

SUNDAY OF PENTECOST



Icon of Pentecost

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this weekend that we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, that event which celebrates Christ sending down the Holy Spirit upon His apostles. Our readings are taken from the Acts of the Apostles and also John's Gospel.

Acts, as some may already know, is attributed to Luke and is a history of the early Church. His Pentecostal narrative consists of an introduction, a speech ascribed to Peter declaring the resurrection of Jesus and its messianic significance, and a favorable response from the audience. It is likely that the narrative telescopes events that took place over a period of time and on a less dramatic scale. The Twelve were not originally in a position to proclaim publicly the messianic office of Jesus without incurring immediate reprisal from those religious authorities in Jerusalem who had encompassed Jesus' death precisely to stem the rising tide in his favor. Once the new covenant had acquired many adherents, public teaching could more easily be undertaken. In any case, these reflections point up Luke's emphasis on the Holy Spirit. He is at pains to show that Christianity cannot be accounted a mere religious sect within Judaism that developed its own branch of messianism. On the contrary, it declared itself from the beginning as originating in the inspiration and under the impulsion of God.

Our reading from John's Gospel relates something that Jesus said to a



crowd of listeners. He is quoted as saying: *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me; let him drink who believes in me.... No followers of mine shall ever walk in darkness; no, he shall possess the light of life.* Jesus, as He often did, uses thoughts from the Old Testament to express Himself.

The story of the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles in the upper room as we typically know it, only appears in Acts. Nevertheless, we do know that something happened to Jesus' followers after His Death, Resurrection and Ascension that gave them the courage to preach in public about their belief in Him as the true Messiah. We attribute their courage to the movement of the Holy Spirit. This approach also manifests the Church's belief that our Triune God (i.e., Father, Son and Holy Spirit) was involved in revealing the truth about human life to us. Our Triune God always acts as one. This is one of the reasons why all of our prayers typically end with expressing our belief in Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

In 988 Volodymyr adopted Christianity as the religion of his realm and had the inhabitants of Kiev baptized. Rus embraced Byzantine Christianity and to some degree culture. A

A church hierarchy was established, headed (at least since 1037) by the metropolitan of Kiev, who was usually appointed by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. With the new religion came new forms of architecture, art, and music, a written language Church Slavonic and the beginnings of a literary culture. All of these were vigorously promoted by Yaroslav, who also promulgated a code of laws, the first in Slavdom. Although Byzantium and the steppe remained his main preoccupations in external policy, Yaroslav maintained friendly relations with European rulers, with whom he established marital alliances for his progeny.

Following Yaroslav's death, Kiev entered a long period of decline, only briefly stemmed in the 12th century under Volodymyr II Monomakh. Shifts in trade routes undermined Kiev's economic importance, while warfare with the Polovtsians in the steppe sapped its wealth and energies. Succession struggles and princely rivalries eroded Kiev's political hegemony. The ascendancy of new centers and the clustering of various principalities around them reflected regional cleavages - historical, economic, and tribal ethnic - that had



persisted even in the period of Kiev's predominance. These differences were accentuated by the Mongol-Tatar invasions that began in the 1220s and culminated in the devastating sack of Kiev in 1240.

The territory that largely coincides with modern Belarus, with Polotsk as the most important center, was one such emerging region. The land of Novgorod to its north was another. In the northeast, Vladimir-Suzdal (and later Moscow) formed the core from which developed the future Russian state. On Ukrainian territory, in the southwestern part of Rus, Galicia-Volhynia emerged as the leading principality.

Volodymyr in Volhynia had been an important princely seat in Kievan Rus; and Galicia, with its seat at Halych, on the Dniester River, became a principality in the 12th century. In 1199 the two principalities were united by Prince Roman Mstyslavych to form a powerful and rich state that at times included the domains of Kiev. Galicia-Volhynia reached its highest eminence under Roman's son Danylo Romanovich. New cities were founded, most importantly Lviv. *(To be continued)*

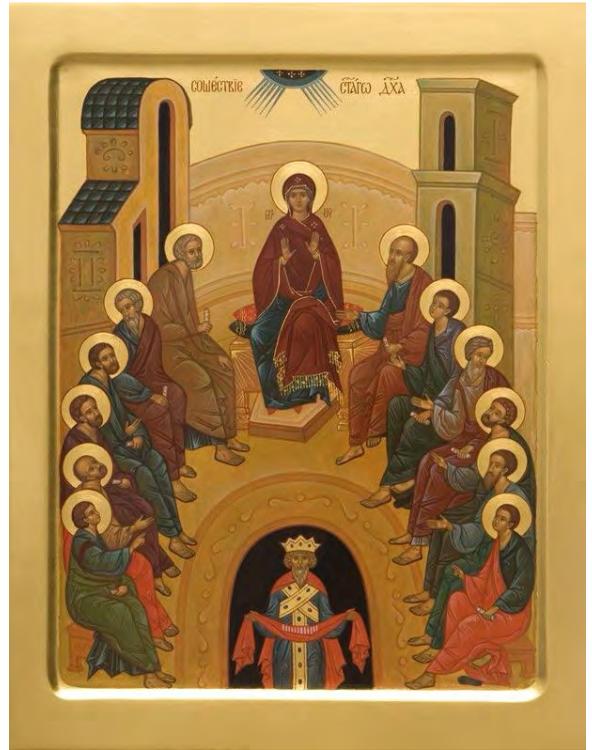
THOUGHTS ON PENTECOST

In the Old Testament Pentecost was the feast which occurred fifty days after Passover. As the Passover feast celebrated the exodus of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, so Pentecost celebrated God's gift of the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.

In the new covenant of the Messiah, the Passover event takes on its new meaning as the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection, the "exodus" of men from this sinful world to the Kingdom of God. In the New Testament as well, the pentecostal feast is fulfilled and made new by the coming of the "new law," the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Christ.

The Holy Spirit that Christ had promised to his disciples came on the day of Pentecost. The apostles received "the power from on high," and they began to preach and bear witness to Jesus as the risen Christ, the King and the Lord. This moment has traditionally been called the birthday of the Church.

In the liturgical services of the feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit is celebrated together with the full revelation of the divine Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Godhead is manifested with the Spirit's coming to man, and the Church hymns celebrate this manifestation as the final act of God's self-disclosure and self-donation to



the world of His creation. For this reason Pentecost Sunday is also called Trinity Day in our tradition. Often on this day the icon of the Holy Trinity - particularly that of the three angelic figures who appeared to Abraham, the forefather of the Christian faith - is placed in the center of the church. This icon is used with the traditional Pentecost icon which shows the tongues of fire hovering over Mary and the Twelve Apostles, the original prototype of the Church, who are themselves sitting in unity surrounding a symbolic image of "cosmos," the world. On Pentecost we have the

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St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

2018 GRAVE BLESSINGS

St. Hedwig's Cemetery

Today 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.



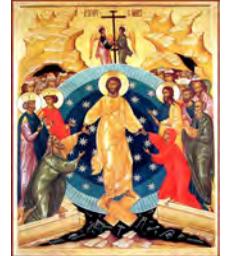
GETTING THE WORD OUT

One of our former parishioners, God rest his soul, had his own form of outreach. He would always take a couple of extra Bulletins and share them with others. While I'm not sure whether that increased the number of persons who come to our church, I do know that others became aware of us. Could you do the same thing? Why not try it?

As you know our future needs us to tell others about our parish. If you like coming to St. Michael's, why not tell others about us?

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As many probably can tell, in this article I mix the new with the old. The idea of living in the present moment is, typically a new idea, although, in essence, a very old idea. It is an old idea in-so-far as we, as Byzantine Christians, know and believe that all things are all happening in the present moment because there is NO TIME IN GOD. In all the feasts that we celebrate we, we constantly declare that they are taking present in the present moment. We declare that Christ is being born right now, crucified right now, raised from the dead right now and, of course, ascended into heaven right now. All that has transpired is, really, transpiring right now.



I know that this is difficult for many to understand. Humans tend to think in either the past or present tense. But, because God is not limited by earthly time, all is present to Him. For God there is not past or future. There is only the present moment.

So the more modern approach to stressing the present moment is, really, the traditional approach of our Eastern Church. *(Continued on page 8)*

The World as Gift and Word



St. Paul said that “the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”. The world no longer has for me anything that might attract me to it, nor is there any longer anything in me that impels me toward the world. The soul is fully satisfied through communion with the personal God, not through created things. These must be only the transparent medium of the personal God, signs of His love. When He Himself is before me, I no longer have need of signs. Communion with the personal God overwhelms the presence of created things: “For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life?”

By returning to God the gifts of

nature transformed through the asceticism of our work and through the imprinting of this cross upon them, we sanctify them and remove the character they have of being an easy source of pleasures. Thus we sanctify ourselves.

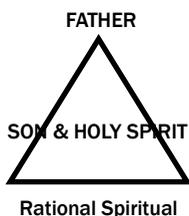
God gives us things as gifts, however, not only so that we might accustom our strength of will to transcend them for His sake, but for the sake of our fellow humans as well, through our act of bestowing these gifts upon them. The love we manifest in using these things as gifts must be directed not only toward God but also toward our neighbors so that we might gain love for them, communion with them. Matthew states “You received without pay, give without pay.” Strictly speaking, when we offer the gifts God has given us to others, we are offering them to God who has given them for the sake of all. God wishes that the talent he gave be invested with the bankers, in other words, with those who know how to put it to work, so that it may be received back with interest. The gift given by someone to another is always returned to him with increased profit. The Savior advises us to make friends with the wealth that is not our own so that it, too, may help us enter into eternal riches.

So think about this. We have been given many things by God, our life in particular. It is for us to give these gifts back to God and to others so that the gifts may profit in increasing the reality of God’s Kingdom. This is precisely what Jesus did - and therefore we do the same.

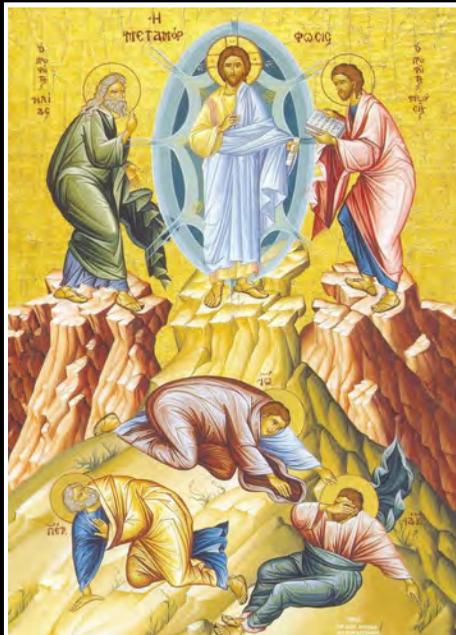
Mysticism - A Characteristic of Our Church

The early Fathers, supported by the writings of Paul, suggested that the soul is transformed by the awakening of its spiritual senses. This is taken by Origen a stage further. As with Clement, he sees the Christian's ascent to God in terms of the perfection of the image of God (i.e., Jesus Christ) in which man was created, and which has been restored by baptism into Christ's victorious death and resurrection. This process of a growing assimilation to God Origen describes as deification: by perfecting its contemplation of God, the mind "is deified in what it contemplates. So, as we concentrate in actualizing our potential to become more and more like Jesus, we are contemplating on God. This process transforms us.

The fourth century saw the long-drawn-out Arian crisis culminating in the establishment of the belief in a consubstantial, uncreated Trinity, in contrast with which all else is created 'out of nothing'. Underlying the Platonic understanding of the soul's ascent to the truth was the conviction of a fundamental kinship between the soul and the divine. This conviction was effectively embraced by Origen with his belief in an eternal spiritual realm forming a kind of pyramid, with the Father at the top, the rational spiritual beings at the bottom and the Word and Spirit in between.



But this conviction could not survive the faith of the fourth century and thereafter: when it surfaced in Evagrius and his disciples, it attracted church censure. If the soul no longer enjoys kinship with God, if in fact there is an infinite gulf between the creature and the Creator, what



kind of mystical theology is possible? Mystical theology, faithful to Nicene Belief, manifests two features: first, an emphasis on God's incarnation as bridging the gulf between Creator and creature, and secondly, a deepening insistence on the fundamental unknowability of God. St. Athanasius is a convenient example of the first point, though it is affirmed by virtually all true believing theologians. God's incarnation makes it possible for men and women to truly contemplate God because of the humanity of God's Son.

More to come!

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

Sunday, May 20 - Weekend of Pentecost

10:00 AM - Special Intention

2:00 PM - Grave Blessings at St. Hedwig's Cemetery

PENTECOST WEEK

Pentecost Monday, May 21

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, May 22 - SS Constantine & Helen

8:00 AM - Special Intent

Wednesday, May 23 - Michael of Synnada

No Service Scheduled

Thursday, May 24 - Simeon, Venerable

No Service Scheduled

Friday, May 25 - 3rd Finding of St. John's Head

8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, May 26 - Carpus, Apostle

No Service Scheduled

Sunday, May 27 - All Saints

10:00 AM - Special Intention

1:00 PM - Grave Blessings at Holy Sepulchre

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I realize that this is not an easy idea for modern people to embrace since we seem to live so much either in the past or the future. We are people who have embrace the idea of *history*. Of course then we want history to be accurate. But when we think about Christianity, we cannot be limited to the past but, rather, to the present moment because we can only understand and experience God in the present moment.

As humans we hold onto the past and hope for the future. This keeps us, however, from truly experiencing God and life in the present moment, which is the only true experience. So, live not in the past or future but in the present moment.



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

THOUGHTS ON PENTECOST

(Continued from page 4)

final fulfillment of the mission of Jesus Christ and the first beginning of the messianic age of the Kingdom of God mystically present in this world in the Church of the Messiah. For this reason the fiftieth day stands as the beginning of the era which is beyond the limitations of this world, fifty being that number which stands for eternal and heavenly fulfillment in Jewish and Christian mystical piety: seven times seven, plus one.

Thus, Pentecost is called an apocalyptic day, which means the day of final revelation. It is also called an eschatological day, which means the day of the final and perfect end. For when the Messiah comes and the Lord's Day is at hand, the "last days" are inaugurated in which "God declares: ... I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."; This is the ancient prophecy to which the Apostle Peter refers in the first sermon of the Christian Church which was preached on the first Sunday of Pentecost.

Once again it must be noted that the feast of Pentecost is not simply the celebration of an event which took place centuries ago. It is the

celebration of what must happen and does happen to us in the Church today. We all have died and risen with the Messiah-King, and we all have received his Most Holy Spirit. We are the "temples of the Holy Spirit." God's Spirit dwells in us. We, by our own membership in the Church, have received "the seal of the gift of

the Holy Spirit" in Chrismation as we were initiated into the Church. Pentecost has truly happened to us! It expresses our belief that we were created as "temples of God's own Spirit" - God truly shares His life with us.

We kneel for the first time in 50 days to express our sincere thanksgiving for the gift of life. We express our belief that God

joined humankind to Himself so that the goal of His creative act might be achieved, namely the deification and redemption of all creation.

On Pentecost itself we truly recall our belief that God is Three-In-One and then on Pentecost Monday we recall that He sent His Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus. The result of this action is what we celebrate then on the week after Pentecost, namely the feast of All Saints, which is the result of God's loving actions.



Some Thoughts About the Eucharist



Byzantine Christians do not see the substance of the bread of the Eucharist as somehow changed in the Eucharistic mystery into another substance - the Body of Christ - but view this bread as the *type of humanity*: our humanity changed into the transfigured humanity of Christ. In approaching the Eucharist, Byzantines begin not with bread as bread, but with bread as man. Bread and wine are offered only because Christ assumed humanity, and they are being *changed* and deified by the operation of the Spirit because Christ's humanity has been transformed into glory through the cross and Resurrection. This is the thought of Cabasilas, and the meaning of the canon of John Chrysostom: "Send down Your Holy Spirit *upon us and upon these gifts*, and make this bread the precious Body of Your Christ, and that which is in this chalice the precious Blood of Your Christ, so that, for those who partake, they may be a purification of soul, a remission of sins, the communion of Your Holy Spirit, the fullness of the Kingdom of heaven.

For Gregory Palamas and other Fathers, the Eucharist is the mystery which not only "represents" the life of

Christ and offers it to our "contemplation"; it is the moment and the place in which Christ's deified humanity becomes ours. The sacrament of new humanity *par excellence*, the Eucharist, for Cabasilas "alone of the mysteries perfect the other mysteries since they cannot fulfill the initiation without it. Christians partake of it "continually," for "it is the perfect sacrament for all purposes, and there is nothing of which those who partake thereof stand in need which it does not supply in an eminent way." The Eucharist is also "the much praised marriage according to which the most holy Bridegroom espouses the Church as a bride"; that is, the Eucharist is the very sacrament which truly transforms a human community into "the Church of God," and is therefore the ultimate criterion and basis of ecclesial structure.

Hopefully those who have been following these thoughts on the Eucharist are gaining a greater understanding of how we think about the Eucharist. The Eucharist is that which transforms our community and us, personally, into the People of God.

As People of God we are called to believe that we are Temples of God's Spirit and joined with Him through the Person of Jesus.



THE EASTERN HERALD

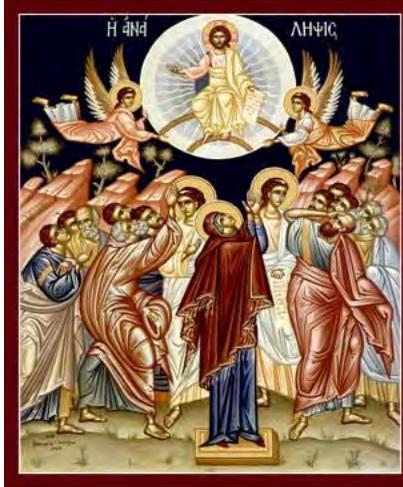
СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 20 Weekend of Pentecost May 19-20, 2018

The Spirituality of the Christian East

The spirituality of the Christian East holds that God has a plan for the deification of humankind and the world. This plan lies within the framework of divine providence and stresses the fact that providence and the plan for deifying creation and humans is not thwarted by sin. Indeed providence takes into account the effect that man's weaknesses has upon his behavior and is included within the redemption of humankind. It is God's providence that preserves and directs the world. This means that the world is not compromised nor will ever be brought to utter destruction by the force of evil but keeps its worth in the eyes of God.

Since God chose to create humans with free will, He understood that this would result in humans making mistakes in the way they think and behave. He granted us humans free will so that we might freely return His



Life's Journey Is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

love and actualize our potential to grow in the likeness of Jesus - to cooperate with God in becoming what God intended when He created us. Moreover, it is possible for the world to be preserved by God in a state such that it can guide humankind toward salvation and deification. Indeed our Eastern spirituality asserts that humans are being guided

toward this goal of deification which is salvation.

Think about what this approach means. God's end goal is for the salvation and deification of all of His creation. This approach stresses God's love for us! As we come to a greater understanding of His love, we are transformed - we are changed! Our spirituality is not based on keeping rules and commandments, its based on living as God intended when He created us and revealed through the Person of Jesus.

There is Life in the Church because in the Church is the Spirit

My brothers and sisters, if you want the Holy Spirit to dwell in you, listen carefully. Our spirit, by means of which each individual lives, is called the soul. And look what the soul does in the body. It gives life to all the limbs. It sees with the eyes, hears with the ears, smells with the nose, speaks with the tongue, works with the hands, walks with the feet. It is present at one and the same time in all the limbs to make them live. It gives life to all the limbs and to each limb its function. It is not the eye that hears, not the ear that sees, not the eye or the ear that speaks. Yet they are nonetheless alive. The ear is alive, the tongue is alive. Their functions are different, the life is the same.

The Church of God is like that. By means of some believers she performs miracles, by means

of others she teaches the truth; by means of some she keeps virginity, by means of others she respects marital fidelity. The tasks are different, the life is the same. What the soul is to the body of a human being, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, the Church. The Holy Spirit does for the whole Church what the soul does for the body of the individual. Look then and see what you ought to fear and what you ought to avoid. If the body suffers an amputation (for example of a finger or a hand or a foot) does the soul go with the limb that has been cut off? While it was in the body, that limb was alive; when it is cut off it loses its life. It is like that with Christians. They are alive only while they are in the Body. If they are cut off from the Body, the Holy Spirit is no longer with them.

St. Augustine of Hippo