

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saints Joseph, Adrian and Natalie -- August 26th

REFLECTIONS ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 14th weekend after Pentecost, our readings are taken from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and again from Matthew's Gospel. The most profound statement in Paul's Letter, at least in my estimation, is this: *God is the one who firmly establishes us along with you in Christ: it is he who anointed us and has sealed us, thereby depositing the first payment, the Spirit, in our hearts.* These words are profound. What Paul is saying is that God has made the first move in establishing a genuine relationship with us by "depositing" His Spirit within us. Not only is God sharing His life-force with us, He has also placed within us His Spirit - the Spirit of Truth.

Our second reading this weekend, our Gospel, is the Parable of the Wedding Feast. It follows immediately after the parable we heard last week, that of the Wicked Husbandmen. The dissimilarities in detail between Matthew and Luke are so great that there is room for doubt that both Gospels are using the same source "Q". The evidence of extensive rewriting in Matthew is clear. Instead of a dinner Matthew has a royal wedding feast. In addition to the excuses presented by the guests in Luke, Mathew introduces a violently discordant note in the killing of the messengers and the ensuing war. This feature very probably represents the destruction of Jerusalem by the



Romans in 70 CE. It is not intruded into an existing form of the parable but is the reason for the change of the main figure of the parable from a host to a king.

The guests are intended to signify both the Jewish people and their leaders. In Luke only the Jewish people as a whole are meant. In Luke the parable then proceeds to the call of the Gentiles, signified by the invitation of anyone who happens to be in the neighborhood. Matthew has altered this part of the parable in such a way that it becomes a second parable. The theme of this modification is set by the introduction of the phrase "good and bad." Even after the rejection of the guests first invited, one still appears who is not suitably attired for a wedding feast. A clean white garment was the proper dress for such festivities. This feature should not be

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forced into an allegorical significance. The point of the second parable is that the reign contains wicked as well as righteous, the same point that is made in the parables of the tares and the net (Matthew 13:36-43, 47-50). In these parables the mixed condition of the Church endures until the Judgment. Matthew, by the use of his tag line, introduced an eschatological note that changes the image of the wedding feast from the Church to the eschatological Messianic banquet.

Language is used here that later became the language of predestination. No real complex theological theory lies behind the verse. The parable represents God as making every effort to bring guests to the eschatological feast. The invitation to all who pass on the highways and byways, even "the good and the bad" is clear. All these are called. The chosen are those who accept the call and do not reject the invitation, like the first guests, or who do not accept it fully, like the man who comes to dinner but is too much of a boor to dress in the proper manner. Because the parable does not exhibit Matthew's usually fine literary unity and coherence, there is no reason to postulate a compilation from various sources. Rather, it is a rare example of substantial rewriting by Matthew and it shows that he did not rewrite skillfully.

So we are all called to communion with God. It is up to us to respond positively to the invitation!

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EUCHARIST

It is truly my hope that my thoughts about the Eucharist will help my readers gain a deep and real appreciation of what we do when we come together to offer



worship to God. Our Divine Liturgy is truly a communal "THANKSGIVING" to God for the gift of life. We do this in union with Jesus Christ and others. I realize that perhaps at times we go through struggles in life which might make it more difficult to be thankful for life. Hopefully our communal prayers can help us to regain our thankfulness when we are having difficulties.

Jesus assured the Church that we pray to the Father, remember what He did and said and call upon God's Holy Spirit, that not only is the essence of the GIFTS changed, but we are changed in some way. We must always remember that during the Divine Liturgy we don't just pray that the gifts of bread and wine are changed but that we too are changed, bringing us ever into closer COMM-UNION with God and other humans.

I don't know about you, but I find that there are so very many wonderful and meaningful words in our Liturgy. Consider this: *We offer to You, Yours of Your own, in behalf of all and for all.*

What do these words mean to you?

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST



One of the greatest miracles for people of ancient times was coming to know of the Gospel message: that the True and Living God was Love; a personal and living God Who gave His only Begotten Son, “not to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:17). Gods of ancient times were remote, murderous and even required sacrifices such as children. The concept alone that the Christian God was a personal God of mercy, love and forgiveness, powerfully attracted great numbers; many even willingly faced the possibility of martyrdom for confessing their faith.

Christ came to bring Life to us because He Himself is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (John 14:6). This is the foundation which the first Christians, from St. Paul onward, understood as the key to salvation: that “forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy death, abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light” through the Gospel (Hebrews 2:14; Timothy 1:10)

For the first thousand years of Christianity the Gospel message was not understood from the now common Scholastic mindset of Anselm, one of the Western theologians. Today, Anselm’s ideas are unfortunately the most dominate perspective of Christianity in the Western world. The early Christians understood that Christ releases us from sin by destroying its root, death.

Anselm, the father of modern Scholastic theology and philosophy, is seen by some to be the first to develop a doctrine of Atonement apart from the Church’s biblical-patristic heritage. By adjust his theology to fit his society’s understanding of the time, Anselm utilizes a feudal ethic to rationally discern the unfathomable depth of the mystery of God.

The article I chose for the Adult Discussion Group, which can be found on our website, challenges Anselm’s notion of Atonement from an Eastern Christian understanding of what Jesus accomplished by His death on the Cross. Almost all of Western Christianity embraces Anselm’s ideas. The Eastern Church does not!



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Sunday September 2nd

I presented an article for our Adult Discussion Group. It is about what the meaning of Christ's death on the Cross. The Eastern Church has a much different approach to this topic. This is one instance where we differ from the Western Roman Catholicism.

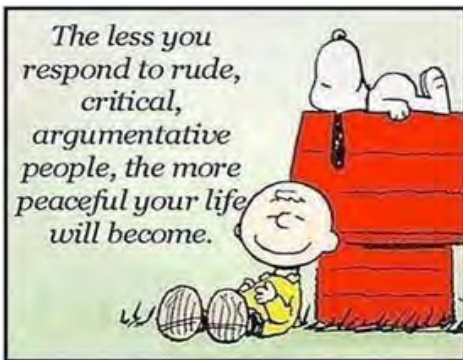
BEHEADING OF THE BAPTIZER

Wednesday, August 29th



While this is not a feast that we celebrate on a weekend because it is not one honoring Jesus or Mary, John was truly an important figure in

Christianity. If you can, why not offer a special prayer on Wednesday, remembering him.



CALLED TO HOLINESS

If you are a regular reader of this article, you will probably agree that it is similar to what people call a *stream of consciousness*. This has become this because



holiness has so very many different dimensions. It is my firm conviction that when we truly decide what the true *purpose* of life is, we are on the way to true holiness.

Purpose is the primary fuel of holiness. Understanding life's purpose creates a destination and a focus. We can only become fully engaged in life when we feel that we are doing something that really matters. Purpose is what inspires us, lights us up and floats our boats.

The search for purpose and meaning is one of the most powerful and lasting themes in every culture since the dawn of time. If put into the context of holiness, it can support us in our efforts at personal change and transformation. There is one quality we must possess to become holy and that is definiteness of purpose, the knowledge of what one wants and a burning desire to possess it.

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THE WORLD AS GIFT AND WORD



In this one article I have been attempting to present ideas about our integration into all of creation. We are a part of God's creation. All of creation is in a relationship. All things are meant to support and help us come to an understanding of their relationship with us and for the sake of our fulfillment.

We cannot consciously coexist among things without adapting them to our needs and without making provisions and reciprocal promises related to the fact of our interventions into the sphere of these created things, that is to say, without discovering and bringing into act the common general meaning of things and of men. This presupposes both the rationality of things and also the elastic quality they have within the framework of a rationality that can

be envisaged on a larger scale. What I am saying is that we must always think about creation and understand how it fits into the intended purpose of our lives. This also, I believe, requires us to treat creation with respect. While creation is given to us to help us achieve growth, it is not given to us to abuse! What I see in our modern world is that there is very little respect for creation and humans are abusing creation right and left. We can, however, refuse, at least in our own lives, to treat creation as sacred and a true gift to us from God to help us achieve the purpose of our lives.

I think that any true Christian must ask this question: *Why did God create the things He created and place humans at the center of His creation?* Humans are supposed to be *guardians* and *protectors* of creation. We are supposed to be judicious in our use of creation since it too is created by God. Creation is not given to us just for our pleasure - although it can give us pleasure - it is a part of God's idea of what we humans need in order to grow spiritually and personally change.

God gave us Earth as a present that can help us on our journey through life. How do we treat it? Both Francis, the Ecumenical Patriarch of the West and Bishop of Rome and Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of the East and the Bishop of Constantinople, have spoken out very strongly about our duties and responsibilities to protect and conserve Mother Earth, the home God gave us for our spiritual growth.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY - WHO IS GOD?

I have been exploring, in this article, ideas about the Holy Trinity. In the last issue I shared the idea that the sense of the Incarnate Son as sent by the Father and turning to the Father in prayer is the fundamental *Leitmotif* of St. John's Gospel

This realization of the dual aspect of Christ - leading us in prayer to God, and also being the One to whom we pray, 'done of the Trinity' - is something that needs to be explored as we try to understand the Holy Trinity. As we try to understand the Trinity, I would try to share with you a relationship within the Godhead between Father and Son, articulated in prayer, brought about a realization of God as Trinity.

You might sway that what I have just said only makes clear a relationship between the Father and the Son: What about the Holy Spirit? It was indeed, popular among Western scholars in the last century or so to maintain that in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity there was a 'binitarian' stage, a stage of the 'two-in-oneness' of the Father and the Son in the Godhead. Such a view seems much less popular nowadays, and indeed it seems to be based on a false model of doctrinal 'development', as if the doctrine of the Trinity is really 'later' than the New Testament (NT) and the revelation of Christ. Rather, the realization that the One Godhead embraced persons in relationship, a realization that may have taken centuries to articulate in the language that the Church later regarded as canonical, nevertheless that realization seems to be aboriginal.

But what about the Holy Spirit? The language about the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures is much less straightforward.



Sometimes it seems to be a matter of someone personal, but on other occasions the language seems more general, referring to the divine presence or activity. First, however, we must make one thing clear. What I have presented during these last several weeks, is not, in any sense, a *proof* of the relationship between the Father and the Son in the Trinity. Certainly not in the sense of explaining *why* there are Father and Son in the Trinity. It is a point frequently made by the Fathers that we cannot answer the question "Why"?

It is all a matter of faith. If you believe in the Trinity, why do you believe this?

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, August 26 - 14th Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 5
10:00 AM + Special Intention

15th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 6

Monday, August 27 - Poemen, Venerable
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, August 28 - Moses the Ethiopian, Venerable
No service scheduled

Wednesday, August 29 - Beheading of John the Baptizer
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, August 30 - Alexander, John & Paul, Patriarchs
No service scheduled

Friday, August 31 - Deposition of Mary's Cincture
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, September 1 - Simeon, Venerable - Beginning of the Year
No service scheduled

Sunday, September 2- 15th Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 6
10:00 AM + Special Intention

St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
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Pastor

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LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony
*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

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But what is a purpose, exactly? The dictionary defines it as: *The reason why something is done or why something exists. It is something set up as an end to be attained; an intention.* I think my readers can immediately make the connection between knowing the purpose of life and holiness. Where

the goal is the *what*, the purpose is the all-important *why*. Purpose gives goals meaning. When the intention to make something happen is weak –when you're just not feeling the "fire" - its not going to happen. People that ignore purpose don't go very far in life. Nobody can love what they don't feel in their hearts. So, **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR LIFE? DO YOU REALLY WANT ETERNAL LIFE?**



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

MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

This article is complicated because it deals with a 'mystery'. Jesus Christ, we believe, is a God-Man. There is no real way that we can comprehend this. First, the fact that Almighty God chose to become a human is beyond our comprehension. Our belief is that He created us. Then, He chose to become one of us in the Person of His Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, is beyond our comprehension. Why would God do this? He did it because of His love for His creation. He created humans in His "image and unto His likeness" as seen in the Person of Jesus Christ. Why? Because the love that exists between the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity is "generative". All genuine love is generative. He had to create humans as a result of His Love. We are the products of His love. Therefore, we are called to be His children. But He could not "demand" that we love Him. That would be against His nature. Therefore, He had to send His son to show us how to voluntarily return His love. Jesus did precisely that.

Much like all human parents, they desire their children to return their love. This is something that cannot be demanded but, only, wished for. God is similar to our earthly parents in this

regard. There is no demand to return His love but, rather, there is a hope that the love will be returned.

Jesus is the model of return love to the Father. He shows us how this can be accomplished. He voluntarily and freely returned the Father's love. He is our model to imitate. Of course this requires that we see Him as God and Man. Does He show us how to return the Father's love. I sincerely believe He does.

How does He do this? He loves others! Consider how He lived. He responded to every request He got from others for help. When He saw someone in distress, He reached out and tried to help them. He was centered on "loving others as Himself" and as His Father loved others.

What can we learn from Him? We can learn that in order to grow in our love of God we must learn to love others, regardless of how they treat us. This, of course, is a challenge since we humans have a natural response - reject those who hurt you or disregard you. The Jesus response is to base His response on what He believes, not on how others treat Him. That is the challenge! We need to learn how to treat others in accord with our beliefs not in accord with our feelings!



UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY GOSPELS



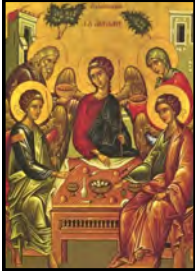
As I shared in the last issue of this article, there are points of contact between Matthew and the Talmud - the rabbinical writings - that are not found in the other Gospels.

These points of contact are more than an interest in the Law and allusions of Jewish institutions. Scholars assert that Matthew sometimes moves in the world of rabbinical thought. He is familiar with rabbinical dialectic and actually uses it. He describes genuine rabbinical discussions. Certainly nothing in this implies undue liberty with the traditions. If Jesus was recognized in any character in the Jewish community, it was as a rabbi. That he engaged in rabbinical arguments and discussions is certain; but the other Gospels are less familiar with this world of thought than Matthew, and they report it in less detail. These methods are employed by Matthew because he wishes to make a point that is directed toward Judaism: the thesis that Jesus Messiah is the new Moses and the new Israel, and the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. This thesis, which could only be directed to a Jewish audience, is supported by the type of argument accepted in Jewish learning. Matthew reflects not only the rabbinical

discussions of Jesus himself, but controversies of Jewish Christians with their fellow Jews.

Matthew cites the Old Testament (OT) 41 times. Of these quotations 21 are common to Mark and Luke, and evidently Mark is the source. But 20, nearly half his total, are not found in Mark and Luke; and 10 of these 20 are found in no other New Testament (NT) book. Here we enter an area where Matthew shows his greatest originality. Of the 41 texts 37 are introduced with a formula; the most common formula is: "that it might be fulfilled". Matthew's idea of fulfillment is not the idea of the fulfillment of a prediction, but of the growth of a reality to its destined fullness. There is a certain rough similarity between Matthew's use of OT texts and the type of midrashic (*Midrash—an ancient commentary on part of the Hebrew scriptures, attached to the biblical text. The earliest Midrashim come from the 2nd century AD, although much of their content is older*) interpretation found in "QL"

Matthew was, obviously, writing to a Jewish audience. He decided that he would use an approach that they were familiar with and therefore he ingeniously cast the teachings of Jesus in this manner. He was not writing a history of Jesus and His teachings. He was being an apologist (*a person who offers an argument in defense of something controversial*).



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 34 14th Weekend After Pentecost August 25-26, 2018

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

The Fathers' theology of blessedness has points indisputably in common with Greek eudemonism (*a system of ethics that bases moral value on the likelihood that good actions will produce happiness*). They often stated explicitly that they had borrowed the expression 'the happy life' from the philosophers to indicate what Scripture meant by eternal life. They certainly were quick to add that the prophets had spoken of blessedness even before the philosophers had, and that Christ and David began their teaching with the same word, 'blessed'. The phrase 'inexpressible joy' in the First Letter of Peter (1:8) has had a long history in spiritual literature.

As to terminology, the Septuagint avoided the Greek terms of the *eudaimonia* group; it used *makarios* (i.e., *supremely blessed, by extension fortunate, well off, blessed, happy*) and words of the same family exclusively. Aristotle considered these expressions identical. Nevertheless, in order to understand the scope and meaning of the many maxims of Wisdom on true happiness they should be set in the religious climate in which they were uttered. The Beatitudes of Christ present a program of Christian blessedness based on a radical reversal of values which is made possible through Jesus, who is himself the highest value. One must however admit that Christian "eudemonism" never took on a systemic form, but has been expressed instead



Life's Journey is an Ascension to

through images and symbols.

The living God calls man to eternal life in him. He is 'the fountain of life.' Christ is the source of life and bestows it abundantly. He is the life. The passage from death to life is repeated in the one who believes in Christ.

Our Eastern spirituality is based on such thinking!

His Body, His Blood

And this food is called among us "Eucharistia" [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Savior, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, 'Do this in remembrance of Me, this is My body;' and

that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, 'This is My blood;' and gave it to them alone.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, ... we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

St. Justin the Martyr