

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of the Call of the First Apostles

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

As we enter this time after Pentecost, which is called Ordinary Time, our readings are first taken from Paul's Letter to the Romans and Matthew's Gospel. This will be the pattern of our readings until July 15th.

You will recall that last weekend we celebrated the feast of All Saints. Our readings build on this idea that we are called to be saints. They seriously convey information that will help us to achieve this goal - to become saints.

Paul suggests that, because God's Spirit is within us, the law of love of God and neighbor is written within us. It is only for us to recognize it. If we are honest with our own feelings, we know that there is a great desire within all of us to establish meaningful relationships with others. We already know that such relationships can only be established when we truly and unconditionally extend our love to others. Paul says that the *demands of the law are written* in our hearts.

Our Gospel reading this weekend recounts how Jesus called His first disciples. The call of His disciples is related after Matthew recounts that Jesus, following John the Baptizer's example, exclaims this: *Reform your lives! The kingdom of heaven is at hand!* Think about this! Somehow the people that followed Jesus understood and desired to engage in personal change because they recognized that there had to be something more to life than they were experiencing.



I wonder how many of us truly feel and understand that there has to be more to this earthly life than we are currently experiencing? It is only when we come to the realization that there must be more to life than just existing and going through the struggles that life presents. Spiritual growth only comes when we realize that there is more to this present earthly existence than just accruing things and to be successful in some occupation. When death comes, none of these are important! We don't take "things" with us into eternity and we don't enter eternity with a title or an educational degree. We only enter eternity with our memories and the feelings that are connected with genuine relationships with others.

Today the Church reminds us that we are clearly called by God, through Jesus, to be saints. Do we believe this? How are we responding to the call? What are we doing with our lives? Do we realize we need to make change?

Some Thoughts About the Eucharist



As you, my readers, have probably surmised by now, the Eucharist is that mystery (sacrament) that makes us the Church of Jesus Christ. It is the ultimate of all the sacraments since we experience the presence of Christ in a most profound way. It is also that sacrament that Jesus Himself established so that He might always be with His Church - His followers. He is also, however, present in the other sacraments in a profound manner when we stop and contemplate their meaning.

BAPTISM - LIFE

CHRISMATION - SPIRIT (Powers)

MARRIAGE - LOVE

HOLY ORDERS - COMMITMENT

PENANCE - FORGIVENESS

HEALING - CONSOLATION

Of course this doesn't happen if we don't believe that He is the source of all these things and if we don't take the time to think about these things. This is also why we can perform these sacraments without the Eucharist.

For example, when we recognize Him as the LOVE FORCE that brings two people together, He is really present without the celebration of the Eucharist. In the West,

we find that marriage is not performed outside the Eucharist. In the East, we find His presence in the love and faith that we experience in the couple whose wedding we are attending and also in recalling our own power of loving others.

I would, at this point, again reiterate something that I have shared with my readers before. The rejection of the concept of the Eucharist as "image" or "symbol" is very significant for the understanding of the entire Eucharistic "perception" of the Byzantines. The Eucharist for the Byzantines has always remained fundamentally a mystery to be received as food and drink, and not to be "seen" through physical eyes. The gifts remain covered, except during the sequence of prayers pertaining to the consecration of the gifts and during communion. In contrast with Western medieval piety, the gifts were never "venerated" outside the framework of the Eucharistic liturgy itself. For us Byzantines, our encounter with the Lord is experienced in the "eating" and "drinking" of the gifts not in "looking at the gifts." This, I believe is an important difference between the East and the West.

More to follow

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST



While this article is not about the Divine Liturgy, I would begin it by asserting that if we celebrate the Liturgy with reverence and attention, we find as much grace and even more than can be found anywhere else. For this reason, if we keep the Liturgy properly, there is hope for a renewal, maybe even for a renaissance of the whole world. This general crisis that we face nowadays - and it may intensify - will force many people to look for a spiritual solution and may lead them back to the Church. And if this is already happening with a small number of people, God is able to generalize it.

The Liturgy is the heart of the Eastern Christian experience, the place where one meets the Lord and learns to abide and live with Him. Not only this. It is through the Liturgy that one finds and works out one's salvation. In the liturgical life of our Church, we find the Mind of the Church, which is the Mind of Christ. Through regular participation in the cycle of services throughout the year, and the Holy Mysteries, we absorb and acquire this Mind and make it our own, enabling us to learn how not only to think, but also how to understand the world, God, ourselves, and each other. We must never see the Liturgy and the liturgical life of the Church as something extra. It is through the grace that we receive at each Liturgy that we are enabled to enter eternity, and are empowered to escape corruption, sin and death, because what we are offered and receive is nothing other than the Life of God Himself.

In our modern American society, many things about the way we live and how we learn are antithetical to Eastern Christian spirituality. What is it that epitomizes the world if not the frenzy and busyness of day-to-day life? Counter to this, what is it that characterizes Eastern Christian spiritual ethos and experience or stillness? Indeed, the root of healing, of freedom from the passions and the beginning of the knowledge of God is to be found in the words of the Psalmist: *Be still and know that I am God.*

Our Eastern Christian spirituality leads us to a knowledge of God, and concurrently to a knowledge of ourselves.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

RESCHEDULE OF BLESSINGS

Last week I canceled the blessing of graves at Holy Sepulchre for a variety of reasons. I would still like to go and bless those graves. If you would be available and would like to have the grave(s) of your departed blessed, would you please contact me and let me know when you are available.

ONGOING EDUCATION

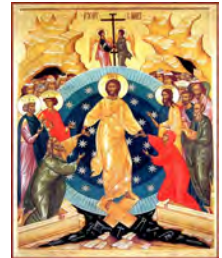
As most people know, some time ago I decided that the way we could best conduct “ongoing education” about our faith was to provide “articles” on a certain topic and then provide an opportunity for those who would like to discuss the material. I will continue to do this.

Since in our Eastern Christian tradition we see eternal life as an ongoing opportunity to grow in our likeness of Jesus, how does the concept of “hell” fit in. Does hell exist? I would like to present two articles this first time: a Byzantine conception of hell and Pope Francis’ thoughts on the topic. **ARTICLES ARE AVAILABLE.**

No one can make you feel inferior without your consent

CALLED TO HOLINESS

I have been stressing in the last several issues of this article, that the call to holiness is a call to live in the present moment and not live in the *past* or the *future* in the way that



you think. Our minds can, by the way that we think, keep us in the past or the future. We become slaves to our thinking. This is one of the reasons why both St. John the Baptizer and Jesus exhorted the people of their day to “change the way that they thought.” Enlightenment”, that is holiness, is truly freedom to our thinking. Our thinking brings about prejudice, bigotry, anger, revenge, despair and arrogance. We humans seem to have a great need to be “right” and cannot tolerate when others think differently than us. This brings about those thoughts which clearly keep us from achieving holiness. Why? Because our thoughts and attitudes separate us from others.

In order to unconditionally love others and learn how to not judge them, we have to control our thinking. We have to make a concerted effort to respond to others like Jesus would. He didn’t judge others

(Continued on page 8)

The World as Gift and Word



The world as nature proves itself a rational unitary reality that exists for the sake of the dialogue among human beings and as a condition for the spiritual growth of humans and for the development of humankind. This is an important point. The world as it is structured, with all the built in struggles and challenges that it presents to us human beings, is designed to help us grow. If you look at your life, you will find that the struggles in your life are unique to you and that they are uniquely designed to help you grow in your likeness of Jesus.

According to the Fathers, all things have their inner principles/ reasons in the divine Logos or the supreme Reason. If the world

existed only to provide food, there would be no need for its rational character. It is true that the animals also make use of the rationality of physical and biological processes of nature, although only for their unconscious biological growth. But if this rationality did not have as its purpose the serving of man, it, too, would be without meaning.

The rationality of the world has, however, multiple values. It is malleable and contingent, and the human person is the one who makes use of these characteristics and brings them to light.

The human person alone, by making use of the rationality of nature and its processes through the work - animated by responsibility - that he performs, rises to a life of spiritual communion and to the awareness of some of the more sublime meanings and purposes of nature.

When you think about it, God is sharing His lifeforce with all of creation, not only us human beings. The entire universe is filled with His lifeforce. It is His consciousness of all of creation that brings it into existence and sustains it in existence. God has joined Himself to His creation, bringing all things into a unity which is beneficial for all things. We humans should respect this instead of destroying it for our own greedy use. Think about what we are doing to God's creation. He intended us to take care of it and to allow it to bring us closer to Him. The way that we are treating God's Kingdom, because of our greed, is destroying us and it. **LET US WAKE UP!**

Mysticism - A Characteristic of Our Church

As I have been trying to highlight, our Church's tendency toward "mysticism" originated in the work of various Fathers to come to a deeper understanding of God. They recognized that we cannot really know God from just looking at or contemplating His work in our world. The progress from purification, through contemplation of the world and God's activity within it, to contemplation of God himself, understood by Origen as a progress from darkness to ever increasing light, becomes for Gregory a movement from illumination into the cloud, and finally into utterly impenetrable darkness. These three stages (*which I have mentioned in the past*) are symbolized in the life of Moses (*like Philo, Gregory takes the life of Moses as an allegory of the soul's ascent to God*) by the Burning Bush, the ascent of Mount Sinai and his final experience of God in the cleft of the rock. In this last episode, Moses is denied the vision of God face to face, but sees his back parts as he passes by: to see God is to be behind him 'seeing God means following him' The vision of God is inexhaustible, for God is beyond any human comprehension: the 'true vision of God consists in this, that the would that looks up to God never ceases to desire him'. In the darkness God is experienced - Gregory makes signal use of the notion of the spiritual senses - but there is no final vision of God, in which he is comprehended.

All of the above says but one thing that the priest prays in the Divine Liturgy about God, namely that God is *ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever-existing yet ever the same*. The only image we have of God is Jesus, the Christ. God made Himself manifest in Jesus. The only way that we can



know Him is through Jesus. So it is truly important that we come to know Jesus.

What do we know about Jesus? He unconditionally loved all others and He didn't judge others other than when he saw hypocrisy. He forgave others and He treated all others as He wanted to be treated. He did not base His response to others on how they treated Him. He went out of His way to help others who were in need and did everything He could to relieve them of their suffering. He was a true friend to others and did everything He could to show them His love.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, June 3 - 2nd Weekend After Pentecost
10:00 AM - Special Intention

3rd WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 2

Monday, June 4– Metrophanes, Patriarch
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, June 5 - Dorotheus, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, June 6 - Bessarion & Hilary, Venerables
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, June 7 - Theodotus, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

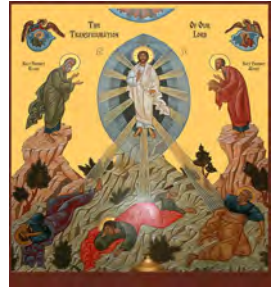
Friday, June 8 - Translation of Theodore's Relics
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, June 9 - Cyril of Alexandria, Archbishop
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, June 10 - 3rd Weekend After Pentecost - Tone 2
10:00 AM - Special Intention

(Continued from page 5)

and surely was not prejudiced or bigoted. He, like us, had to face the society in which He was living. His society was not unlike our present society where prejudice is rampant and where there is a total disregard for any kind of civility. His society openly judged others and, it is attempt to feel better about themselves, rejected all others who were not exactly like them. Think about how people treated the Samaritans, Romans, handicapped people and even of a different interpretation of Judaism. He truly attempted to confront these perceptions, ideas and beliefs in His society. Should we not do the same? We are called to be like Him. Should we, like Him, refuse to be like the trend in our society?



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

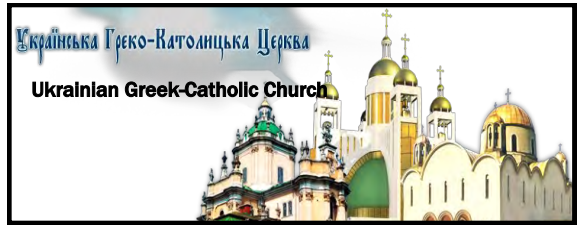
<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

I have been sharing with you some of the historical background which has had an impact on our own Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church. Competition with Poland over the former Galician-Volhynian principality ended in the 1380s in partition, by which Lithuania gained Volhynia and Poland was confirmed in its possession of Galicia. Thus, Lithuanian control extended over virtually all the Ukrainian lands as far as the open steppe and even, briefly, to the Black Sea.

Within the grand duchy the Ruthenian (i.e., Ukrainian and Belarusian) lands initially retained considerable autonomy. The pagan Lithuanians themselves were increasingly converting to Orthodoxy and assimilating into Ruthenian culture. The grand duchy's administrative practices and legal system drew heavily on Slavic customs, and an official Ruthenian state language (*also known as Rusyn*) developed over time from the language used in Rus.

Direct Polish rule in Ukraine in the 1340s and for two centuries thereafter was limited to Galicia. There, changes in such areas as administration, law, and land tenure proceeded more rapidly than in Ukrainian territories under Lithuania. However, Lithuania itself was soon drawn into the orbit of Poland following the dynastic linkage of the two states in 1385/86 and the baptism of the Lithuanians



into the Roman Catholic Church. The spread of Catholicism among the Lithuanians and the attendant diffusion of the Polish language, culture, and notions of political and social order among the Lithuanian nobility eroded the position of the Orthodox Ruthenians, as had happened earlier in Galicia. In 1569, by the Union of Lubin, the dynastic link between Poland and Lithuania was transformed into a constitutional union of the two states as the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. At the same time, the greater part of the Ukrainian territories was detached from Lithuania and annexed directly to Poland. This act hastened the differentiation of Ukrainians and Belarusians (*the latter of whom remained within the grand duchy*) and, by eliminating the political frontier between them, promoted the closer integration of Galicia and the eastern Ukrainian lands. For the next century, virtually all ethnically Ukrainian lands experienced in common the direct impact of Polish political and cultural predominance.

As you can tell, the history of our Church is very complex.

THE POWER OF METANOIA (REPENTANCE)

As I shared in the last issue of this article, St Paul states that the goal of life, which includes growing in our likeness of God's Image, Jesus, is achieved by dying to sin. Therefore the question is: *How do we die to sin?*

So, in practical terms, how do we accomplish this? Christ Himself tells us plainly that *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.* But what do these words really mean? Is this just an exalted metaphor that is intended to encourage us to be good, honest and truthful citizens? Most certainly not!

For if Jesus is truly "the way", then surely, if we would be His disciples, we must also follow Him, follow His way. His way is, of course, that of the Cross: "where I am, there shall also my servant be" and "Where is Christ"? On the Cross.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Our Lord gives us a vivid description of the divine way of life, that is to say, He teaches us how to live as He does. This is especially evident when we bring to mind such verses as: *You have heard that it was said of them of*

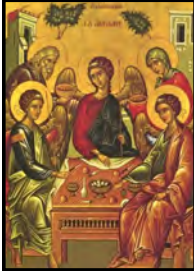
old, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that cure you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you so that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.

If we look closely at these and other pronouncements by Jesus, what we shall find is nothing less than Christ's self-revelation. In other words, Christ is telling us how He lives, and how we too should strive to live, if we would be as *He is!*

Thus, if we wish to be eternally with Christ, we must become like Him. This process of becoming Christlike, this purification, invariably involves repentance - which is a fundamental change in our whole way of life, in our "mode of being", in our way of thinking and the attitudes that we have about God, others and ourselves.

Our reactions in any and every circumstance must become like that which Jesus modeled by His very life. This takes, of course, personal desire and deliberate thought!





THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 22 2nd Weekend After Pentecost June 2-3, 2018

The Spirituality of the Christian East

As I have been attempting to share in this article, our Eastern Christian spirituality takes into real consideration the “Divine Providence” of God. It believes that the main task of Divine Providence is preservation, leading the world forward. It is hard to distinguish between the providence that acts to preserve and the providence that acts to lead. God, in His infinite wisdom and love, did not create an universe, with all living beings within it, that can truly make a choice to destroy itself. This dynamic sense of the providence that preserves is activated more intensely in the sphere proper to the history of conscious human beings and their development. Providence helps the forces of good not only to maintain themselves - and therefore consequently humankind too - in the same forms, but also to obstruct and thwart evil’s own new forms of action.

Thus, a balance is maintained between the forces of good and evil, which at the same time accords with progress in conscious beings. Yet laziness in development on the part of good would not itself constitute a good, just as simple continuance in imperfection itself represents an evil. Nevertheless, after the fall into sin, progress in the good occurs through the struggle against evil, and sometimes this very struggle, through the ambiguity that belongs to it, leads to ideas and impulses which, up to a point, are good in themselves. Moreover, in this guise they do



Life's Journey Is an Ascension to

more than just provoke opposition to the good; they also force those who serve the good to make their own the task of giving effect with sincerity and greater thoroughness to those ideas and impulses belonging to the forces of evil that are incompletely or only apparently good. No conscious being can withdraw from good.

More explanation later!

What Have We Left Behind?

Most successful people would probably tell you that what separates great people from ordinary people is that great people are willing to risk making decisions, whether right or wrong, and then acting on those decisions. Great people are people who have made great choices, often very risky choices, but in the long run their choices have usually been right. Biblical history is peopled with folks who were confronted by decisions they had to make.

Just imagine the decision required of those fishermen on the shores of Lake Galilee. Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen, true, but they were businessmen. Perhaps even prosperous businessmen. Fish was a staple in the diet, and fishermen could often make a very good living. The brothers Peter and Andrew were

probably business partners with the brothers James and John and most likely had a good business going. So when Jesus said to the two sets of brothers, "Follow me," He was not calling them to leave a sport, or a hobby; he was asking them to leave their careers, their livelihoods, and their families! They had everything to lose.

What have we left behind to follow Him? Unless there's some pain, some discomfort, some sacrifice, then most probably we haven't left anything. Perhaps we're still fumbling about in our boats, tossing our nets over the side, and business goes on as usual.

Yet, if we do that, the Great Fisherman might leave us and move on to someone else, and the choice might go by forever.