

SUNDAY OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN



*Icon of Christ with the Samaritan Woman*

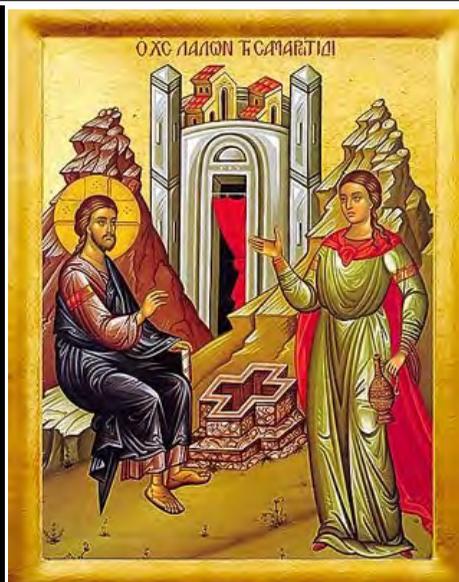
## Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this fourth weekend after Easter, our readings are again taken from the *Acts of the Apostles* and *John's Gospel*. Our Epistle continues to share the history of the early Church, indicating its initial growth. It also shares with us that it was *in Antioch that the disciples were called Christians for the first time*. It also tells us that Barnabas came from the Church in Jerusalem and, rejoicing at the evidence of God's favor, *he encouraged them all to remain firm in their commitment to the Lord*.

Our Gospel story, which recalls an event that took place at the beginning of Jesus' ministry when He passed through Samaria. He met a woman at Jacob's well when His disciples had gone off to buy provisions. John uses this story to further develop the theme of the water of Judaism replaced by the life-giving water of Christ. The rabbinical comparison of the Torah with water (*i.e., as cleansing, as satisfying thirst and as promoting life*) affords the background of John's teaching. Once again Christ is the fulfillment of what the Law could only promise.

That this event took place in Samaria helps bring out by contrast the favorable reception that Jesus receives from the Samaritans. Now it should be noted that it was unheard of for a rabbi to speak familiarly with a woman in public but also for a Jew to request water of a Samaritan. Jesus was untroubled by such scruples and the story records His enlightened attitude toward women and non-Jews.

Perhaps the common thread between these two readings rests with how Christians are identified. Namely, that like Jesus, true Christians put no barriers themselves and all



others. The fundamental rule of Christianity is to *do unto others as you would have them do unto you*. The rule that true Christians live by is their faith - their belief that if they are to come to have a real relationship with God, they must have relationships with their fellowmen. True Christians must live by their beliefs and not how others may treat them. Each person that crosses our path in life is an opportunity to make sure that we live like Jesus lived. It means, of course, being strong in our faith and deciding what we believe and then actually put our beliefs into practice. It means deciding who we are and how we want to live.

# Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

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Although I believe that many may already know much of the history of our Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, I thought I would initiate a series of articles on our history.

Our Church is the largest of the Eastern Catholic Churches, that is Eastern Churches that are in full communion with Rome since the Union of Brest-Litovsk (1596).

Byzantine-style Christianity was established among the Ukrainians in 988 by St. Vladimir. Our Church was in union with Constantinople in the Great Schism of 1054 since it received Christianity from missionaries sent from Constantinople. Temporary reunion with Rome was effected in the mid-15th century, and a definitive union was achieved at Brest-Litovsk in 1596, when Metropolitan Michael Ragoza of Kiev and the bishops of Vladimir, Lutsk, Polotsk, Pinsk, and Kholm agreed to join the Roman communion, on condition that their traditional rites be preserved intact. The Orthodox did not accept the union peaceably; and the bishops of Lviv and Przemysl, as well as the Orthodox Zaporozhian Cossacks, opposed the Catholics. In 1633 the metropolitanate of Kiev returned to Orthodoxy, while Lvov joined the union in 1677, followed by Przemysl in 1692.

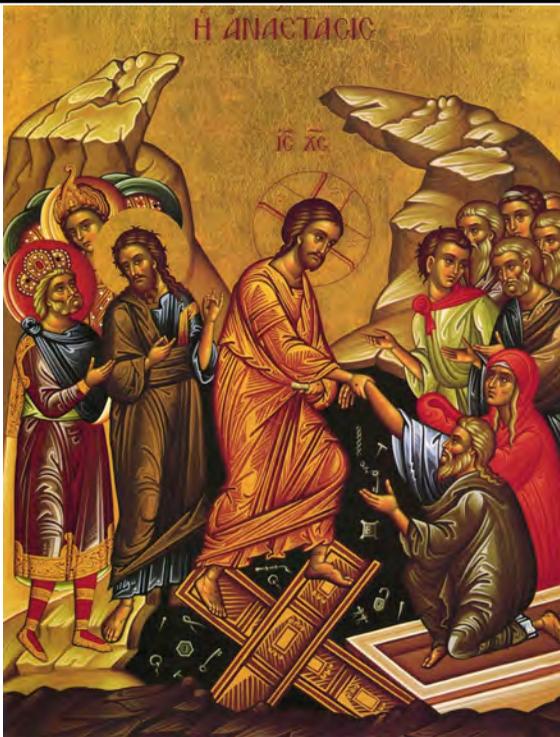
The partition of Poland at the end of the 18th century brought all Ukrainians, except those Ukrainians in



control. By 1839 the tsarist government had forcibly returned the Ukrainian Catholics to Orthodoxy. Galicia meanwhile came under the domination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in 1807 it was organized into the metropolitanate of Lviv. With the occupation of Galicia by Soviet armies in 1939 all church activity was suppressed, and the hierarchy was interned. In 1944 the Soviet authorities began to put pressure on the Ukrainian bishops to dissolve the Union of Brest-Litovsk. On their refusal, they were arrested and imprisoned or deported. A spurious synod in 1946 broke the union with Rome and “united” the Ukrainian Catholics with the Russian Orthodox. Not until December 1989, during the general liberalization of Soviet life, was the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church again made legal. A great number of Ukrainian Greek Catholics emigrated to the Americas and western Europe between 1880 and 1914 and again after World War II.

I shall, after this, share more of the Prehistory of our Church.

## Understand More About the Resurrection



I have been attempting to present ideas about the Descent of Christ into Hades which is the central theme of our Church's celebration of the Lord's Resurrection from the Dead. It conveys the impact of Our Lord's resurrection from the dead.

In creating human beings and placing them in a situation where they choose between good and evil, God assumed responsibility for their further destiny. God did not leave humans alone to face such decisions in life but entered into the struggle for humanity's spiritual growth. To this end he sent prophets and teachers; and then he became a man, suffered

on the cross, died, descended into Hades and was raised from the dead in order to share human fate. By descending into Hades, Christ destroyed death which, before Christ's descent into Hades, governed held human life captive. In Old Testament understanding, this place was Sheol. After Christ's descent, Sheol became a place of divine presence.

This presence is felt by all in paradise as a source of joy and bliss. Christ abolished the sting of death, and the walls of Hades were destroyed. But "death even without its sting is still powerful for us.

The doctrine of the descent is important for an understanding of God's action in human history, as reflected in the Old Testament. The biblical account of the flood, which destroyed all humanity, is a stumbling block for many who wish to believe in a merciful God but cannot reconcile themselves with a God who "repents" of his own deed. The teaching on the descent into Hades, as set forth in I Peter 3:18-21, however, brings an entirely new perspective into our understanding of the mystery of salvation. The death sentence passed by God does not mean that human beings are deprived of hope for salvation because, failing to turn to God during their lifetimes, people could turn to him in the afterlife, having heard

*(Continued on page 9)*



# St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

## 2018 GRAVE BLESSINGS

*Advance Notice*

### St. Hedwig's Cemetery

*May 20th - 2:00 PM*

### Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

*May 27th - 1:00 PM*



At both cemeteries we will first meet at the mausoleum where we will hold a general Panahyda and, weather permitting, then visit individual graves. I have to delay the blessing on May 20th, Pentecost, because I will be substituting for Father Petriw at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church that day. Father will be in Ukraine.

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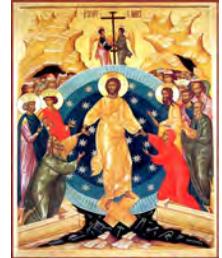
## CONTINUING EDUCATION

I'm planning to continue our ongoing Adult Education Program. The effort means presenting an article every few weeks and then inviting anyone who wants to discuss the article to join with an after-coffee discussion. As you know, It is my goal to be able to say before I retire that I have the best educated parish in the entire Eparchy. If there are any topics that you would like me to cover, please let me know.

***We all have two lives. The second one starts when we realize we only have one***

## CALLED TO HOLINESS

As I have been thinking about holiness, I have decided that perhaps true holiness is learning to live in the *present moment*. It is only in the present moment that I can encounter God and sense my union with Him. Neither the *past* nor the *future* are real. The past was, at one time, a present moment but it no longer exists.

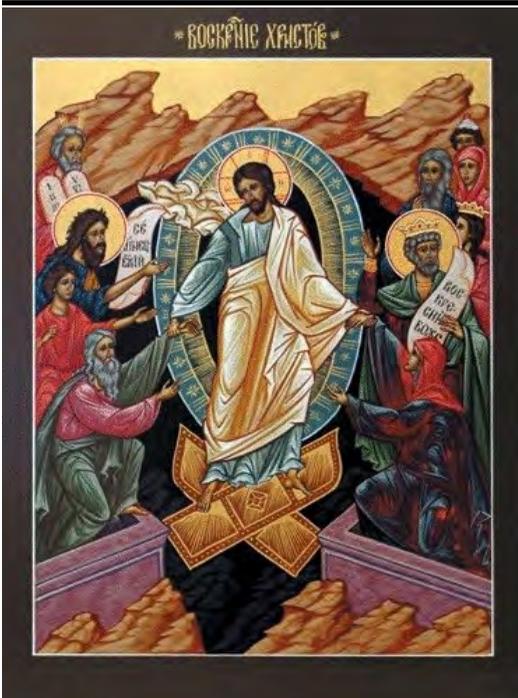


I have come across too many people who live in the *past* and/or the *future* and fail to comprehend the fact that the present moment is the only real thing. The past cannot be changed and therefore to regret what happened in the past is worthless since it cannot be changed. The future is not real. It may never come into existence and therefore it is not real. Only the present moment is real.

It is only in the present moment that I can experience the presence of God; embrace the beauty of life; know myself as the temple of God; know and experience love; and be filled with the wonder of life. It is only in the present moment that I can come to know who I am and offer thanksgiving to God for who I am.

*(Continued on page 8)*

## The World as Gift and Word



I ended the last issue of this article by sharing that even though a person he has life from God, he 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. Certainly this does not mean a refusal of the life received from God. Indeed, the one who offers his life to God does not hold onto it in a selfish way but gives it to God when this is necessary, or, more frequently places his life in the service of God. On the one hand, through each thing offered to God, the human person gives witness that it is the

gift of God and that he holds it not from himself but from God; on the other hand, he witnesses to the fact that he does not wish to profit selfishly from the gift of God by keeping it for himself, but that he, too, is showing his love for God by offering him at least what is in his power to give, namely, a part of what he has received from God himself.

Perhaps one of the greatest or all challenges that we humans face is the understanding that all we have is a gift from God. Too often we think that all things that we work so hard for belong to us and are the result of our labor. To come to the point where we recognize that all we have is a gift from God is truly spiritual growth.

It must also be observed that no one returns to God things he has received from him without his own work having been added to them. The grapes, the bread, the wine, the oil offered to God are more than just God's gift; human work has also left its stamp upon them. Obviously work is also something the human person does through the powers given him by God. Nevertheless, the human person can choose not to use these powers for this kind of work, a work through which he returns what he has received but stamped now with his own human impress and thus with their value enhanced. In this way he multiplies the talents he has received in accordance with the word of the Savior.

***This is a lot to think about.  
What do you have that is your own?***

## Mysticism - A Characteristic of Our Church

Clement introduces into mystical theology the idea of the influence of classical philosophy, especially Plato. Clement's understanding of the ideal of the Gnostic owes a great deal to the philosophical ideal of the sage, especially in the way he characterizes this ideal as one of *dispassion* or *apatheia* which is a detachment and serenity that frees the Gnostic from the disturbance of world matters and makes possible objectively loving activity in the world. But his understanding of the progress of the Christian towards knowledge (*gnosis*) owes much to Plato. It demands purification (*katharsis*) and this purification is most fundamentally a purification of love (*eros*). Plato's statement that 'flight from the world is a likening to seeking God as far as possible' is one of Clement's favorite quotations: Clement identifies Plato's admonition with Moses' command to follow after God.

Interestingly, some of these same concepts also appear in psychoanalytic theory. To achieve true mental/interior health, one has to go through *catharsis*, purging oneself of old ideas and experiences that keep a person from truly coming to a healthy understanding of himself. This means, of course, to come to an understanding of the unconscious thoughts, values and attitudes one has and then ridding oneself of those that keep you from being shackled to disruptive ideas. It is all about freeing oneself to come to a healthy understanding of life.

The same is true with spiritual growth. A person must rid himself of those ideas about God, creation and self that present obstacles to growing in union with God. This, as one might expect, takes work, reflection and a true assessment of self.

In this interpretation of the Old Testament in terms of Greek philosophy, Clement is evidently



indebted to the Jewish Alexandrian philosopher, Philo, whose influence on this aspect of the Christian mystical tradition continued to be important into the fourth century with SS Gregory of Nyssa and Ambrose. (*It must be noted that Philo's interpretation of 'following God' is not identical with Clement's*).

Clement's fondness for Plato's *homoiosis theoi* as a term for the goal of the Christian life is also related to his desire to see life as the perfecting of the image of God in which we are created.

*I know that this is heavy!*

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

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
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

## **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

### **WEEK OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN**

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

**Monday, April 30 - James the Greater, Apostle**  
**8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Tuesday, May 1 - Jeremiah, Prophet  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Wednesday, May 2 - Athanasius the Great, Patriarch**  
**8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Thursday, May 3 - Passing of Theodosius of the Cave  
*No Service Scheduled*

**Friday, May 4 - Pelagia, Martyr**  
**8:00 AM - Special Intention**

Saturday, May 5 - Irene, Great-Martyr  
*No Service Scheduled*

### **WEEK OF THE FATHERS OF THE 1st CONCIL**

**Sunday, May 13 - Weekend of the Fathers of the 1st Council**  
**—Mother's Day—**  
**10:00 AM - Living & Deceased Mothers of the Parish Family**

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

Although it is true that I can learn from the past by reflecting on those things that I have experienced, it is critical that I don't dwell in the past but rather use the insights I have gained from reflecting on my past memories to be more fully present to the present moment.

One of the things we don't often think about is that for God all things are the present moment. Time does not exist for God. All things are eternally present to Him. So, it is in the present moment that we have the opportunity to truly experience and come into contact with God.

***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)

Christ's preaching in Hades. While committing those he created to death, God did not destroy them but merely transferred them to a different state in which they could hear the preaching of Christ, believe him and follow him.

Christ's descent into Hades is significant not only for human destiny but also for the destiny of all creation. God's light entered the realm that it had never before penetrated and enlightened not only heaven and earth but also the netherworld. It is noted in the paschal canon of St. John Damascene that the entire created world underwent corruption and death originally and therefore all creation needs the redemptive sacrifice of Christ, the vanquisher of death.

The doctrine of Christ's descent into Hades is an integral part of Eastern Christianity's doctrine on salvation. The implication, however, depend on the way in which the preaching of Christ in Hades and its salutary impart on people is understood. Were the preaching addressed only to the Old Testament righteous, the soteriological (salvation) implications of the doctrine would be minimal, but were it address to all in Hades, its significance would be considerably increased. There seem to be enough grounds to argue that "according to the teaching of *almost* all the Eastern Fathers, the preaching of the Savior was extended to all



without exception and salvation was offered to all the souls who passed away from the beginning of time, whether Jews or Greeks, righteous or unrighteous. At the same time, the preaching of Christ in Hades was of good and joyful news of deliverance and salvation, not only for the righteous but also for the unrighteous. It was not preaching "to condemn for unbelief and wickedness," as it seem to Thomas Aquinas. The entire text of the First Letter of St. Peter relating to the preaching of Christ in Hades speaks against its understanding in terms of accusation and damnation.

Unlike the West, Christian consciousness in the East admits the opportunity for salvation not only for those who believe during their lifetime but also for those who were not given to believe but pleased God with their good works. This is, as you can tell, a complicated issue. Again our liturgical texts share our perspective.

## Some Thoughts About the Eucharist

Patriarch Nicephorus, as also for later Byzantine theologians, the Eucharist is Christ's transfigured, life-giving, but still human, body, en-hypostasized in the Logos and penetrated with divine "energies." Characteristically, one never finds the category of "essence" used by Byzantine theologians in an Eucharistic context. They would consider a term the Western Church uses, "transubstantiation", as improper to designate the Eucharistic mystery, and general use the concept of *metabole*, found in the canon of John Chrysostom, or such dynamic terms as *trans-elementation* or *re-ordination*. The usual term transubstantiation appears only in the later writings of the *Latinophrones* of the 13th century, and is nothing but a straight translation from the Latin. The first Orthodox author to use it is Gennadios Scholarios; but, in his case as well, direct Latin influence is obvious. The Eucharist is neither a symbol to be *contemplated* from outside nor an *essence* distinct from humanity, but Jesus Himself, the risen Lord, made known through the breaking of bread. Byzantine theologians rarely speculated beyond this realistic and soteriological affirmation of the Eucharistic presence as that of the glorified humanity of Christ.

The rejection of the concept of the Eucharist as *image* or *symbol* is, on the other hand, very significant for the understanding of the entire Eucharistic



*perception* of the Byzantines. The Eucharist for them always remained fundamentally a mystery to be received as food and drink, and not to be *seen* through physical eyes. The elements remain covered, except during the prayers of consecration and during communion; and, in contrast with Western medieval piety, were never *venerated* outside the framework of the Eucharistic liturgy itself. The Eucharist cannot reveal anything to the sense of vision; it is only the bread of heaven. Vision is offered another channel of revelation - the icons: hence, the revelatory program of the Byzantine iconostasis, with the figures of Christ and the saints exposed precisely in order to be *seen* and *venerated*. "Christ is not shown in the Holy Gifts. He is given. He is shown in the icons. The visible side of the reality of the Eucharist is an image which can never be replaced either by imagination or by looking at the Holy Gifts that have been saved. Ours is a different approach to the Eucharist!



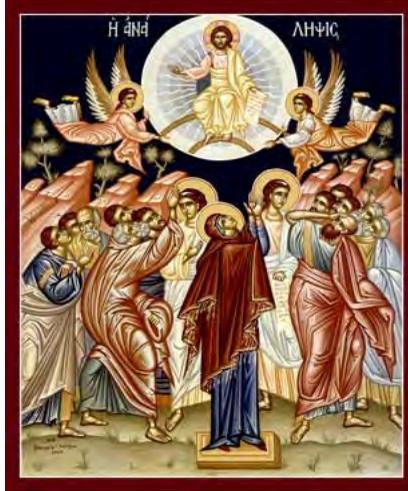
# THE EASTERN HERALD

## СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.  
Vol. 64 No 17      Weekend of the Samaritan Woman      April 28-29, 2018

### The Spirituality of the Christian East

I frequently get the idea when I peruse some of the modern books on spirituality, that there are different kinds of spirituality for different people. This is not the case in the Eastern Church, especially those churches that use the Byzantine ritual. There is one spirituality that is common to all - there is one spirituality to which we are all called. The life in Christ is meant for everyone, priest or monastic, married or single. A monastic may live some aspects of this life with a greater intensity than a married priest, but it's the same life in Christ. Even then, monastics haven't cornered the market. One of the most popular tales about St. Anthony the Great in the sayings of the Desert Fathers is the following: "It was revealed to Abba Anthony in his desert that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the



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

poor, and every day he sang the Sanctus (Holy, Holy).

St. Anthony and his unnamed brother in Christ were living the same life: the laity are meant to harmonize with the angels, and monks are meant to give as well as receive. St. Nikon of the Black Mountain, an 11th century monk at Antioch, counseled monks that they, too, were expected to help the disabled and the dispossessed. He wrote that monks have the obligation to give alms from the work of their hands or from what they receive from others. They must help others when others help them. And when they give alms, they should not make a precise investigation to spot the faithful from the unfaithful, but exercise mercy to all in an equal manner. This single vision of the spiritual life stems from the great evangelical perspective that lies at the heart of the Byzantine tradition.

## *The Samaritan Woman*

The Fourth Gospel, attributed to Saint John the Evangelist, is used exclusively from Easter until Pentecost for the Sunday readings. The first chapter of John's Gospel is the proclamation used for the Divine Liturgy on Easter itself. This week, we are reminded of the story of Christ's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, and thereby Christ's fulfillment of the Old Testament. In one of the many unique stories of the Fourth Gospel not found in the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark or Luke), Jesus reveals himself as Messiah to this woman of Samaria and talks with her about the "water that I will give will become ... a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."

In the early days of His ministry, Jesus travels back and forth between Galilee and Jerusalem, and must pass through Samaria. The Samaritans

were outcast Jews because they were not subject to the Babylonian exile of the Israelites from other provinces. Therefore, when Jesus talks with this Samaritan woman, His disciples are surprised and in shock that He would carry on a conversation with a woman at the well, let alone a Samaritan. But as the story is explained, the woman's testimony about Jesus spreads through the nearby town, and because of her many come to hear His teachings. After hearing His word, they come to believe in Him, and proclaim Him "the Savior of the world." (Jn 4:42)

With water as the focal point of this encounter, we are once again reminded of our Baptism, and that Christ's Baptism is that of "eternal life" through "living water."

*Archbishop Vsevolod of Scopelos*