

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Christ Teaching on the Mount

Reflections on the Scripture Readings for this Weekend

On this third weekend after Pentecost our readings are again taken from Paul's Letter to the Romans and St. Matthew's Gospel. Each has a very poignant message for us. Paul writes two wonderful things. First, he points out that *the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit* and also *We know that affliction makes for endurance, and endurance for tested virtue, and tested virtue for hope.* So Paul tells us very clearly that if we realize that God loves us, we can accept the challenges of life and benefit from them. For life's afflictions are meant only to help us understand that we must change our thinking and our attitudes about life so that we can see that life is calling us to personal change and spiritual growth. If we come to realize that God loves us, then we will know that any of the struggles of life are only meant to help us become all that God intended when He created us. Life is not meant to punish us but, rather, to bring about our spiritual growth. Therein truly lies salvation.

In Matthew's Gospel we hear what the true riches are. Matthew points out

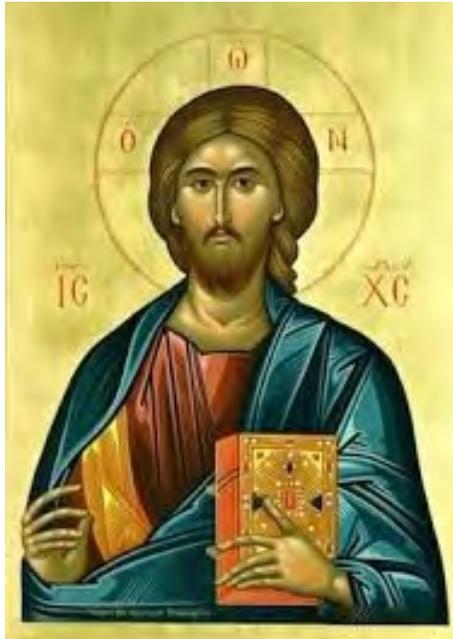
that we cannot serve two masters since we will *either hate one and love the other or be attentive to one and despise the other.* You cannot give ourselves to God and money, that is, the things of this world.

This advice is quite straightforward. If we become centered upon the things of this world, we forget about those of the world to come - we forget that this world is only given to us so that we might grow spiritually and truly become the children of God. Again we have to consider what we believe is the true meaning and purpose of this earthly life.

Unfortunately it is not always easy to think about what life is all about. We become so absorbed in just living this life

that we forget to think about what this life is all about.

As followers of Jesus we are called to realize that this earthly existence is not all there is to life and, therefore, we need to concentrate on changing our hearts and minds to become more like Jesus, God's gift to us as a model of how we should live. Therefore we must ask ourselves: ***What is my idea about what this life is all about?***



Some Thoughts About the Eucharist



In writing about the Eucharist, I have come to realize that there are many different ideas about this “*mystery*.” Many of these ideas are influenced by the Roman Catholic approach to the Eucharist. Although we are Catholic, it doesn’t mean that we forsake our theology and embrace the Roman Catholic ideas about the Eucharist.

Our Church does not embrace the idea of the “Blessed Sacrament.” We do not look upon the blessed gifts of bread and wine as somehow reflective of God. The consecrated gifts of bread and wine are not the *image* of God. Rather, the gifts that are consecrated are the “food of life” since in their eating Christ is present to us.

This is quite different from the Western approach. Our approach does not lessen the significance of what is accomplished during our Divine Liturgy.

Jesus never meant His disciples to **look upon the gifts of bread and wine as “objects of His presence.”** Rather, in the **process of eating these gifts to find themselves in His presence.** Consider the two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus. They only became aware of Jesus’ presence when they partook of the

bread and wine that He blessed. The Eucharist is not meant to be an object of adoration but an experience joining us to Jesus.

This, of course, is based on the meaning of sharing a MEAL! When we gather around a table and share a meal with others, there is a certain “bond” that is formed. We are in “communion” with those with whom we share food. This, was Jesus’ idea. When we share food with others, we are brought into “communion” with them. It is in this context that the Eucharist was established.

We must realize that when we partake of the “transformed gifts”, we express our realization that to be in union with Jesus we have to be in union with others, especially those who also receive these gifts. Our ultimate experience must be, as we receive Holy Communion, communion with others so that we might have union with God through Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

I don’t know now how many really think about this when they receive Holy Communion. It is not just about Jesus being present to us personally but, rather, about Him being present to the Church, which is composed of all believers.

I wonder if you have ever thought about this?

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST



In acquiring the mind of Jesus, we must also consider the Eastern Christian idea of *hesychia*, which is defined as "stillness, rest, quiet, silence". The Eastern Church believes that it is *hesychia* which leads us to the knowledge of God, and concurrently to the knowledge of ourselves; it provides the remedy for the insanity of our modern world. The Church provides this quiet oasis by her liturgical life wherein she brings stillness to the hearts and minds of her members.

Hesychia does not imply an absence or an emptiness. It is to be present with all of our

heart, standing before the mystery of ourselves and God with one thought: the Lord our God. Prayer as listening is our first step toward hearing God. *Hesychia* does not mean, by definition, that we are silent, but rather watchful, waiting for God expectantly with faith. Indeed, the twofold movement shown to us by the Prodigal Son in the Gospel of St. Luke reveals the content of real prayer and spiritual life: we must first come back to ourselves before we can return to our Father. Without a return to ourselves, we have no basis on which to open a dialogue with God, for we will be speaking outside of our heart, outside of ourselves. The Fathers say that if we wish to ascend to heaven, we must enter the heart, and there we will find the rungs of the ladder by which we will begin the ascent.

All of this, however, requires that we become *reflective* people, that is people who think about our lives; our thinking; our attitudes; and about how we live. It means that we can't just "go thought life" without thinking about how we are living our lives.

Now the Divine Liturgy informs the heart and changes us imperceptibly, If we think about what we do during the Divine Liturgy. Do we truly join with Jesus in offering thanksgiving to God for the gift of life? That is, of course, the meaning of our Liturgy.

St. Maximus the Confessor tells us that just being present at the Liturgy ontologically alters us for the better. Think about it. If you truly engage yourself in joining with Jesus in offering your life back to God in true thanksgiving, doesn't it change you?

Have you ever worshipped this way?



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

WHAT'S HAPPENING

As many have probably already guessed, our buildings, because of their age, are in need of work and repairs. Our church building has an electrical problem, the Eastern basement wall is leaking, more repair is needed on our front porch steps, our sub-pump needs service, and our parking lot needs to be resealed. So more of our regular donations must be directed toward maintenance.

Our Parish Council is currently attempting to deal with these issues. While we have yet to find a solution to the electrical problem, we are getting bids and advice on the other building issues. I will keep you informed about our progress.

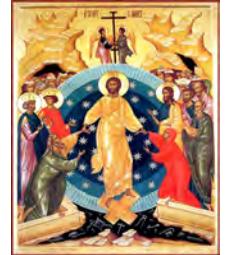
SUMMER PICNIC

Although we do not have a firm date set yet, our Parish Council has already initiated discussion about having a Summer Picnic on our grounds and/or in our Social Hall. If you have any ideas about this, please let me or a Council member know.

There is only one thing that makes a dream impossible to achieve: the fear of failure

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As many have already surmised, it is my belief that the *call to holiness* that I have been writing about is truly a call to *authentic humanity* - a call to *true civility* - a call to *reasonability* as it pertains to life. It is a call to become a *reflective*, and *caring* person who finds truth in the *message of Jesus Christ*.



As I think about holiness, I realize that any efforts at growing in holiness leads to greater freedom. Holiness does restrict our freedom but, rather, enhances it. We are not held captive to crazy, fanciful ideas about God, others, ourselves and the world. Holiness brings a certain reasonableness to our thoughts about these things. Holiness helps us understand our relation to God, others and creation. It provides us with insights about how to live and truly be free.

For example: the truly free person is the person who does not base his way of living and treating others based on the responses he receives from others. Rather, the free person decides how he wants to live, what his personal standards are, and lives by them. He is the truly free person. (Continued on page 8)

The World as Gift and Word



This means that as we humans come to understand that creation is a part of God's plan for us, we develop a greater degree of understanding. Creation, as it is, is at our service and designed to help us humans come to an ever greater understanding of how it helps us to grow in our image of God - in our image of Jesus. By discovering and harnessing the manifold rationality of the world - freely and in cooperation with our neighbors - in order to make better use of the world's resources and to grasp its inexhaustible meanings, the human person grows in communion with these. Moreover, this process itself becomes a source that leads to the knowledge of other and still more sublime meanings. In the knowledge of the rationality of nature that comes through his reason, the human person discovers his responsibility to nature, to his fellow human beings, and to God. The development of this responsibility, moreover, is equivalent to the growing discovery of the meanings of the world and of human existence.

I have been sharing thoughts about the "world" being a gift and word given to us by God. I shared in the last issue that in the human person alone does the rationality of nature's undefined possibilities acquire a meaning or a purpose, or draws ever closer to its fulfillment. Only for the human person is this rational character of nature something useful both for his biological existence and for his spiritual growth. As a consciously rational being whose knowledge of the rationality of nature and its meanings keeps on improving, only the human person himself becomes more rational through nature - he actualizes his reason to a greater and greater degree.

I know that many will immediately recognize that as our modern society does not respect nature and rapes the nature in which we live for the sake of financial profit, we do not receive the real message that God intended when He created nature and put it at our disposal. All we learn today is that we can destroy nature for our own benefit. We use the nature that God gave us for profit. It will eventually revolt, since it is not respected, and cause us harm. *Think about this!*

Mysticism - A Characteristic of Our Church

I don't know if my readers have come to sense the "mysticism" that is characteristic of our Church. I think that it is more "mystical" than the Western Church since our Western world has become mesmerized by the "scientific method", believing that if you can find "data" to prove your beliefs, then your beliefs are true. If something is true because of concrete data, than it is no-longer a belief but, rather, a proven fact.

Religion, if it is truly religion, requires that people embrace a set of "beliefs," that is a feeling of certitude about things that cannot be proven. Beliefs are not based on "data" but ideas that seem to "ring true" with our minds and hearts.

We say that we believe that our God is **TRIUNE IN NATURE** - that is Three Persons Who are One. There is no way that we can prove this and yet it is one of our beliefs. It is a belief because we believe that Jesus, Who was a human being, truly shared with us much about human life that "makes sense" and seems to get at the essential "meaning and purpose of this human life." Because we accept that He was human and that He rose from the dead, we assert that we believe He is God as well as man. This belief changes everything. Although we cannot prove it, we believe that because Jesus was truly God and Man, that God must be Three-In-One. This belief is predicated on the fact that if Jesus was only divine, then all that He said about living and how to come to the fullness of life, would be impossible for us humans. For the teachings of Jesus to reveal to us how to live, Jesus had to be truly human. **BUT HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD.** Therefore, He also had to be God. So His resurrection has



informed our beliefs about His divinity, and His teaching has informed us about His true humanity and that we can live like Him if we so choose.

Mysticism, I believe, brings real faith and belief. We embrace ideas that cannot be proved but make real sense to us and they are ideas which bring a greater understanding of the meaning and purpose of the earthly existence.

Our beliefs about Jesus and about God, I believe, provide us humans with **HOPE** and **UNDERSTANDING** about life and drives away the fear of death which we know we must ultimately face.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

4th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 3

Monday, June 11– Bartholomew & Barnabas, Aposles
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, June 12 - Onuphrius & Peter, Venerables
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, June 13 - Aquila, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, June 14 - Elisha, Prophet
No Service Scheduled

Friday, June 15 - Amos, Prophet
8:00 AM - Special Intention

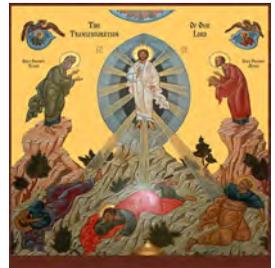
Saturday, June 16 - Tycxhon, Wonderworker-Bishop
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, June 17 - 4th Weekend After Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM - All Living & Deceased Fathers of the Parish

(Continued from page 5)

So the call to holiness is a call to real and true freedom. Rather than restricting our freedom, holiness makes our freedom genuine.

Of course this requires that we do not see our religion and faith as a “series of rules and regulations” but, rather, as a “series of insights” about God, life and the meaning of life. It also means that we don’t embrace personal change or transformation out of fear of punishment. It requires that we decide how to live our life on the belief that there is a meaning and purpose for our life and that if we work at becoming the person God intended when He created us, we will be truly free and truly holy.



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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

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

Understanding Our Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

In this article I have been sharing information about the history of Ukraine and, therefore, about our Church. Over three centuries of Lithuanian and Polish rule, Ukraine by the middle of the 17th century had undergone substantial social evolution. The princely and boyar families tracing their roots to Kievan Rus had largely merged and become part of the privileged noble estate of Lithuania and Poland. Long attached to the Orthodox religion and the Ruthenian language and customs, the Ruthenian nobility in the late 16th century became increasingly prone to Polonization, a process often initiated by education in Jesuit schools and conversion to Roman Catholicism.

With the growth of towns and urban trades, especially in western Ukraine, the burghers became an important social stratum. They were divided both in terms of an internal social hierarchy associated with the guild system and by religion and ethnicity. Since the 13th century many Poles, Armenians, Germans, and Jews had settled in the cities and towns, where the Ukrainians were often reduced to a minority. Although the burghers came to play an influential role within the Ukrainian community, legal disabilities imposed on non-Catholics progressively limited their participation in the municipal self-



government enjoyed by many cities and towns under Magdeburg Law.

In the period of Polish rule the conditions of the peasantry steadily deteriorated. The free peasantry that had still existed into the late Lithuanian period underwent rapid enserfment, while serf obligations themselves became more onerous. Peasant unrest increased toward the end of the 16th century, especially in eastern Ukraine. The sparsely settled lands were opened to Polish proprietorship for the first time, and large latifundia (*agricultural estates worked by a large number of peasants*) were established through royal grants to meet the demands for grain on the European markets. To attract labor to the new estates, peasants were granted temporary exemptions from serf obligations; the expiration of these exemptions and the reintroduction of servitude among a population grown accustomed to freedom led to much discontent and peasant flight into the “wild fields”—the steppe lands to the east and south.

It is important to understand the history of the area in order to understand our particular approach to the belief in God.

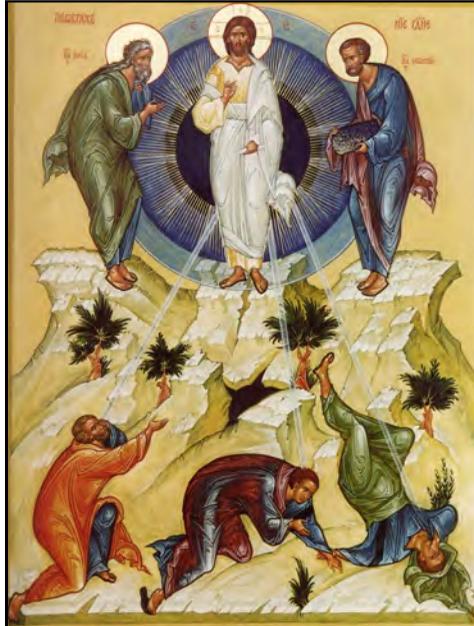
THE POWER OF METANOIA (REPENTANCE)

As I concluded the last issue of this article, I suggested that we are called to make our reactions, in any and every circumstance, Christlike. Each time we find ourselves in difficult circumstances; each time that we are tempted to think or act according to the way of the world, and every time that we resist this impulse for the love of Christ, and ask for His help and mercy, we are indeed taking up our cross, we are indeed striving to change our way of life in accordance with the commandments that Christ gave us. When we do this, we are indeed beginning to repent - we are beginning to become more like Christ - to transform ourselves, through the transformation of our thinking and our attitudes - to be truly children of our Heavenly Father.

One of the more recent Fathers of the Church has this to say about repentance:

Glory be to the Lord that He gave us repentance. Through this process of repentance we shall all, every one of us, be saved. Only those who refuse to repent will not find salvation, and therein I

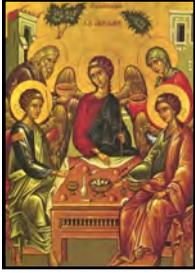
see their despair, and shed abundant tears of pity for them. They have not know through the Holy Spirit how great is God's mercy. But if every soul knew the Lord, knew how deeply He loves us, no one would despair, or murmur against his lot.



Being aware of the mercy of God is a great gift. It helps us truly see what the true meaning and purpose of life is. I suspect that almost all people have come to some individual understanding of the meaning and the true purpose of life. The problem, most often, is that their understanding is not

informed by God's idea of why life is the way that it is. Humans have many fantasies about life. The Christian Good News is meant to present what we believe is God's idea about what the meaning and purpose of life truly is. We believe that God revealed this through the person of Jesus.

What did Jesus teach us? He taught that the way to find meaning and purpose is to live in a way that is based on our beliefs about how to treat our neighbor and not on how they treat us.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

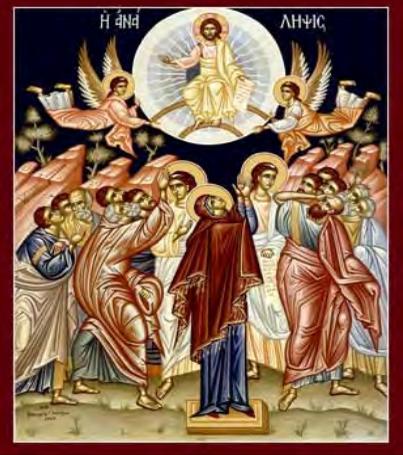
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 23 3rd Weekend After Pentecost June 9-10, 2018

The Spirituality of the Christian East

I have been trying to share, in this article, what our Eastern Christian spirituality says about the Providence of God and the Deification of the world. I ended the last installment with saying that no conscious being can withdraw completely from the force of the good. Thus, God makes use both of the evil and the good forces as he leads history toward higher stages and ultimately toward salvation and deification, for providence implies synergy between God and the conscious creature.

What this is saying is that God, who is all powerful and omnipotent, is leading his creation to more complete union with Him. While we, a part of His creation, can never - for all eternity - be completely united with Him, His intent is to ever lead us closer to Him since He is sharing His life and Spirit with us.

Although all this might seem very abstract, it is not. What I am trying to impart is that God is sharing His life with all creation at this very moment. He is a part of all creation and, especially, us, His children. His intention is to bring all of us back into union with Him. Since He has shared free will with us, His creatures, He has to allow us to not want to join with Him. BUT, He also gives us multiple opportunities, through the experience of life, to see that we are called to UNION WITH HIM. He gives us multiple opportunities to choose to be united to Him. NOW, the intelligent person will take every opportunity to



Life's Journey is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

join with Him during this present existence. We must know that, because we have eternal life, there are multiple opportunities to join with Him. Why not try to do it during this present existence? If we work to become like Jesus during this present life, we are farther ahead with the goal of becoming joined with God in a very special way. ***What are your thought about this?***

Prove Your Faith by Your Trust

'Look at the birds of the air,' says Jesus. What a splendid example for our faith to follow! If God's providence bestows an unfailing supply of food on the birds of the air who neither sow nor reap, we ought to realize that the reason for people's supply running short is human greed. The fruits of the earth were given to feed all without distinction and nobody can claim any particular rights. Instead, we have lost the sense of the communion of goods, rushing to turn these goods into private property. The birds do not know famine because they do not claim anything specially for themselves and neither do they have any envy of others. 'Consider the lilies of the field: not even Solomon in all his glory was

arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass which is alive today and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe one of you!' Listen to these stupendous and uplifting words. With this parable of flowers and grass the Lord urges us to hope that God will also be merciful to us. Nothing is more persuasive than a glance at unthinking creatures who have received such beautiful dress from Providence. Surely we should be all the more ready to believe that human beings, if they entrust themselves completely to God and free themselves of all their worries, will not lack anything.

St. Ambrose of Milan