself. Theologians centered in Antioch were particularly concerned that the reality of Jesus' humanity be preserved in any theological paradigm modeling

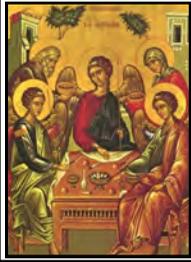
the relationship between his deity and humanity. They, like the fathers in Cyril's camp, realized that Jesus must be human if salvation was to be communicated through his person to humanity. For example, the fathers realized that Jesus must possess a human soul along with a human body if a human being was to be saved. Why? Not only was a soul a

constituent element of a human person, but the soul was well as the body had become intertwined and enveloped in mankind's struggle to actualize his potential to become more like God as found in the Person of Jesus. The deep concern of the Fathers with the fact that the soul and the intellect are culpable

clearly shows that they did not think that sin was simply a matter of the body and its appetites. Only as Christ became what we human beings are did he give us the insight on how we might develop our relationship with God and freely return His love.

This led the Fathers to proclaim that Jesus must be both God and man. However, this also led to the problem of understanding how the two natures could be joined.





THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

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Weekend Of The Forefathers

December 16-17, 2017

The Spirituality of the Christian East

As I have suggested in this article, in order for us to have a genuine relationship with God we must have the ability to have real relationships with others. This means, first and foremost, that we believe the other person is absolutely open to us as a human being and does not expect us to be someone different than who we are. They love us for exactly who we are at this present moment. Further, they do not have the idea that they will change us.

I know that some will challenge me and say that this is where our relationship with God is different. *He wants to change us.* This is absolutely untrue. God doesn't want to change us. He only invites us to freely change ourselves to become more like His Son Jesus so that we might have a genuine relationship with Him.

In true relationships, unconditional love invites us to change ourselves so

that we might become more loving, patient and kind. It seems that when we feel loved and accepted as we are, we desire to change ourselves and become more and more loving.

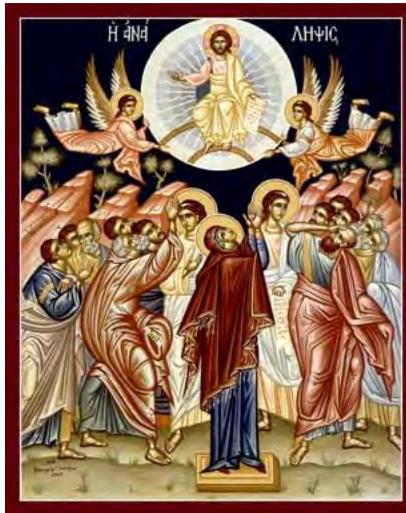
The problem is that if we think that God only wants to change us then we can never feel we have a genuine relationship with Him.

God only calls us to enter a loving and real relationship with Him, knowing that once we feel loved, we will want to change anything about us that keeps from freely returning His love. Only our free

changing of ourselves will allow us to enter a relationship with God that recognizes Him as our Father.

I would challenge you to think about this: God created us out of love and always loves what He creates. It is only for us to grow in our ability to return this love.

What do you think?



Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

Come and Do Not Delay

Let no one delay in coming to the supper. Let us put aside all idle wicked excuses, and come to supper in which our souls are fed. Let no swelling of pride keep us back, or lift us above ourselves; and neither let unlawful superstition frighten us, or turn us away from God. Let not the delights of the senses keep us from the delights of the soul. Let us come, and let us be feasted. And who have come but the poor and the feeble and the lame and the blind? But the rich have not come there, nor the healthy, who as it were could walk well and see clearly, sure of themselves, and the more arrogant were they, the more endangered.

Let the poor come, for He who invites us, though rich, became poor for our sakes, that by His poverty we might be made rich.

Let the feeble come, for they who are in

health do not need the physician, but they that are ill. Let the lame come. Let the blind come.

Compel them to come in. I have prepared a great supper, a great house: I shall allow no place there to remain empty.

The Gentiles came from the streets and the lanes. Let the heretics come from the hedges; here they will find peace. For they who make hedges are seeking to bring about divisions. Let them be drawn from the hedges; let them be plucked free of the thorns. They refuse to be compelled, and they cling to their hedges. Let us, they say, come in of our will. But this is not what the Lord commanded. Compel them, He says, to come in.

St. Augustine of Hippo

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