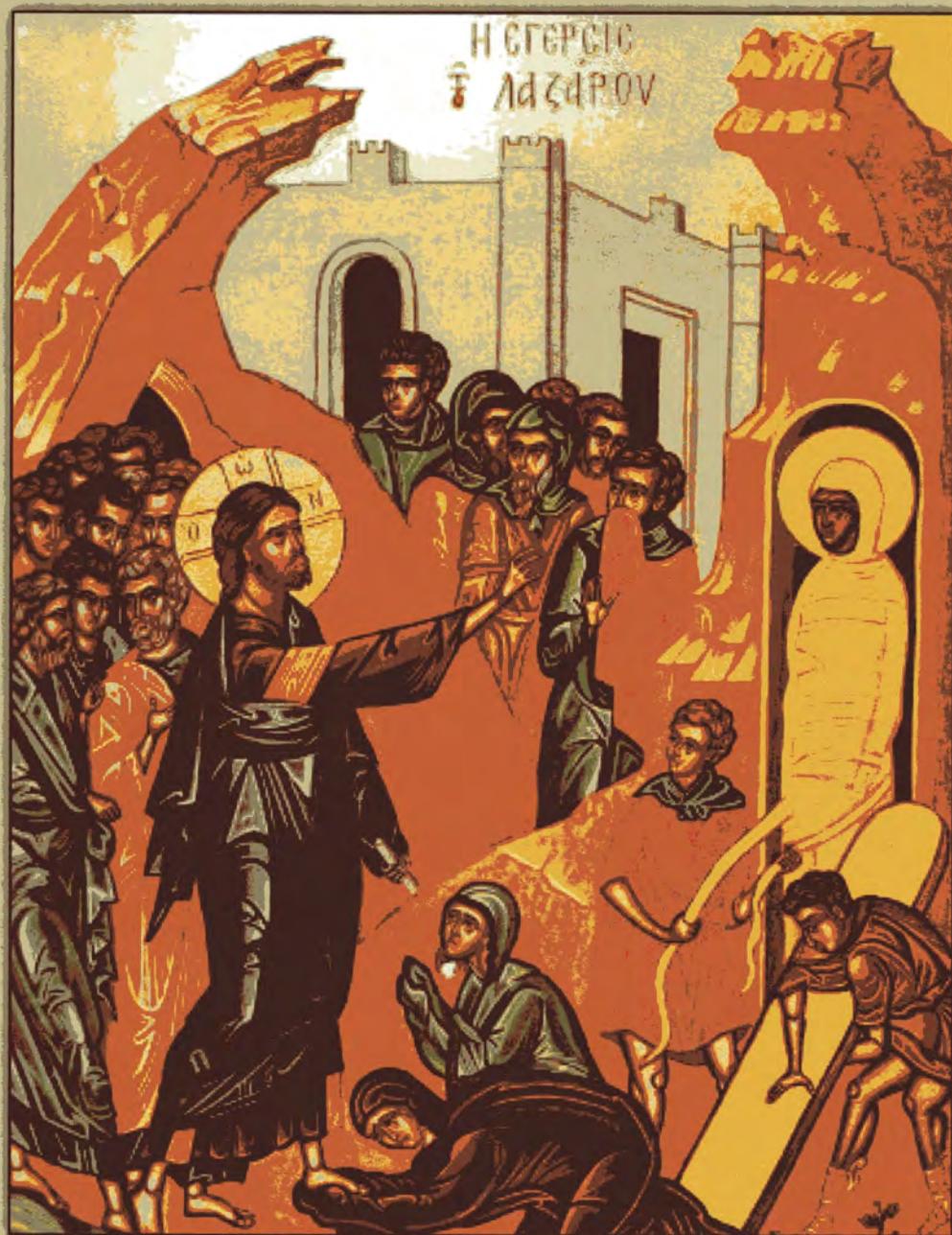


FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE GREAT FAST  
SUNDAY OF ST. MARY OF EGYPT



*Icon of Raising Lazarus from the Dead*

## Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

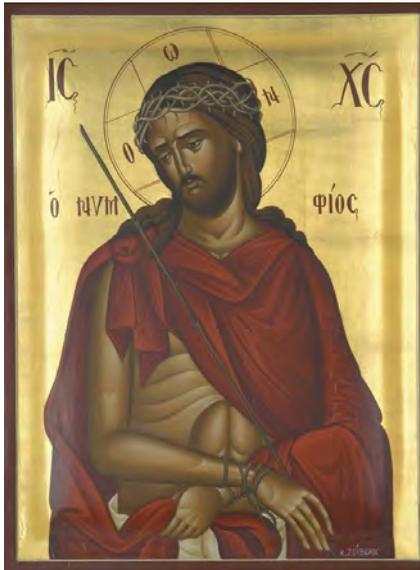
---

On this last weekend of the Great Fast (*Next weekend begins the Great and Holy Week*), our reading from Hebrews reminds us the *sacrifice of Jesus* and the Gospel tells us what Jesus taught about how Jesus saw His role among men. Both are very powerful and thought-provoking passages.

Paul tells the Hebrews that Christ did not offer to God the blood of goats or calves but, rather His very own blood to offer thanksgiving to God for life. By His act of self-sacrifice, Jesus truly revealed to us that true worship of God is accomplished by truly offering our very lives back to Him in deep thanksgiving for the gift of life. That is why we join with Jesus when we celebrate the Eucharist in offering ourselves to God. We do not just offer Jesus' Body and Blood to God but join with Jesus in offering ourselves to God for all that He has given us. Paul declares: *how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself up unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to worship the living God.* Our worship of God is accomplished when we join with Jesus and, by attempting to imitate as He lived, make God Kingdom real right

now. The way that Jesus lived made God's Kingdom real.

The Gospel we hear states this: *The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve - to give his life in ransom for the many.* We are called to do the same. However, in order to accomplish this, we must follow this teaching: *Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest: whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all.*



Think about this profound teaching! First, we have to desire to be of serve to others and second we have to serve others with true humility.

I wonder how many think about the call we have been given as Christians to be of service to others? I also wonder how many ask themselves how they might be of service to others? And, what does it mean to be of service to others?

I won't attempt to offer my answer to these questions. I only pose these questions because I think that each of us, if we want to follow Jesus, have to ask these questions of ourselves and then attempt to find answers.

***Dare to ask yourself these special questions!***

# Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

---

As I have shared previously, the Eucharist is not served during the week days of the Great Fast because such a celebration is incompatible with fasting. The question must then be answered, however, as to why the Eucharist is still prescribed on Saturdays and Sundays of the Fast and this without “breaking” the fast? The canons of the Church seem here to contradict one another. While some of them forbid fasting on Sundays, some others forbid the breaking of the fast on any of the forty days. This contradiction, however, is apparent only because the two rules which seem to be mutually exclusive refer in fact to two different meanings of the term fasting. To understand this is important because we discover here the Eastern Christian “philosophy of fasting” essential for our whole spiritual effort.

There are indeed two ways or modes of fasting rooted both in Scripture and Tradition, and which correspond to two distinct needs or states of man. The first one can be termed *total fast* for it consists of total abstinence from food and drink. One can define the second one as *ascetical fast* for it consists mainly in abstinence from certain foods and in substantial reduction of the dietary regimen. The *total fast*, by its very nature, is of short duration and is usually limited to one day or even a



part of one day. From the very beginning of Christianity, it has been understood as a state of *preparation* and expectation - a state of spiritual concentration on that which is about to come. Physical hunger corresponds here to the spiritual expectation of fulfillment, the “opening up” of the entire being to the approaching joy. Therefore, in the liturgical tradition of the Church, we find this total fast as the last and ultimate preparation for the great feast, for a decisive spiritual event. We find it, for example, on the eves of Christmas and Theophany, and above everything else, it is the Eucharistic Fast, the essential mode of our preparation for the messianic banquet at Christ’s table in His Kingdom. Eucharist is always preceded by this total fast which may vary in its duration but which for the Church constitutes a necessary condition for Holy Communion. Many people misunderstand this rule, seeing here nothing but an archaic prescription and wondering why an empty stomach should serve as a prerequisite for receiving the Sacrament.

***More to come!***

## Our Worship of God Through the Great Fast

It is probably important to point out that our liturgical tradition, which is different from the Western Church, has no adoration of the Eucharistic Gifts outside Communion. The Gifts are reserved only for administration to the sick. We do not “sacralize” portions and elements of matter and make them sacred or holy to oppose them to the profane ones. Our Church sees that the purpose of the Eucharist is to make man’s life communion with God, knowledge of God, ascension toward God’s Kingdom. It is in the eating or consuming of the Gifts that we believe that Christ is present to us in a real way. Of course this requires, first and foremost, faith. The Eucharistic Gifts are the *means* of that communion, the food of that new life, but they are not an end in themselves. For the Kingdom of God is “not food and drink but joy and peace in the Holy Spirit.” Just as in this world food fulfills its function only when it is consumed and thus transformed into life, the new life of the world to come is give to us through the partaking of the “food of immortality.” Our Church consistently avoids all adoration of the sacrament outside Communion because the only true adoration is that having partaken of Christ’s Body and Blood, we “act in this world as He did.” As to the Protestants, in their fear of any “magical” connotation, they tend to



“spiritualize” the sacrament to such an extent that they deny the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ outside the act of Communion. Here again, our Church, by the practice of reserving the Holy Gifts, restores the true balance. The gifts are given *for* Communion but the reality of Communion depends on the reality of the Gifts. Our Church does not speculate on the mode of Christ’s presence in the Gifts. She forbids the use of them for any act other than Communion. She does not reveal, so to speak, their presence outside Communion, but she firmly believes that just as the Kingdom which is yet to come is “already in the midst of us”, just as Christ ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father yet is also with us until the end of the world, the means of Communion with Christ and with His Kingdom, the food of immortality, is always present in the Church.

***More to come!***



# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

## ADULT DISCUSSION SESSION

*Today, March 18th*

Today, immediately after a brief Coffee Hour, we will have the third Adult Discussion Session on the article, hopefully, you picked up.

\*\*\*\*\*

## PALM/FLOWERY WEEKEND

*Next Weekend, March 25th*

Next weekend we begin the Great and Holy Week. I have prepared a schedule for this week which is for both of the parishes I serve. Services are at St. Michael's Parish on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

We will again attempt to keep VIGIL at the Lord's Grave which will end on Saturday at 6:00 PM. You will find the sign-up form in the vestibule. Multiple people can be placed on any time slot.

\*\*\*\*\*

## COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICE

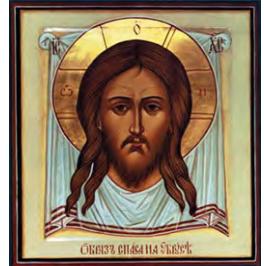
*Tuesday, March 27th @ 7:00 PM*

This will be a part of the  
Presanctified Liturgy

***Start each day with a grateful  
heart and life with be  
wonderful***

## CALLED TO HOLINESS

What is the Fount of Holiness. St Matthew says in his Gospel: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of God is theirs and blessed are the single-hearted for they shall see God." These are taken from the Sermon on the Mount which are called the Beatitudes.



Another integral part of holiness is the presence of the virtues in a person. The virtues are excellences, beautiful traits of character, manifested in beautiful practices. The possession of the virtues, which are coexistent with purity, render one a likeness to God. This is aptly expressed by the following statement in the Ladder of Divine Ascent: "The firmament has the stars for its beauty, and freedom from the passions has the virtues for its adornment."

Prominent among the virtues are faith, hope, and love, and the four "most general virtues" of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice. Besides these, often mentioned and emphasized in Holy Scripture and patristic writings, are humility, longsuffering

*(Continued on page 8)*

# A Prayer-A-Day For the Great Fast

---

## **SUNDAY, MARCH 18<sup>th</sup>**

O gracious Lord, Your handmaid, Mary of Egypt, preserved with exactness, Your image. For she took up her cross, in imitation of You, O Lord, and followed you by her deeds. She taught us to overlook the flesh because it passes away and to attend to the soul, since it is immortal. Because of the way she lived, her spirit now rejoices with the angels. O Master, give me the courage to take an example from Mary of Egypt and give myself to imitating You, my Master and God. Like her, help me to present my spirit, body and soul to You in thanksgiving for all that You have done for me. I ask this of You Who I call, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now, always and forever. **AMEN.**

## **MONDAY, MARCH 19<sup>th</sup>**

O gracious Lord, the days of this Great Fast are rapidly coming to an end. In a few short days we will celebrate the Great and Holy Week, a week unlike any other in the year. I beg You to give me the strength to redouble my efforts and prepare myself to make it truly holy. Help me to prepare myself, during this last week of the Great Fast, to enter fully into the mystery of human salvation that I will be celebrating together with the Church. Help me to realize that I can only accomplish this with Your help. I know that I must desire to make this special week a time of spiritual growth. I ask this of You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN.**

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 20<sup>th</sup>**

O my loving Lord, in a few short days the Church will be enter the Great and Holy Week – a week wherein I will be called to join others in remembering the final days of Your life. Help me to prepare myself to make it truly spiritual and learn from how You lived that final week how I should live. I know You faced the greatest challenge of Your life with dignity. Help me to learn how to imitate You when I am called upon to face the challenges in my life. Help me to learn how to unconditionally love and forgive others, know that if I do live in that manner, I will one day join with You in eternity. I ask this of You, my loving Lord. **AMEN.**

## **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21<sup>st</sup>**

O Loving Lord, my journey of preparation for Pascha is rapidly coming to an end. In a few short days help me to join the Church as she enters the Great and Holy Week. Help to prepare myself this week to make the coming week truly a sacred and holy time, becoming completely immersed in the events that will be remembered. Open my heart, mind and soul to the mystery of Your noble, and voluntary self-sacrifice, so that I may learn from these events. Help me to learn from how You lived the last days of Your earthly life how to live if I want to gain the fullness of life. I ask this of You, Who I call Father, Son and Holy Spirit not only now but forever. **AMEN**

# A Prayer-A-Day For the Great Fast

---

## **THURSDAY, MARCH 22<sup>ND</sup>**

O my Loving Lord, I would proclaim Your loving providence towards me. For possessing knowledge of the things to come as though they were already present, You have set before me the story of Lazarus and the rich man. Reflecting, then, upon the end of both of them, let me truly avoid the cruelty of the one and his hatred of others. Let me emulate the fortitude and longsuffering of the other, Lazarus, that with him I may enjoy rest in Abraham's bosom, crying aloud: O Lord and righteous Master, glory to You. As I cry out my praise to You, O my dear Savior, I ask You to help me complete this Great Fast. I make this prayer to You, Who are the Savior and Lover of humankind. AMEN

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 23<sup>RD</sup>**

O my Loving Savior, the time of the Great Fast is quickly coming to an end. Tomorrow the Church begins the Great and Holy Week by remembering the miracle You performed by raising Your friend Lazarus from the dead. This event prefigures the forthcoming encounter between You and Death. I beg You to help me fully prepare myself to enter into the Great and Holy Week, making it a time of spiritual growth – a time during which I come to realize more fully Your great love for me, strengthening my desire to become more like You. Help me to join with the Church in the celebration of these events. I ask this of You, my Savior, Who I call my Lord and Master and thank You for Your love. AMEN.

## **LAZARUS SATURDAY, MARCH 24<sup>TH</sup>**

Shedding tears for Your friend, O Savior, You have shown the reality of Your Incarnation. The flesh that You have taken from us was united to You in essence, not in appearance only. And, since You are a God who loves mankind, immediately You called Lazarus from the grave and raised him up. O Christ our God, You made the tears of Martha and Mary to cease. Calling Lazarus, through Your own authority, You have raised him by Your voice and he worshipped You. As man, You shed tears for Lazarus. As God, You raised him up. You asked, O loving Lord, Where is the buried, dead these four days?, thus confirming our faith in Your Incarnation. O gracious Lord, O offer You praise and worship now and forever. AMEN

## **FLOWERY SUNDAY, MARCH 25<sup>TH</sup>**

The Son and Word of the Father, like Him without beginning and eternal, comes today to Jerusalem, the city of where He will die, seated on a foal. From fear the cherubim dare not gaze upon Him. Yet the children honor Him with branches and mystically they sing a hymn of praise: 'Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna to the Son of David, who has come to save from error all mankind'. Help me, O Savior, to join with them in chorus and also approach the challenge of my life with the same dignity and serenity You did. Help me to calmly face life with the same kind of trust You had in the Father. I ask this of You Who are my Savior and Redeemer, always now and forever. AMEN

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

## **Schedule of Services**

**Sunday, March 18 - Fifth Weekend of the Great Fast - Tone 8**  
**10:00 AM + Mary Jane Pipta**  
**11:30 AM - Third Adult Discussion Session**

### **SIXTH WEEK OF THE GREAT FAST**

Monday, March 19 - Chrysanthus & Daria, Martyrs  
*No Service Scheduled*

Tuesday, March 20 - Fathers of St. Sabbas Monastery  
*No Service Scheduled*

Wednesday, March 21 - James of Cantania, Bishop-Confessor  
*No Service Scheduled*

Thursday, March 22 - Basil of Ancyra  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Friday, March 23 - Nicon & Others, Venerable Martyrs**  
**7:00 PM - Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts**

Saturday March 24 - Lazarus Saturday  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Sunday, March 25 - Flowery/Palm Weekend - Festal**  
**10:00 AM + Joseph, Ann and Sharon**

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)  
and gentleness.

So, as is very evident, holiness is when we are more like Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. While we will never be able to achieve complete likeness to Him, nevertheless we can become more like Him.

Holiness means, I believe, that we accept the fact that God doesn't expect us to be perfect but that we strive to become "more perfect", more like Jesus. I do believe that it is important that we accept our own *limitedness*. There is nothing wrong with that. That is how God created us. Holiness is using our *free will* to improve ourselves to the extent possible. It is in the striving that we are holy. Striving requires that we *intend/desire* to spiritually grow.



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

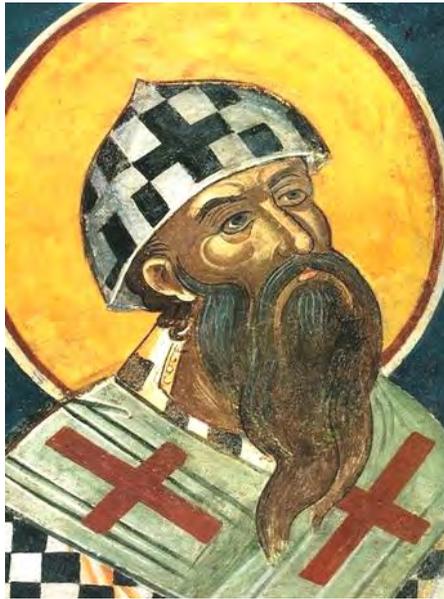
## Learning our Faith from the Greek Fathers of the Church

Cyril, as you my readers may have already guessed if you have been following this article, advocates genuine union, but no confusion. “The term union in no way causes the confusion of the things it refers to, but rather signifies the concurrence in one reality of those things which are understood to be united.” Again here he is speaking of Christ as truly God and truly man. It has been one of the greatest struggles in Christianity to come to a real understanding of Who Jesus Is because we humans find it difficult to really understand how there can be a union of both Divine and Human Natures and not end up with a new type of Divine/Human person. The mystery is how God could possibly have united the two natures in one person without one nature having dominance over the other. The Church believes that somehow the two natures in Christ were united but somehow not mixed, creating some-kind-of superhuman that is not really a human being.

Jesus was not a superhuman being that was and is unlike us. The

Gospels tell us that He was like us in every way except sin. He allowed God’s Spirit, which is in all human beings, to empower Him to always choose good over evil. His strong religious up-bringing instilled this in Him. His Divine Nature did not dictate how His Human Nature acted!

This concurrence in the mystery of the incarnation is truly, genuinely inexplicable. That is to say, “Godhead is one thing, and manhood is another thing, considered in the perspective of their truly respective and intrinsic beings.” One would never have imagined that divinity and humanity could have been joined in a union that not only simultaneously preserved their real distinction, yet in the incarnation this is exactly what has



CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

occurred. Cyril explains, “in the case of Christ they came together in a mysterious and incomprehensible union without confusion or change. The manner of this union is entirely beyond conception. In light of the revelation Scripture provides, through, Cyril is willing to accept the conceptual enigmas of it.

## The Courage to Pray

Praying is living our whole life as a communion with the Lord. Do we really understand what this means? For the other remains other to us, how ever close we are. In true communion we come so close to the other that we are identified. It is more important for us for him to be what he is than for us to we are. We need him more than ourselves in order to be ourselves. A true and real relationship between persons cannot be an external bond which does not change them. A true personal relationship enables two people to enter into each other without losing their identity.

This can help us understand the communion between the three persons of the Trinity. And it shows us that there can be no true personal relationships without God or without reference to God, the awareness of being in him and through him. Personal relationships are such a deep reality that they can only come from God. We know a spiritual being by communion with it, by being in one another. We know God by being aware of him in ourselves. This is why prayer is essentially personal. Grace cannot be impersonal. It is the acceptance of someone. Someone with whom we live, who has a plan for us and who himself fulfills it patiently, perseveringly and with faithful love.

God exists before us. Prayer does not create his presence, it makes us aware of it. How freely we live in this presence if we truly believe in it. It makes itself felt in little ways, which are not proof but rather an invitation to turn towards it. We must believe, and be led to believe more and more simply and express this belief by an attitude of submission.

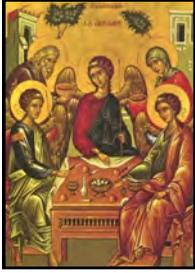
It is less important to become aware of this presence than to accept it. We have to accept



that it holds us and we no longer belong to ourselves. This is the free consent of love. We consent to be in and through another.

Think about it. If we consist to be in and through God, life changes. As you can tell, all of this depends on how we think about things. The way we think about God depends greatly on a number of experiences which transpire early in life. What is your image of God? By image I mean your real thoughts and ideas about Who He is and how He acts. Our image of God greatly colors how we pray.

***More to come!***



# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Vol. 64 No 11 Fifth Weekend Of the Great Fast March 17-18, 2018

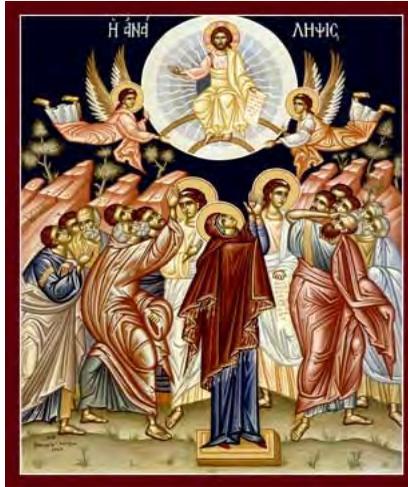
### The Spirituality of the Christian East

The sixth characteristic of Eastern Spirituality is that it is

#### **PATRISTIC**

How can our spirituality be patristic? It can only be patristic if it is truly based on the traditions of the Church. Our spirituality should not become involved in all types of new ideas about how we can develop a relationship with God and must be based on sound dogma that is presented by the Fathers of the Church. St. Irenaeus, wrote this:

This, beloved friend, is the preaching of the truth, the means of our salvation and the way of truth. Foretold by the prophets and carried out by Christ, it was delivered to the Church by the apostles and handed down by her to her children throughout the world. Keep this with all certainty, maintaining a sound will, pleasing God, practicing good works, and aiming always at what is right.”



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

Eastern spirituality is not built on theological speculation but upon the experiences of those who have known God. The purpose of Eastern spirituality is to lead each baptized soul to such experience for him or herself. One of the biblical texts which has powerfully shaped Eastern spirituality and, rarely quoted in the West is 2 Peter 1:3:

His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

What think you of this quote from 2 Peter? This is something to really incorporate in your prayers. Think about it. What does it mean to you?

### ***Conventional Wisdom and the Lord's***

Listen, friend, it's a dog-eat-dog world out there. You've got to do it to them before they do it to you.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Always remember the golden rule: those who have the gold, make the rules.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Remember: Never get mad. Get even.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Take my advice, kid – Don't make waves. You've got to go along to get along. Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Charity is fine, but business is business. Always, always, always buy low and sell high.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

The drug users and the city scum – they deserve what happens to them. We work hard for what we've got – nobody is doing us any favors. Let them do the same. It can be done. Hey, look: You got to take care of your own.

*But it cannot be like that with you ...*

Jesus' admonition is almost a pleading: If you really understand Me and what I am about, if you really want to be My disciple, if you really seek to be worthy of My name, then you must see the world differently and respond to its challenges with a very different set of values. The world may try to justify vengeance rather than forgiveness, to glorify self-preservation over selflessness, to insist on preserving the system and convention for the sake of compassion and justice.

*But it cannot be like that with you.*