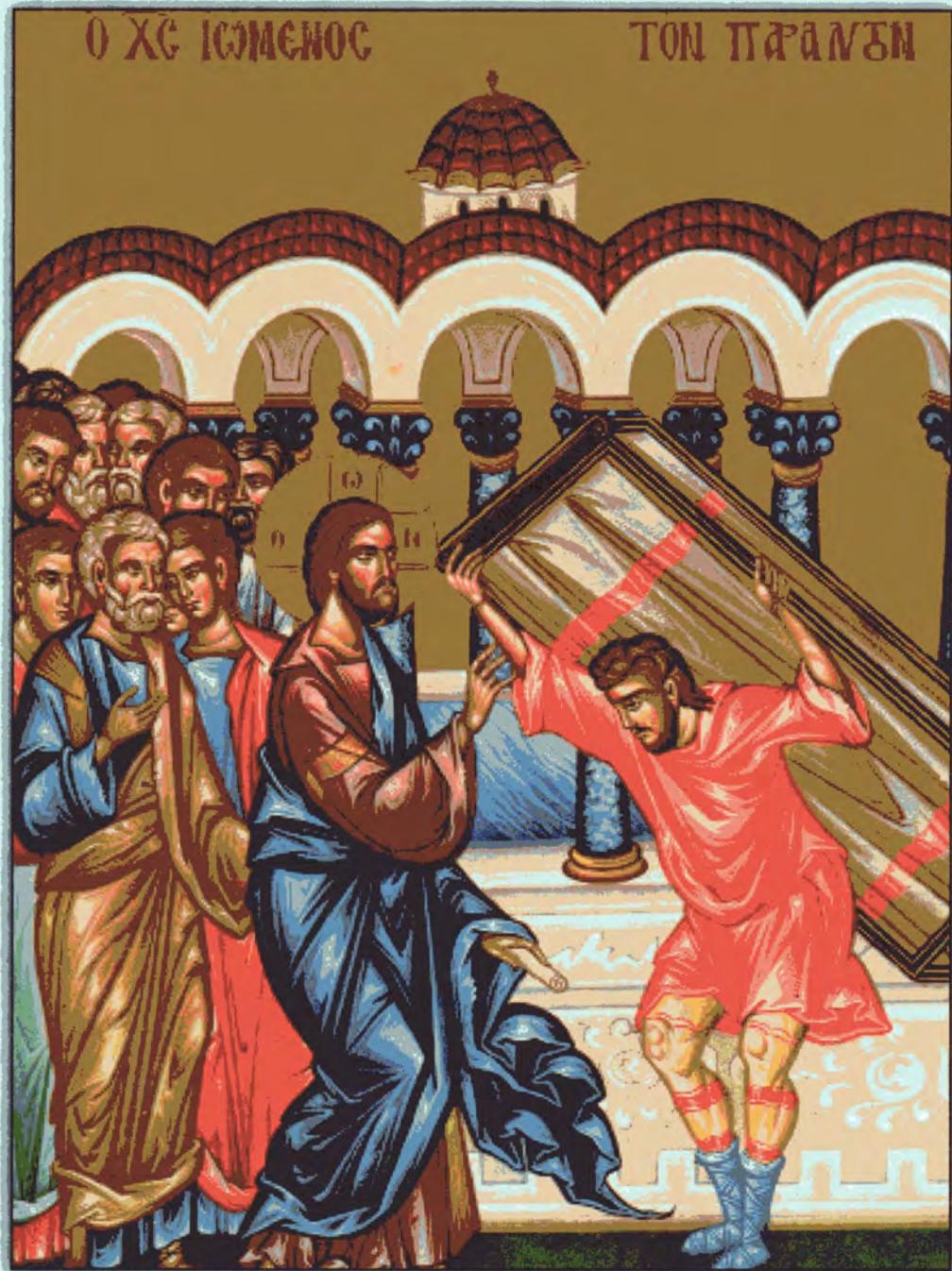


SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC MAN



Icon of Jesus Healing the Paralytic Man

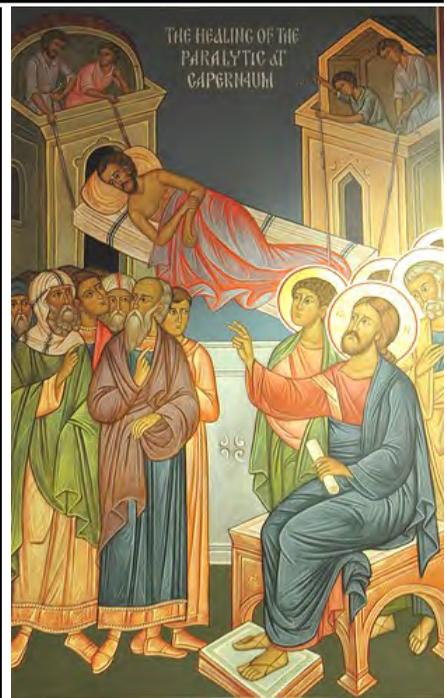
Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this third weekend after Pascha, which is called the weekend of the Paralytic Man, we hear readings again from the *Acts* and *John's Gospel*. Interestingly enough, the story in *Acts* relates Peter curing a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years and also raising a young girl, Tabitha, from the dead. We, of course, immediately realize that Jesus gave to His apostle the ability to perform the same kind of wondrous works as He did. This again, in some way, highlights the fact that what Jesus did during His ministry He did as a human being and not as God and again telling us that we too can live as Jesus did if we make every attempt to imitate Him.

The story in John's Gospel of Jesus curing a paralytic man takes place by the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem which is called Bethesda. The man there had been sick for thirty-eight years. He was unable to get into the curing pool because he had no one to help him.

As I have shared with you before, the early Christians, because they were mainly Jews, were very much into understanding the meaning of various numbers. Kabbalah, which is the Jewish version of numerology, was very important for numbers could be used to convey various different meanings. For example the number 38 conveys the meaning of *The work of God* while spiritual meaning of eight symbolizes that which is beyond nature and its (inherently limited) perfection.

Now in these two stories neither Jesus nor Peter ask the person cured if they believed in God. Peter simply tells the paralytic to stand up and walk and Jesus, after the tells Him that he has never had anyone to help him into the pool, simply tells him to pick up his mat and walk.



In both cases it has to do with the desire of the person performing the miracle to help someone else.

As I reflected upon these stories this weekend it dawned on me how essential it is for me to *desire* to help others. When I desire to be of help to others, I grow in my likeness of Jesus - I become a greater imitator of Him. In the process of this the person I desire to help benefits and, at the same time I benefit since I grow in my likeness of Jesus which is the goal of this human life.

What do you think?

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church



Great feasts in our Church are usually celebrated for several days after the feast itself. This continuation of the celebration is called the post-feast. The feast of the Pasch, the most prominent and solemn of all the feasts, has the longest post-festive period; it lasts until the feast of the Ascension of our Lord. During this period the services begin and end with the hymn of the Resurrection: *Christ is risen from the dead*. The weekends of the Pentecost season are named according to the Gospel event that is remembered. The Gospel events and the services of those weekends have for their purpose the glorification of the risen Christ and the strengthening of our faith in His divinity. During this time we celebrate three feasts that deserve our attention: (1) the Anti-Pasch or weekend of St. Thomas, (2) the Mid-feast - the half-way mark, and (3) the Ascension of Our Lord.

The first weekend after Easter tells us

of the conversion of Thomas, the Doubter, to Thomas the Believer and calls us to believe.

On Wednesday after the weekend of the Paralytic (*i.e., this year April 25th*), which falls exactly in the middle of the Pentecost season, our Church celebrates the feast of Mid-Pentecost, which is a celebration of two great feasts: Easter and Pentecost. This feast unites and joins these two feasts.

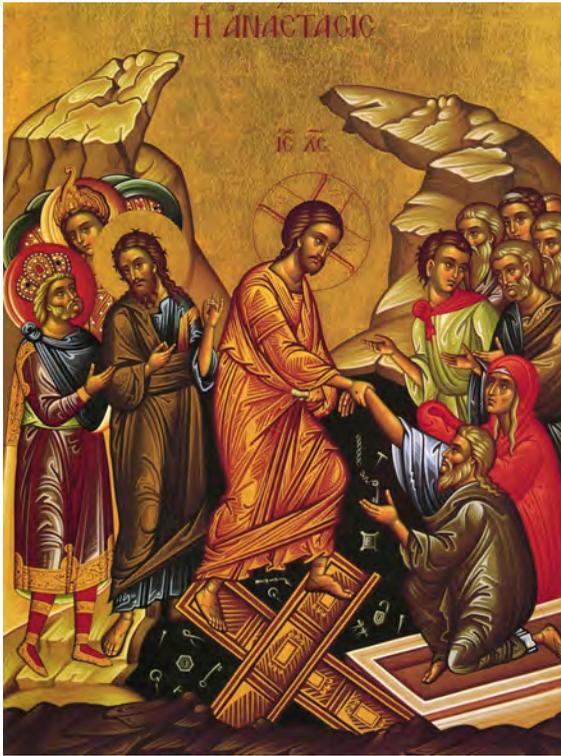
This feast was already observed at the time of St. John Chrysostom (+407). The liturgy of the feast was composed by Anatolius, Patriarch of Constantinople, Andrew of Crete, John Damascene and Theophane the Confessor. This feast aims to strengthen our faith in the risen Christ, to inspire us to observe His teachings and to predispose us for the feast of the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

The final feast, the Ascension, always falls on a Thursday, on the fortieth day after Pascha. This is one of the principal feasts of Our Lord and has a post-feast of nine days.

Sources of the first three centuries do not speak of this feast as a separate feast but was celebrated with the Descent of the Holy Spirit. In the fourth century this feast became universal and observed everywhere.

Getting to know Our Church!

Understand More About the Resurrection



According to SS Maximus the Confessor and John Damascene, ALL are called to salvation but not everyone responds. The only hindrance to salvation is one's free will to resist God's call. Such an understanding radically differs from the doctrine of predestination formed in the Western Augustinian tradition.

The entire church also supports the belief that Christ liberated the Old Testament righteous from the bonds of hell. This doctrine is based on the works of the fathers, liturgical texts, and certain ancient apocrypha that became accepted by the Church.

However, the opinion that *only* the righteous of the Old Testament were saved and that everyone else remained in hell for eternal torment should be considered a personal opinion. In any case, it is no more authoritative than the Eastern Christian belief that Christ led out the Old Testament righteous.

The teaching that Christ trampled on death by his death, abolished the power of the devil, and destroyed hell - a teaching based on the New Testament, liturgical texts and works of the church fathers - is general church doctrine. The devil, death and hell continue to exist, but their power over people is neither unconditional nor unlimited, for hell "reigns," but "not for ever," over the race of mortals. The opinion that Christ only "wounded" hell but did not mortify it should be considered a personal interpretation without authority for the entire church. Of course some Western and Eastern Christians may dispute this position., Some may say that a "hierarchy of authorities" should not be constructed, since all of the above mentioned sources are of equal authority for the Christian. These statements are meant to not marginalize certain dogmatic writings but to point to the significance of liturgical sources. Think about what we prayed on Easter. Our prayers represent

(Continued on page 9)



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

CONGRATULATIONS

I would, on behalf of the Parish Family, extend our Congratulations and Best Wishes to

GEORGE DURISIN

on the occasion of his 90th birthday. May God grant him health and happiness for many more years.

MNOHAYA LITA

EASTER FLOWERS

Easter flowers are available in the South stairwell. Please take them and plant them.

ADULT EDUCATION

Planning to continue with Adult Education after Pentecost. Again will provide articles which you can read and then, if you wish, join with others in discussing the content of them.

OUR DEADON CANDIDATE

Len Mier will be preaching on May 6th at the end of the Liturgy. Please come and support him.

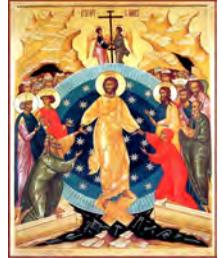
You're only here for a short visit.

Don't hurry, don't worry.

*And be sure to smell
the flowers along the way*

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As you can tell, if you have been following this article, *holiness* cannot be easily defined. As you may have guessed, it is my belief that holiness is developing a true and real understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. When a person does that, God becomes the center of a person's life since God is the Giver and Sustainer of life.

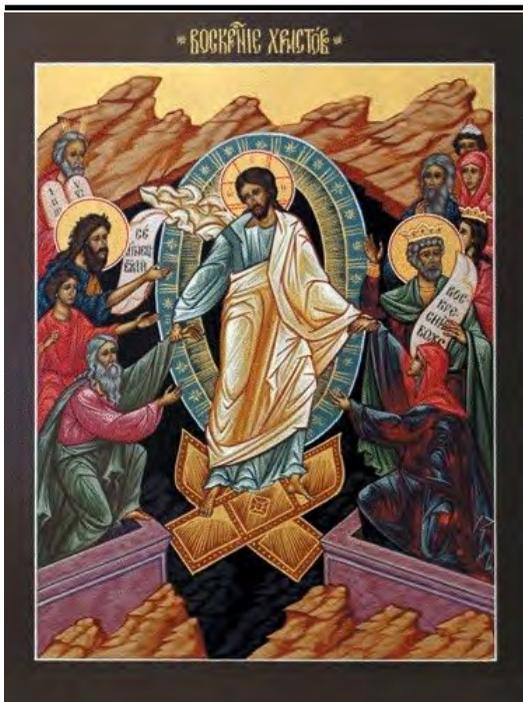


What happens when you make God the center of your life? You first try to discover what the purpose of life is. In simple terms, the purpose of life is to grow into the person that God intended when He created you. The person He intended is a true human being in the likeness of Jesus, the Christ, who is God's revelation to us as to what He, God, intended to be a true person.

This understanding, of course, has consequences. It means that I have to first discover how Jesus lived and then voluntarily attempt to become like Him. This task is not as complicated as one thinks. This gives us the purpose of life. The meaning of life is that God created us, out of love, to become His true children and life is the *school* given to us

(Continued on page 8)

The World as Gift and Word



I ended this article in the last issue by writing: *persons give themselves as gift, and through this giving they grow spiritually.*

The things given us by God can become our own gift to God by the fact that in the return of these things to God we are free. We transform things into gifts of our own through the act of our freedom and through the love we thus show to God. Having this aim in view, we can be endlessly transforming and combining the things of creation. God gave the human person the world as a gift characterized not just by a continuous fertility, but also by the great wealth of alternatives

that man has the capacity to make actual through freedom and work. As talents given by God but multiplied by the human person, this process of actualization is the gift the human person returns to God.

The greatest gift someone can make to God is the gift of his very own life. Surely this manner of returning the gift means no disdain for the gift that was given. Where there is disdain, the gift of the human person returned to God would no longer be a gift at all. The returning of a gift in our sense implies appreciation for it by the very one who received it. Given that the essential desire of nature is for its own preservation, in the offering of our life to God, our will is making a supreme sacrifice. In fact, because he gives, the human person is accomplishing something by which he thinks he is enhancing his own being. The dialogue of the gift between God and the human person lies in the fact that each bestows himself upon the other. Even though he has life from God, the human person can make his life a gift to God inasmuch as, through his freedom - for he could hold onto his life until God takes it from him - the human person returns it to God in a more exalted service.

As I have often expressed, our worship of God (*i.e., the Divine Liturgy*) is a joining of ourselves to Christ and offering our lives back to God in thanksgiving for the gift of life. This is precisely what Jesus did and in the Divine Liturgy we join with Him in *freely* offering our lives back to God.

Think about this!

Mysticism - A Characteristic of Our Church

As I offered in the last issue of this article, in the early Church the true test of faith was martyrdom. But martyrdom was not for everyone: the earliest of the Acts of the Martyrs - Polycarp's - contains a cautionary tale against voluntary martyrdom: one Quintus had given himself up voluntarily, but his courage failed him when he saw the wild beasts, and he recanted. Nonetheless, martyrdom was the ultimate test of faith and it was for steadfastness in the face of persecution that the Christian prepared himself. Very soon this is given systematic expression: for Clement and Origen, the great Alexandrian theologians, even if martyrdom in the literal sense is not the destiny of all, everyone may aspire to *spiritual* martyrdom. Clement devotes a whole book to martyrdom, distinguishing between *simple* martyrdom and what he calls *Gnostic* martyrdom. Simple martyrdom certainly achieves fulfillment or perfection but achieves this not simply by death but because it displays the *perfect work of love* and that *perfect work of love* can be displayed by those who are not called to literal martyrdom. It is, in fact, displayed by those Clement calls *Gnostics*, men and women who are devoted themselves wholly to God, and who, like the martyrs, are close to God and able to bring blessings on others by the power of their intercession.

Clement's account of the Gnostic's perfection introduces two other themes into the *mysticism* of the early Church. First of all, we find in him the use of those words that historically lie behind the word *mysticism*: words like *mystikos* and *mysterion*. *Mysterion* refers to the *mystery of Christ*, the secret that is revealed in Christ, which yet, because of God's secret, remains a secret, though revealed. This mystery is revealed in the life lived close to Christ, in the Eucharist (*though Clement himself*



does not emphasize this) and in the Scriptures: the word *mystikos* (*hidden*) can be applied in all these contexts. The unutterable mysteries hidden in the depths of the mind of the Gnostics are nourished by their ever deeper understanding of the Scriptures.

When we accept the revelation made by God through Jesus, we come to understand the *secret* that cannot be proven but can only be believed. This is *spiritual martyrdom*. It means giving myself totally to the revelation made by God to mankind.

What does this mean to you?

St. Michael the Archangel
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6340 Chase Road
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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

WEEK OF THE PARALYTIC MAN

Sunday, April 22 - Weekend of the Paralytic Man
10:00 AM - George Durisin; Family (90th Birthday)

Monday, April 23 - George, Great Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, April 24 - Sabbas, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, April 25 - Mark, Apostle & Evangelist - Mid-Pentecost
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, April 26 - Basil, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Friday, April 27 - Simeon, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, April 28 - Jason & Sosipater, Apostles
No Service Scheduled

WEEK OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Sunday, April 29 - Weekend of the Samaritan Woman
10:00 AM + Mary Mihalko; Kotlinski Family

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)
to learn how to do this. Life, I believe,
presents us with the unique challenges
and talents to learn how to be like
Jesus.

As some of you have heard me
repeatedly say, the goal of life is not
happiness but rather to gain a true
understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. If you
understand why God created you and why this earthly
existence was given to you, you will find true happiness.

There is another aspect of holiness which I think I will
begin to address and that is **LIVING IN THE PRESENT
MOMENT.** **More to come!**



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

Understanding More About the Resurrection

(Continued from page 4 - Resurrection)

the doctrine of the Church. Quite frequently “professional” theologians underestimate the role of liturgical tradition. Some forget that the church’s law of *believing* (*lex credendi*) is based on its law of *praying* (*lex orandi*) simply summarized by the phrase *the law of praying is the law of believing*. The prayers of our Church are one of the foundations upon which our beliefs are based.

Given that this is true, think about what we believe when we pray: *Christ is risen from the dead, conquering Death by death and to those in the graves bestowing life!* And if you attended Resurrection Matins on Easter or any of the services during the Great and Holy Week, you got a real idea of what our Church truly believes. Our services are an organic and adequate expression of the church’s dogmatic teaching and the prayers of our Church came, in most instances, before the Church formulated and found ways to express our dogmas.

The fact that liturgical texts are in second place after the New Testament while other sources are placed below them is conditioned by the desire to restore justice. Historically, even the New Testament Scriptures are secondary relative to the liturgical tradition, since the Christian community grew out from the Eucharist and from the liturgy in a wider sense. Christians celebrated



liturgical services long before the appearance of the New Testament writings and their compilation into one generally accepted canon.

The theological significance of the doctrine of the “descent of Christ into Hades” has great significance for theodicy (*the vindication of divine goodness and providence in view of the existence of evil*) - the justification of God in the face of the accusing human mind. Why does God permit suffering and evil? Why does he condemn people to the pains of hell? To what extent is God responsible for what happens on earth? In the Bible, why does God appear as a cruel and unmerciful judge, “repenting” of his actions and punishing people for mistakes that he knew of beforehand and that he could have prevented? These are other similar questions have been posed throughout history. These are some of the questions I’ll attempt to address in coming issues.

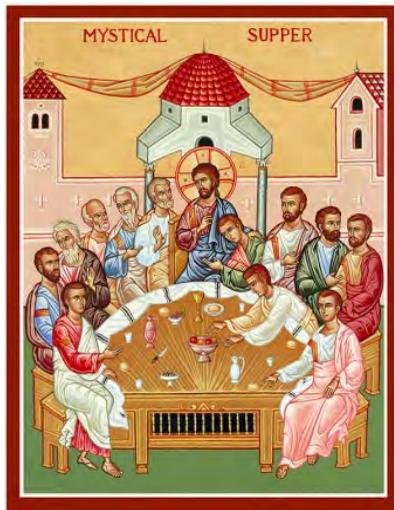
Some Thoughts About the Eucharist

Because the Eucharist is a mystery in the truest sense of the word, the Church has continuously struggled to find a way to understand it. This is perhaps why the Western Church, calling upon Aristotelian philosophy, has attempted to define it. They call it the Blessed Sacrament and say that the substance and accidents of the bread and wine are changed. They call this process “transubstantiation”. The Eucharist becomes more objectified and, although there is no way to understand what this really means, at least they have a definition.

The Eastern Church approaches it a little differently by saying that the “essence” of the bread and wine are changed into Christ. Our Church uses the Greek idea expressed by the term **metousiosis** (μετουσίωσις) that means a change of **ousia** (οὐσία,) “essence, inner reality”. When we use the word *metousiosis*, we by no means think it explains the mode by which the bread and wine are converted into the Body and Blood of Christ, for this is altogether incomprehensible. We mean that the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord, not figuratively or symbolically, nor by any extraordinary

grace attached to the but the bread becomes verily and indeed and essentially the very true Body of the Lord, and the wine the very Blood of the Lord.

As a result of the iconoclastic controversy, Byzantine “Eucharistic realism,” clearly departing from Dionysian terminology, was redirected along Christological and soteriological (*i.e., doctrine of salvation*) lines. In the Eucharist, man participates in the glorified humanity of Christ, which is not the “essence of God,” but a humanity still consubstantial to man and available to him as food and drink. This is something that we don’t often think about. Jesus, the Christ, was consubstantial with man and with God. To be consubstantial with man means that He shares our human



nature in its fullness while also sharing fully in the Divine Nature. Again this is a mystery, a mystery which is within the power of God to create.

This idea of humans participating in the “essence of the glorified Christ” instead of the “essence of God” is a very important point which I shall attempt to further explain in the next issue. It makes clearer, I believe, our understanding of the Eucharist.



THE EASTERN HERALD

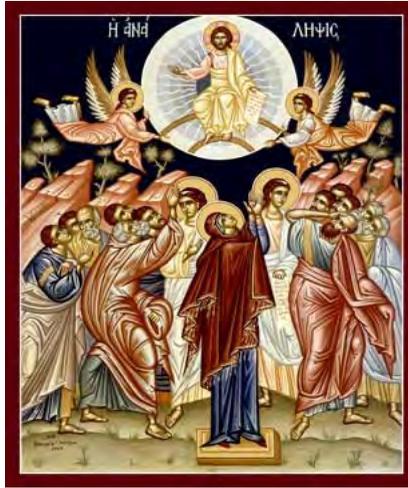
СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 16 Weekend of the Paralytic Man April 21-22, 2018

The Spirituality of the Christian East

As I think about the spirituality of the Christian East I realize that it draws from the central aspect of our liturgical life, namely the Eucharist. The Eucharist, as I have shared before, is the action which brings us into *communion with* not only God but others. This is a great influence on our spirituality. We see that the only way that we can come into true union with God, through the Person of Christ in the Holy Spirit, is by working to be in *communion with* others. Our relationship with others is the way given to us to make our relationship with God real.

Therefore an important part of our spirituality is to be of *service to others* or to have a *deep desire to help others*, realizing that they are a part of the process of us growing in our *communion with God*. That is why when you closely analyze the teachings of Jesus you realize that He



Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

stressed living in a manner that gives true evidence to the fact that you *love your neighbor as yourself*. All of His teachings are focused on how we treat others.

I would have you remember the four important things that Jesus taught:

We are called to

- *love our neighbors and enemies as ourselves*
- *do unto others as we*

would have them do

unto us

- *not to judge others*
- *to unconditionally forgive all others regardless of what they do unto us*

When you think about these four very important admonitions from Jesus, you realize that He is telling us to live like Him and, regardless of how others treat us, to live according to these important principles.

Our spirituality is not about keeping laws! Its about living like Jesus Christ!

The Cure of Baptism Foreshadowed

What manner of cure is this? What mystery does it signify to us? For these things are not written carelessly, or without a purpose, but as a figure and type they show in outline things to come, in order that what was exceedingly strange might not, by coming unexpectedly, do harm among the many the power of faith. What then is it that they show in outline? A Baptism was about to be given, possessing much power, and the greatest of gifts, a Baptism purging all sins and making men alive instead of dead. These things then are foreshown as in a picture by the pool, and by many other circumstances. And first is given a water which purges the stains of our bodies, and those defilements which are not, but seem to be, as those from touching the dead, those from leprosy, and other similar causes; under the old covenant one may see many things done by water

on this account. However, let us now proceed to the matter in hand.

First then, as I before said, He causes defilements of our bodies, and afterwards infirmities of different kinds, to be done away by water. Because God, desiring to bring us nearer to faith in Baptism, no longer heals defilements only, but diseases also. For those figures which came nearer [in time] to the reality, both as regarded Baptism, and the Passion, and the rest, were plainer than the more ancient. ... And this miracle was done in order that men, learning that it is possible by water to heal the diseases of the body, and being exercised in this for a long time, might more easily believe that it can also heal the diseases of the soul.

St. John Chrysostom