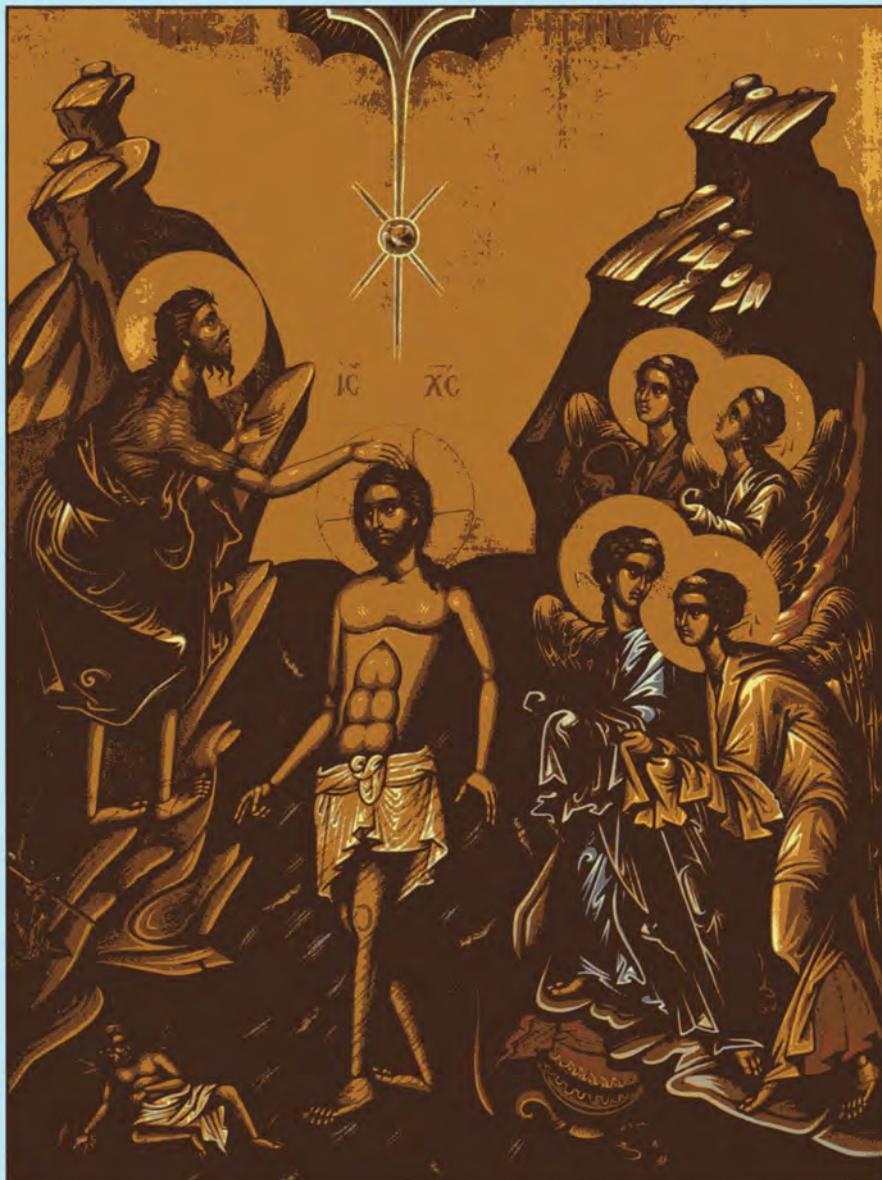


# SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS



*Icon of the Theophany (Epiphany) of Our Lord*

## Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

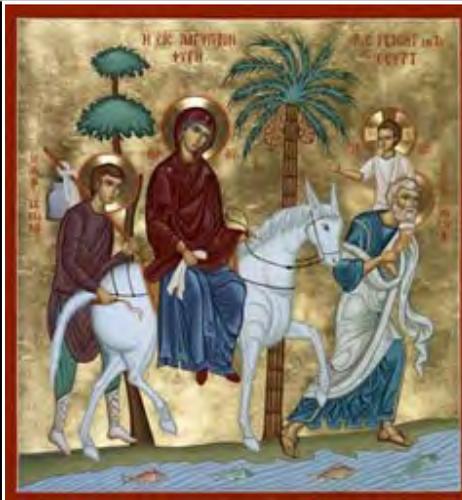
On this weekend after the great feast of the Birth of Jesus Christ, our readings are taken from Matthew's Gospel and Paul's letter to the Galatians. We look for meaning in these readings that can help us lead our lives.

The Gospel continues the story begun on Christmas about the early struggles of the Holy Family and their eventual flight into Egypt in order to escape the attempts of King Herod to kill the child Jesus. It is a story that reminds us that all humans, even the Holy Family, had to deal with life challenges. Their struggles, while more than we will ever have to personally face, were challenging to their belief in God. Their courage in meeting these challenges, however, serve as a model for us as we are confronted with our challenges.

The Gospel appointed to be read relates the story of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt and then their eventual return to Israel. It sets the stage for Jesus eventually being seen as the new Moses who was called by God to lead people out of slavery to freedom. This image of Jesus as the new Moses only comes to its real and meaningful conclusion with His death and resurrection.

The fact that the Holy Family fled to Egypt after Jesus' birth and their eventual return to Israel also proclaims loud and clear that the revelation of God through Jesus is something that can lead us to true human freedom. It also fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would come from Egypt. This parallel to the story of the Exodus is very important for our full understanding of the meaning of God's incarnation as a human.

In addition to this revelation, this story tells us of the courage of two people, Joseph and



Mary, to meet the challenges that they are presented with in their lives. Their courage is prompted by their love for Jesus and their true desire to protect Him from harm. Their love for Him allowed them to make sure that they did not let anything separate them from Him.

St. Paul's letter to the Galatians seems to echo this same theme about doing everything in his power to stand by the new community of Christians that he founded in the Galatian community. Stresses true and unwavering faith and belief in Jesus Christ.

If we truly believe that God Is With Us, then we know that any challenge we have to face in life can be positively accomplished. **ONLY BELIEVE!**

# Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

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I would continue some thoughts about the history of our Church which I began before the Winter feasts. I had gotten to a point where I introduced Metropolitan Slipyj, someone who lived within our lifetime. In fact he visited Detroit in the 1960s.

The pastoral life of Patriarch Josyf Slipyj began with his ordination to the priesthood in September of 1917 at the hand of Venerable Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytsky. Father Slipyj held the post of Rector of the seminary in Lviv, directing the formation and education of priests of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. In November of 1939 Father Josyf Slipyj was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Lviv to succeed Metropolitan Sheptytsky. He received episcopal consecration the following month. He succeeded to the See of Lviv in 1944 upon the death of Venerable Metropolitan Andrei. Father Slipyj was only metropolitan for several months before he was arrested, under the cover of night, and sent to hard labor by Soviet authorities on accusations that he added and abetted the Nazi's during the Second World War. "On April 11, 1945, the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops including Slipyj, were arrested. Most were accused of collaboration with Nazi rule and sentenced to forced labor and exile. This action also prompted a strong response from the Vatican and



Pope Pius XII. Metropolitan Slipyj ministered and was an example of a Christian minister all through his interment in the gulags of the Soviet Union. Refusing to denounce his faith in the Holy Apostolic See and accept a position as a suffragan bishop to the Patriarch of Moscow, he was again sentenced to hard labor. In the heat of the Cold War Slipyj became a bargaining chip between the United States and the Soviet Union, with Pope Saint John XXIII brokering for the release of Slipyj from the labor camps.

Khrushchev, who was familiar with the case because, he was from the Ukraine, was afraid that Slipyj would be used for propaganda purposes. Reassurances were made that "Pope John is not seeking the archbishop's release for that purpose but wants to give Archbishop Slipyj a chance to live out his life in some distant seminary.

Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj was released from the Soviet Union in 1963 on the condition that he never return to his homeland. Metropolitan Slipyj was to reside in Rome for the rest of his life under a Vatican Diplomatic Passport. *(To be continued)*

# The Divine Liturgy and Our Worship of God

Before the Christmas holy days, I was sharing information about the Early Church and the meaning of the Holy Eucharist. I had quoted Paul, from his letters to the Romans and Hebrews, this understanding of the Eucharist. I quoted Paul as writing: *Present your bodies as a living sacrifice. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.* It is obvious from these quotes, that Paul saw Jesus' act of voluntarily dying on the Cross as a voluntary offering of His very life to the Father in thanksgiving for the gift of life. Therefore, the spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, which Christians are enjoined to offer, and which consist of 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 in the heavenly tabernacle, and continually represented in the Church's commemoration of it in the Eucharist.

Like all things about our faith, It took years before the Church came to



a full understanding of all these things. Suffice it to say, the early Church had a sense that when she repeated the acts of Jesus on the last night of His life, He was present to the Church - the gathering of those who believed in Him. The Eucharist became a real way that Jesus fulfilled His promise to be with those who believe in Him for all the days to come.

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, this synagogue service seems to have been replaced by the rite of initiation.

This fact signals us that there was a certain *development* in the Church's understanding of the true and real meaning of the liturgy. I will continue sharing ideas about its development.



# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

## SCHEDULE FOR FEAST DAYS

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**Sunday, December 31st**

**St. Michael's Divine Liturgy @ 10 AM**

**Monday, January 1st**

**St. Michael's Divine Liturgy @ 10 AM**

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## THE 2018 GREAT FAST



Pascha, this coming year, is on April 1st. This means that the five-year sequence before the Great Fast begins on the 14th of January.

## FEAST OF THEOPHANY

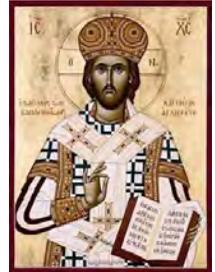
Next weekend, January 7th, we will celebrate the feast of Theophany. The Great Blessing of Water will be celebrated. This feast is the second greatest feast of our Church. As you probably know, it commemorates Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan and manifesting God as a Trinity of Persons.



***You only live once, but if you do it right, once is enough!***

## CALLED TO HOLINESS

As I have been sharing in this article, the call to holiness is the call of God our Father to freely make every effort to be truly His child. He has shared His life and His powers with us so that



we might accomplish the task of growing in the likeness of Jesus. He only grants us His love with the hope that we, knowing that He loves us, will make every effort to spiritually grow.

I think the problem is that we humans find it hard to change. We become easily set in our ways and don't see the need to change. Further, we frequently become discouraged with life because of the challenges that we have to face. I'm sure that if we are honest with ourselves we find it very difficult when life doesn't turn out the way that we want. It is difficult to think sometimes that the challenges we are given are really opportunities to grow in our likeness of Jesus.

The challenges of life, which are a natural part of life, are not given to us in order to punish us BUT, rather, to help us grow. We have a choice in the way that we respond to life's challenges.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## The Story of Christmas in the New Testament

As I shared in the Christmas issue of the Bulletin, there are different versions of the Nativity story in the New Testament. I would continue sharing that information.

In the gross structure of his infancy narrative, Luke seems intent on comparing John the Baptist and Jesus. His point is that while John is great, Jesus is even greater. So the announcement of John's birth as the forerunner of the Messiah is balanced by the announcement of Jesus' birth as the Son of the Most High. And so the account of John's birth and naming is balanced by the birth and naming of Jesus as Savior, Messiah, and Lord.

Luke portrays Jesus and his family as observant with regard to Jewish laws and customs. At the same time, there are subtle "digs" at the Roman emperor and his claims to divinity. The narratives are punctuated by triumphant songs of joy. They are well known by their traditional Latin titles: *Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, and *Nunc dimittis*. These are pastiches of words and phrases from Israel's Scriptures, and they serve to praise the God of Israel for what he was doing in and through Jesus.

With his infancy narrative, Luke wants to root Jesus in the best of Israelite piety, while hinting at Jesus' significance for all the peoples of the world. That is why Luke's genealogy of Jesus goes back beyond Abraham all the way to Adam. Luke's infancy story truly provides the real framework for the traditional *Christian story*. Its tone is upbeat, celebratory, and even romantic.



The way to read the Christmas stories of Matthew and Luke is to respect their historical contexts, literary skills, and intentions. It is not, however, the only way. What I hope to have shown here is that there is more to the biblical Christmas stories than gets included in the traditional account.

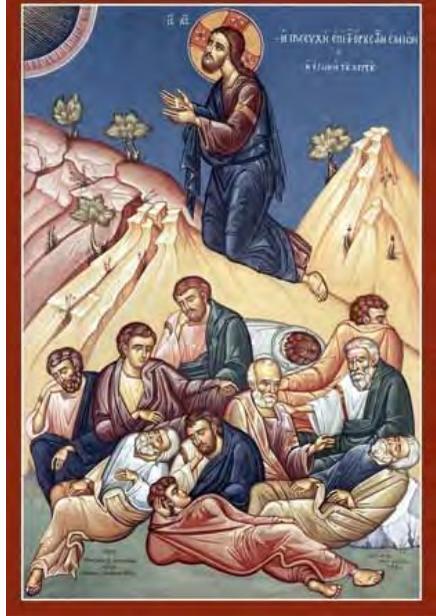
Most people, when they think of the Christmas story, think of one biblical narrative that includes the holy family, the midnight hour, a barn, various farm animals, shepherds, angels, wise men and a quiet, little town called Bethlehem. It might come as a big surprise to learn that many of the elements people often treasure as part of the nativity story really come from Christmas carols that have been composed over time. *(To be continued)*

## The Courage to Pray

One of the last things I shared about prayer before we entered into the St. Phillip's Fast was that *encounter* is central to prayer. However at the start any man seeking this encounter is alone and must learn to recognize the existence of the other. And this recognition must take place in a relationship and not in isolation. This is important. We know nothing and nobody except through relationship. Truly, if we are disconnected nothing exists for us.

I know that this sounds very esoteric. But think about it. There is a danger in not knowing anything or anybody except in relation ourselves. This is to de-center the universe. In referring everything to ourselves we deform it and make it as small and mean as we are, with our small mean cravings (*something that has become very common in our modern society*). So when we begin to recognize the existence of the other, we must be prepared to set ourselves aside to some extent, to go beyond ourselves and to admit the other's needs and his rights to independence and freedom, outside us. We must accept his irreducible *otherness*. Whatever we do, however well we know him, however close we are, and this is even truer of man and God than man and man, there remains a central mystery which we can never solve.

It has been my experience that we humans tend to make, in our own minds, God IN OUR IMAGE AND LIKENESS instead of understanding that we must discover Who He Really Is. A part of this has been facilitated by a tendency to think that we can have a relationship with God by JUST KEEPING RULES. We must begin to admit that God is nothing like our mental representation of Him (*that is the group of*



*thoughts and ideas we have about Him*). For example, He does not hate the people we hate. Our enemies are not His enemies, although I suspect many expect Him to have the same values that they do. Humans want God to be Who they want Him to be.

Unless we accept the fact that God is not like us, we can never have a real relationship with Him. We must be ready to encounter the real God, one who freely chooses to unconditionally love others, allowing them to be free.

***Who is God for you?***

# SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**Sunday December 31 – Weekend After Christmas**  
**10:00 AM + Special Intention**

## WEEKEND AFTER CHRISTMAS- TONE 6

**Monday, January 1 – Circumcision of Our Lord**  
**10:00 AM - Special Intention**

Tuesday, January 2 – Sylvester, Pope  
*No Service Scheduled*

Wednesday January 3 - Malachy, Prophet  
*No Service Scheduled*

Thursday January 4 - Synaxis of the 70 Apostles  
*No Service Scheduled*

Friday January 5 – Vigil of Theophany  
*No Service Scheduled*

Saturday January 6 - Theophany of our Lord  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Sunday January 7 – Feast of Theophany**  
**10:00 AM + Special Intention**

*(Continued from page 5 - Call to Holiness)*

I do believe that one of the problems that we face in responding to the call to holiness is that it requires a *change in the way that we think!* Most people do not connect their thinking with their behavior. What we think about God, life, the world, others and ourselves directly impacts our behavior. When we see life as a journey back to the Father which require personal change and transformation, then the events/challenges of life take on new meaning.

Perhaps one of the ways that can help facilitate personal change is to not live in the past or the future but only in the present moment. The present moment is the only thing that is real. Embrace the NOW and live it to its fullest measure.



St. Michael the Archangel  
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church  
6340 Chase Road  
Dearborn, MI 48126

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Pastor

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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

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>  
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

# Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the New Testament

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As I shared in the last issue of this particular article which has been focused on the development of the Gospels, because the early Church and the Apostles anticipated a return of Jesus, they had no thought of writing an extended biography of Jesus or elaborate instructions for the faithful. If all were to end soon with Jesus' return, there was no need for such writings. The apostolic group had all it could do to carry its urgent message orally to its countrymen to convince them before the fateful day arrived.

Acts 10 has a particularly good, short summary of early apostolic preaching as the church began to branch out toward the Gentiles. Note especially in verses 38-40 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.

## *The Gospel is open to all*

Verses 34-35: Peter proceeded to address them in these words: I begin

to see how true it is that God shows no partiality. Rather, the man of any nation who fears God and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.

## *But is first sent to Israel*

Verse 36: This is the message he has sent to the sons of Israel, the good news of peace proclaimed through Jesus Christ who is Lord of all.

## *Salvation History and John the Baptizer*

Verses 37-38: I take it you know what has been reported all over Judea about Jesus - beginning in Galilee with the baptism John preached: of the way God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good works and

healing all who were in the grip of the devil, and God was with him.

## *Judea Jerusalem*

Verse 39: We are witnesses to all that he did in Jerusalem

## *Passion - Resurrection*

Verses 40-41: They killed him, finally, hanging him on a tree, only to have God raise him up on the third day and grant that he be seen, not by all, but only by such witnesses as had been chosen beforehand by God - by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead

*(To be continued)*

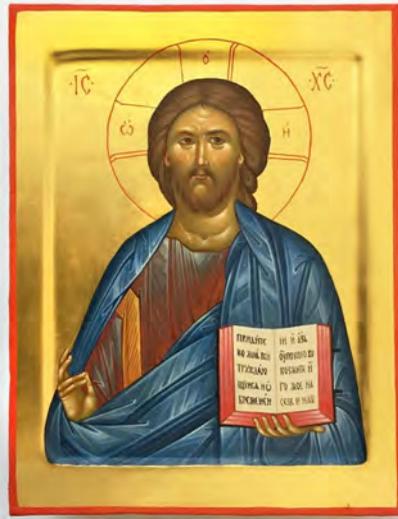


## Learning our Faith from the Greek Fathers of the Church

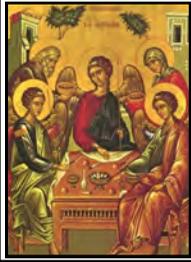
In this article, I have been attempting to highlight the Church's struggle with Christ's *divinity* and *humanity* and how we now understand this mystery. Harold O.J. Brown refers to three fundamental test questions that surround the question of Jesus' deity and humanity: (1) Was Jesus-God born of Mary or only a Jesus-man?; (2) Did God die on the cross, or only a man?; and (3) Should the human nature of Christ be worshipped? 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?

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

partially 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 as well as the body had become intertwined and enveloped in



earthly existence and therefore in need of God's revelation on how to live. Once we assert that Jesus must be both God and human, the problem of how the two natures can be joined immediately presents itself. Nestorius and Antiochene theologians, such as Theodore of Mopsuestia, were greatly concerned that Jesus' genuine humanity be maintained in the theological language and paradigms employed by the Church. Thus the real struggle that emerged in the Church's understanding of WHO JESUS IS.



# THE EASTERN HERALD

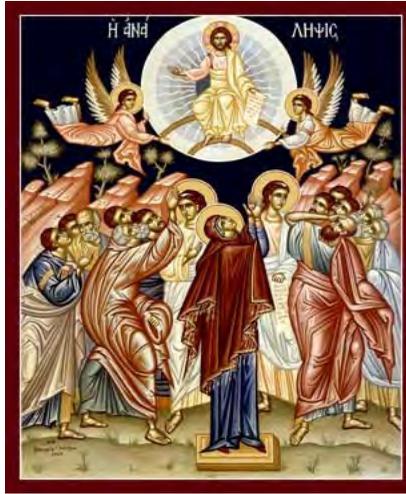
## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Vol. 63 No 53      Weekend After Christmas      December 30-31, 2017

### The Spirituality of the Christian East

It has truly been my experience over the 51 years of my ministry that a good number of people become in some way become frightened when they hear the word spirituality (*albeit many in our modern world tell me that they are “spiritual” but not “religious”*). I believe that this fear comes from the fact that when the word spirituality is heard the concomitant thought is *personal change*. At some level we humans know that in order to be a spiritual person I must change in some way.

Further, the word *spirituality* seems to drudge up the idea that we must be so very different than we are right now and that we feel that we will not fit into our society of friends if we become a *spiritual* person. This is all too tragic since I sincerely believe that we are given this earthly life to become *spiritual* beings, that is people who are aware of the spiritual



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

dimension of creation and ourselves.

A simple definition of *spirituality* is the *quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things*. That is *spirituality* is truly all about coming to a deep understanding of what it means to be a human being and then living in concert with this basic understanding. In truth

it means coming to know who we are in God's Kingdom and then living in accord with this understanding.

So I would ask my readers: *Who do you think you are in God's creation? And What does it mean to be a human being?*

Of course to answer these very basic questions we have to ask ourselves what we believe is the meaning and purpose of life. This process of finding answers to this questions, of course, brings us to the development of *spirituality*.

## *The Anointing with the Holy Spirit*

When we were baptized into Christ and clothed ourselves in Him, we were transformed into the likeness of the Son of God. Having destined us to be His adopted sons, God gave us a likeness to Christ in his glory, and living as we do in communion with Christ, God's anointed, we ourselves are rightly called "the anointed ones." When He said: Do not touch my anointed ones, God was speaking of us.

We became "the anointed ones" when we received the sign of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, everything took place in us by means of images, because we ourselves are images of Christ. Christ bathed in the river Jordan, imparting to its waters the fragrance of His divinity, and when He came up from them the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, like resting upon like. So we also, after coming up from the sacred waters of baptism, were anointed with chrism, which signifies the Holy Spirit, by whom Christ was anointed and of whom blessed Isaiah prophesied in the name of the Lord: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because

he has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor.

The oil of gladness with which Christ was anointed was a spiritual oil; it was in fact the Holy Spirit Himself, who is called the oil of gladness because He is the source of spiritual joy. But we too have been anointed with oil, and by this anointing we have entered into fellowship with Christ and have received a share in His life. Beware of thinking that this holy oil is simply ordinary oil and nothing else. After the invocation of the Spirit it is no longer ordinary oil but the gift of Christ, and by the presence of His divinity it becomes the instrument through which we receive the Holy Spirit. While symbolically, on our foreheads and senses, our bodies are anointed with this oil that we see, our souls are sanctified by the Holy and Life-giving Spirit.

*St. Cyril of Jerusalem*

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