

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



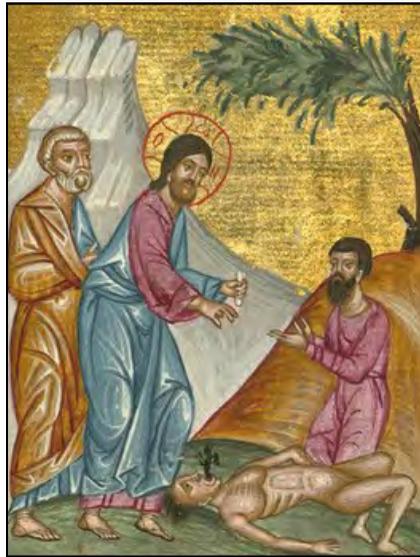
Icon of Saints Callinicus and Theodotia -- July 29th

REFLECTIONS ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 10th weekend after Pentecost, we again hear passages from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and also Matthew's Gospel. Paul's words to the Corinthians are rather biting. He contrasts, with irony, the humiliations and sufferings of the apostles with the smugness of the Corinthians who, in forming factions, make pretense of a spiritual superiority over their fellow Christians. Every supernatural and natural quality by which they may be distinguished is God's gift. The Corinthians have lost the sense of their own indigence and spiritual poverty that is the basic disposition of the true Christian. They behave as though they have already reached the summit of perfection and are reigning in the Kingdom of Heaven. Paul truly didn't mince any words, and reminded them about the sufferings of the apostles. It seems that humans can easily fall into the tendency to act holier than others. Smugness must be guarded against.

The passage we hear from Matthew's Gospel is the healing of an epileptic child. This exorcism story, one of the most vivid in Mark has been condensed in Matthew to less than half. The healing story issues in a

saying, but Matthew has changed the saying. Mark's answer to the question about the disciples inability to cure the boy, *This kind is expelled only by prayer*, was too difficult for both Matthew and Luke. Matthew has substituted a saying on faith adapted from Mark, namely *Because you have so little trust*. Matthew then adds a tag which has Jesus telling his disciples that if they even had *faith the size of a mustard seed* they would have been able to cure the boy and do even greater things.



As I put these two passages together I realized that if we are arrogant or smug in our righteousness, we will never come to place our trust in Christ sufficient to spiritually grow. A certain degree of true humility must be a part of our lives in order to truly embrace spiritual growth. We must learn how to place our trust in God, realize that we cannot accomplish spiritual growth without His help and also engage in prayer and fasting.

Of course none of this makes any sense if we don't realize that we are here on earth in order to learn how to grow and become spiritually more mature.

What is the meaning and purpose of your life?

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EUCHARIST

As I have shared in the last issue of this article, early Christians all saw the importance of always partaking of the transformed food elements at every religious meal. Then, as the numbers of Christians increased, there was a focus on limiting the frequency in which Christians partook of the transformed gifts. We have, hopefully, gone back to the original practice of the Church. In order for our worship to be complete, we must partake of the transformed gifts since it declares that we join with Jesus Christ in offering our very lives back to God the Father in thanksgiving for the gift of life.

Are you thankful for the life that God has given you? The attitude of thankfulness is important. We must be able, in spite of any challenges that we face in life, be able to thank God for the gift of life. Why? Because it joins us to God in a unique manner. Think about it! Our thankfulness is true when we can, even though we face real and true challenges in life, turn our thoughts to God and thank Him for the gift of life. We must always remember that it was important to God that He create us. In some way He felt that His creation would be complete if He brought us into existence when He did.

Of course this way of thinking requires that we, perhaps, change the way that we usually think. We have to change the way that we think about the challenges of life. They are neither good or bad. They are just challenges.

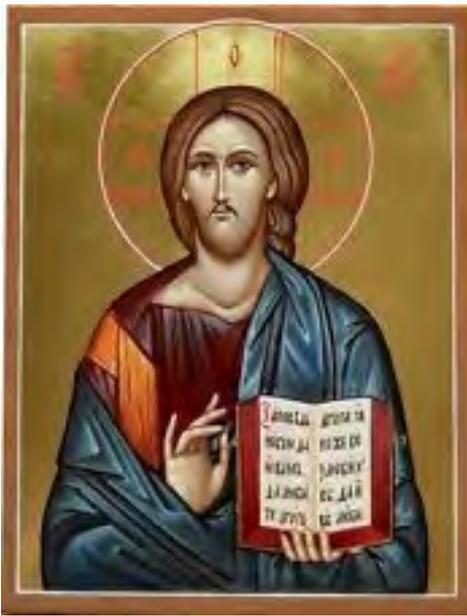


We also have to accept the fact that without certain challenges we would never change or grow. This also requires that we accept, as Jesus did, the challenges of life and seek the lesson that they are attempting to have us learn.

In so many ways, the transformed gifts of bread and wine tell us of how life must be transformed. We have to change if we truly want to understand the meaning and purpose of life. While life remains the same externally, we must internally change.

A lot of this depends on the way that we THINK. Too often we don't see that the way we think is the result of our up-bringing and our experiences in life. The real problem, as I see it, is that the "negative" (*the way we see events in our life*) events in our life quite often skew our thinking. We not really think, quite often, about our thinking! Too often prejudices and bigotry are a part of our thinking and we're not even aware of it. We have to stop and question our attitudes on a number of things in order to truly come to an understanding of how we think. ***Do we really think like Jesus?***

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST



In order to acquire the mind of Christ, three basic tasks must be undertaken. First, we must be deeply committed to a certain amount of prayer at a certain time every day, without fail. We must fulfill this task, not just as a rule or an obligation, but out of concern for cultivating our relationship with God. This is our salvation and joy.

Second, as St. Theophan the Recluse says, we must always pray as if we have never prayed before. This means we always approach the mystery of God without expectation or illusion, without letting our past success or failure distract us from our present contact with the Lord.

As God can only be found in the present, nostalgia can be harmful to prayer. In addition, imagination should never be used when praying as it can potentially be the conduit for demonic energy.

Third, we must always be willing to start again no matter how long it has been since we have prayed or what the outcome, good or bad, has been in the past. This also applies to our repentance so that no matter what we have done, seen, thought, or heard, we approach God for forgiveness, in search of our medicine. St. Paul reminds us: *Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:13-14), for a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise (Psalm 50:19).*

The Apostle Paul exhorts all Christians to “pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). This task is great and is often one of the most difficult to pursue, precisely because prayer affords such great reward: peace, life, renewal, enlightenment, joy in the Holy Spirit and ultimately our salvation. Our Lord asks each one of us: *Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation and fall away from your spiritual life. What I say to you, I say to all: Watch!*

In this context of prayer, watchfulness is key to our inner life. It allows for a healthy distance from our thoughts and potential release from our passions. The Jesus Prayer is essential in helping us to build up a sense of watchfulness in our heart and thoughts.

Hopefully everyone knows the Jesus Prayer.

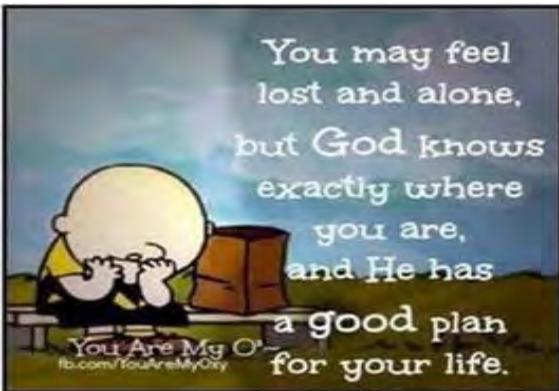


St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

NEXT WEEK

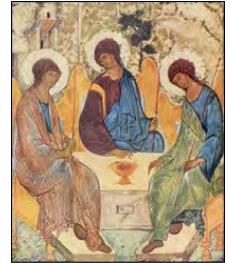
Beginning next week, August 5th, Deacon James Fraser, a deacon of the American Byzantine Church will be serving with me in preparation for his service in our Grand Rapids church where he will be for a period of about a year. Since there is no Ruthenian Church in Grand Rapids and his employment is reassigning him there, he will learn how to serve in the Ukrainian Church by serving with me. At the end of the year he will be ordained a priest. This should be a wonderful experience.



***Very little is needed to make a happy life;
it is all within yourself,
in your way of thinking***

CALLED TO HOLINESS

As I shared in the last issue of this article, an author I am reading, Matthew Kelly, felt that the “biggest” lie in the history of Christianity, which seems to be prevalent in our modern society is that Christians cannot even begin to achieve holiness which is the meaning and purpose of human life on earth. He claims that in a thousand ways every day we tell ourselves and each other that holiness is not possible. We don't use that language, but the fact that the word *holiness* has disappeared from our dialogue is proof that we consider it either irrelevant or unattainable. This made me think. I have been writing about our “call to holiness” for some time now. I, as you might guess, don't believe that it is unattainable. We may not, during this lifetime, gain the “fullness” of holiness but, I truly believe, that we can grow in our ability to be holy persons.



Why do I say this? Because I truly believe that the meaning and purpose of our earthly existence is to grow in holiness - to become more like Jesus Christ.

(Continued on page 8)

THE WORLD AS GIFT AND WORD



I have been trying to convey, in this article, the need for us to see all of creation as a “gift” and “word” from God to help us understand the meaning and purpose of our lives. Indeed we are a part of creation that somehow we are interconnected with creation. It has been given to us to help us come to a fuller understanding of the meaning and purpose of our lives. One of the biggest problems is that our “analytical reason” sometimes sees creation in a much different way than God intended.

Analytical reason see the world and each thing that belongs to it in a manner that is somehow separate. But in one who lives his existence completely, analytical reason is accompanied by an understanding that intuits the still higher meanings of things and

their supreme meaning through the different achievements of analytical reason. For example. Modern science has shown us that the DNA in all things is the same albeit in different sequences. What causes sequences to remain the same in the various species of beings? Is there, I would ask, a Divine Consciousness that keeps all DNA chemicals within their proper order and sequence?

According to our Christian view, reason makes progress in the knowledge of things and of the logical connections between them inasmuch as it is led by that reason or understanding that intuits the ever-higher meanings and the supreme meaning of existence. By the results it achieves at each of its stages, analytical reason is convinced that it has not reached the final and total explanation of reality, while intuitive reason, that is, the understanding that at each stage is intuiting still higher meanings, urges on the analytical reason to further investigations, at the same time making it conscious of the fact that the supreme or complete meaning of any individual reality that it has investigated is a mystery linked to the mystery of reality as a whole and of the supreme reality, a mystery that it will never come to know completely.

Human intellect has deciphered so much about creation and yet it has also identified that there is so much more that it does not understand. Although we humans have figured out much about creation, we don't have all the answers.

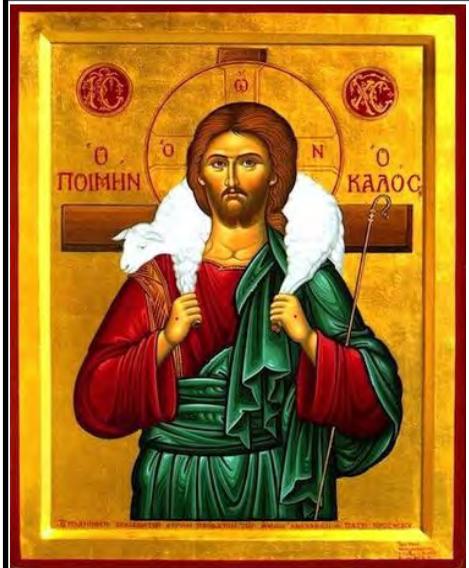
THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY - WHO IS GOD?

There are several events in the Gospels where the Trinitarian nature of God is revealed: examples are the baptism of Christ, the Transfiguration, and the agony in the garden. At Christ's baptism as the Lord ascends from the waters, the heavens open, the Spirit of God descends on him in the form of a dove and there is heard the voice of the Father saying, "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (or in the Lucan version: "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"). The Eastern Church celebrates the baptism of Christ on the Feast of Theophany, the 'manifestation of God'. In the icon of the baptism, the Trinity is intimated in the man, the dove and the Father's blessing. The Apolytikion of the feast (The Apolytikion [Greek: Ἀπολυτίκιον] or Dismissal Hymn is a troparion [hymn] said or sung at our worship services. It summarizes the feast being celebrated that day. In the Eastern Church, the liturgical day begins at sunset, so Vespers is the first service of the day. This is similar to the Jewish tradition) expresses its meaning in these words:

As you were baptized in the Jordan, Lord, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest, for the voice of the Father bore witness to you, naming you the Beloved Son; and the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the sureness of the word. Christ our God, who appeared and enlightened the world, glory to you.

Notice that it is the *worship* of the Trinity that is made manifest at this feast, not the doctrine; as we contemplate the mystery of Christ's baptism we are drawn to worship the Holy Trinity, who enlightens the world through the Incarnate Son.

At the Transfiguration, Christ appeared to



the inner three disciples - Peter, James and John - transfigured in his glory and accompanied by the prophets Moses and Elias. Again there is a voice from heaven, the voice of the Father saying, "This is my Beloved Son; again the Spirit appears, this time in the form of a cloud that descends on the scene, from which the voice is heard - the cloud of the divine presence, the *Shekinah*, that filled the tabernacle in the Old Testament. This time what is manifest is principally that the Son belongs to the Holy Trinity, and therefore that it is as God that Christ is going to His voluntary passion.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, July 29 - 10th Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 1
10:00 AM - Special Intention

11th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 2

Monday, July 30 - Silas & Others, Apostles
8:00 Am - Special Intention

Tuesday, July 31 - Eudocimus, Venerable
No service scheduled

Wednesday, August 1 - Procession of the Cross
8:00 Am - Special Intention

Thursday, August 2 - Translation of Stephen's Relics
No service scheduled

Friday, August 3 - Isacius & Others, Venerables
8:00 Am - Special Intention

Saturday, August 4 - Seven Youths of Epohesus, Martyrs
No service scheduled

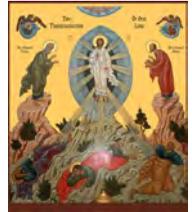
Sunday, August 5 - 11th Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 2
10:00 AM + Husband Michajlo and Parents in Ukraine;
Jaroslava Zalopanyj

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

Holiness is not beyond our attainment any more than becoming a genuine human being is beyond our attainment and achievement. It is all a matter of what we desire to achieve. We have been promised by God Himself, through Jesus, the Christ, that if we desire to grow in our ability to be a true human being, He will help us. Of course we first have to decide what it means to be a genuine human being.

The example we have with regards to what it means to be a genuine human being is JESUS. He is God's example of what it means to be human. Of course it takes first desire, then discipline and finally work to become like Jesus. But it is within our ability.

Do you truly want to become more like Jesus?



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)

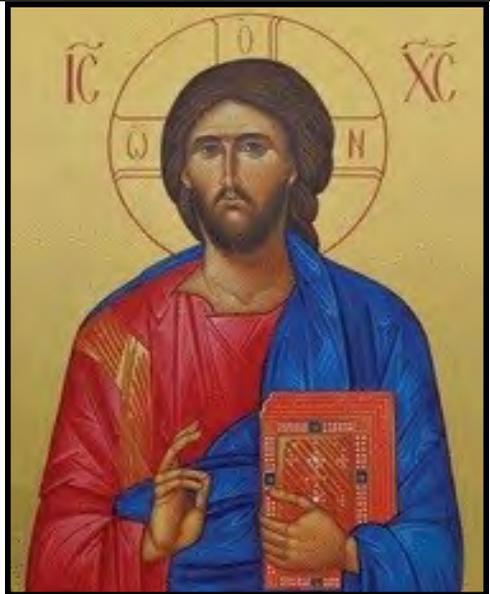
MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

The cosmic dimension of the Incarnation is implied in the Chalcedonian definition of 451 CE, to which Byzantine theology remains faithful: Christ is “of one substance with us in His humanity, 'like unto us in all things save sin.’” He is God and man for “the distinction of natures is in no way abolished because of the union; rather the characteristic properties of each nature are preserved.” The last sentence of the definition obviously covers the creative, inventive, controlling functions of man in the cosmos.

One of the questions that immediately comes to mind is that since Jesus was like us in every way except sin, did His Divinity control His human nature not to commit sin? This question only comes from us humans because we believe that we cannot live without doing “wrong things.” We human beings are quite capable of living without doing wrong things, believe it or not. It is all a matter of deciding that we will live in accord with our beliefs.

For example, we can live without judging our neighbors if we have a real and true desire to live according to the way of Jesus. We only judge others in order to bolster our own understanding of life. If we try to cultivate unconditional love for others that is based on our beliefs, we will not judge them.

Why is it that we humans have to judge and question the beliefs of others? Its all because we are secure in our own beliefs. If we truly believe in the things that we profess to believe, there is no reason to take offense or question the beliefs of others. We

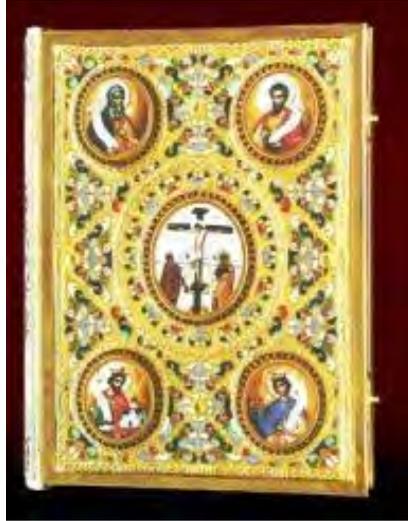


must come to a point where we truly know what we believe and then commit ourselves to those beliefs.

Maximos the Confessor indeed develops the ideas of the definition we have seen when he argues against the Monothelites, for the existence in Christ of a human “will,” or “energy,” stressing that without it authentic humanity is inconceivable. The Monothelites believed that there was only a “DIVINE WILL” in Christ. Christ had a human will, thus revealing that we humans can live like Him if only we have a desire to live like Him. So the question to each of us is: *Do we truly want to live like Jesus Christ?*

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY GOSPELS

The schematism of Matthew's Gospel as a whole is also reflected in details. It can be seen that Matthew usually abbreviates the miracle narratives of Mark. A definite pattern can frequently be discerned: introduction of the persons, the request, the reaction of Jesus, command and effect, and the reaction of the spectators. Matthew's writing here loses some of its vitality and results in a dry and monotonous style; this is not because Matthew does not know how to write vividly. By contrast Mark's vividness is in some ways artless.



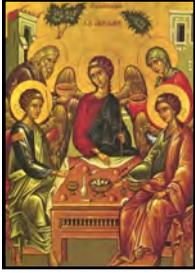
Matthew strives for a hieratic (*highly stylized or formal*) recital in which the miracle becomes a clear epiphany of divine power exercised without effort. When the heavenly reality is manifested, the event is detached from space and time. In Matthew the transfiguration of Jesus has begun.

It is no accident that the words of Jesus are quoted more frequently from Matthew than from any other Gospel. The Evangelist was deeply interested in Jesus' teaching; he presented the teaching in a compressed economical style that allows the impact of the sayings to be felt with no loss of power. This is not to imply that the sayings of

Jesus are feebly recounted in the other Gospels, but simply to give to Matthew the credit for careful composition he so fully deserves. It should always be remembered that in commentaries on the Gospels are not concerned with the question which Gospel reports more accurately "the very words" of Jesus; this question admits to no answer. The form of Matthew's sayings often reflects beyond doubt the experience of the primitive Church and its meditation on the person and the words of Jesus. Matthew is an excellent spokesman for this true experience and meditation. It is really

paradoxical that, in spite of the force of his style, he has sometimes recast sayings that in Mark's form were too harsh for his readers.

The simplest and most widely accept synoptic theory can be outlined. It supposes that Mark is the earliest of the three synoptics and that Mark was used as a source by both Matthew and Luke. This means Mark in the form in which we now have it. It supposes that neither Matthew nor Luke knew each other. The large amount of material that only Matthew and Luke have in common is not attributed to any form of interdependence, but their use of a common source, usually called "Q".



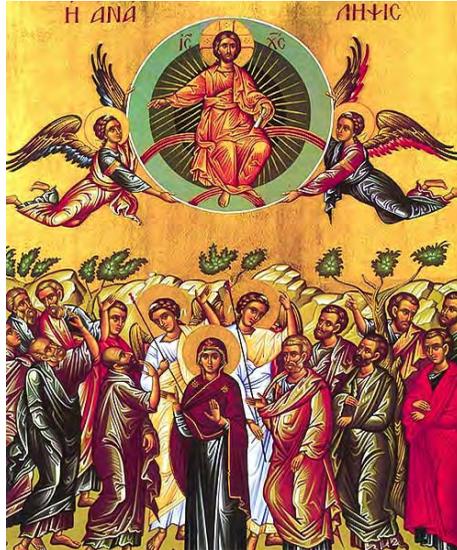
THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 30 10th Weekend After Pentecost July 28-29, 2018

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

I have been writing this article for a great length of time. I keep thinking about and wrestling with my understanding of the true “spiritually” of our Eastern Church. I find that it is so very, very different than that of the Western Church. It takes a much different approach to spirituality. In many ways I find that it is much closer to early Christian spirituality. First and foremost, it stand in awe of our incomprehensible God. It does not try to define Who He Is and, thankfully, does not really attempt to “define” Him. All the Eastern Church states is that she can only say what GOD IS NOT. He is not consumed with anger and He is not a punisher. Rather, He is a God Who has infused His creation with His Life and Spirit and only calls His creation to a great and truer union with Him. He has so designed, for example, human life that



Life's Journey is an Ascension to

it provides for each person the unique and real challenges that are needed to help us grow in our true understanding of life. The challenges that are presented to each of us are unique to us. Life knows how to guide us in growing in our understanding of life, if only we allow it to help us. None of the challenges in life are meant to hurt us or punish us. They are just challenges which, if we embrace them in the way that Jesus did, will help us to spiritually grow. Of course they cannot do this if we don't believe that what life's challenges are all about.

Remember, God did not create us out of anger. He created us to be His children. He is a Father Who only wants the best for His children. He really doesn't believe that the threat of punishment will help us to grow.

Is this the God you believe in?

Baptism is Iconic Imitation

How different and paradoxical is what happened to us who received holy Baptism! We did not really die, nor were we really buried, nor even were we really crucified and raised again. Everything that took place was iconic imitation. Yet they constituted for us our true salvation. Christ was actually crucified and buried, and truly rose again. He freely bestowed on us all these things, so that we might truly gain salvation by imitatively participating in the sufferings of Christ. What a surpassing love for humanity! Christ allowed nails to be attached to His immaculate hands, and suffered anguish. To me, however, He freely bestows salvation without pain or toil but by making me a communicant of His suffering.

Let no one suppose that Baptism is merely for the forgiveness of sins and adoption, as John's baptism was only for the forgiveness of sins. We should fully know that that Baptism effects in us the cleansing of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and additionally, it is equivalent to the sufferings of Christ. For this reason Paul shouts and says, "Are you not aware that all of us who were baptized in Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? So, we were buried with Him by baptism into death" (Rom. 6:3-4). ... I beseech you, then, to constantly maintain in your memory these things which you have sufficiently learned...

St. Cyril of Jerusalem