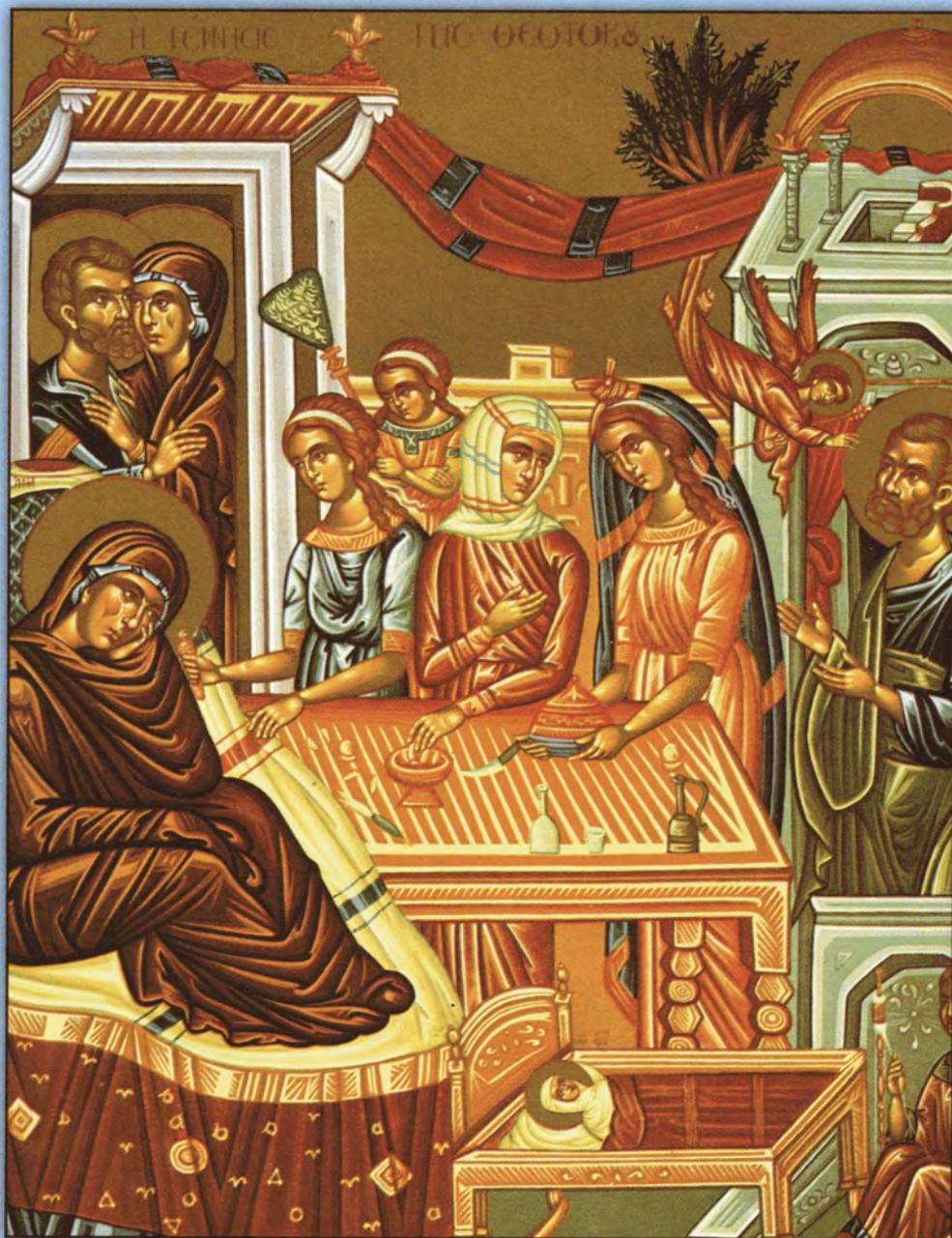


FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



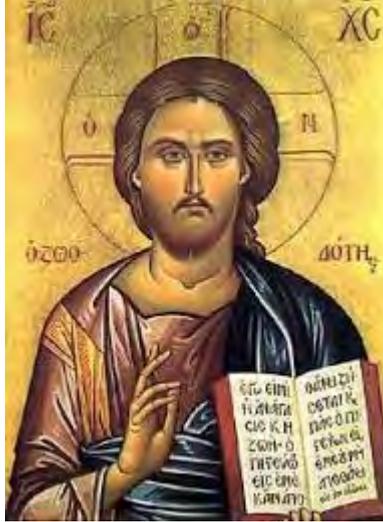
Icon of the Nativity of the Theotokos -- September 8th

REFLECTIONS ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 15th weekend after Pentecost and at the beginning of a new church year, our assigned readings are again taken from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and Matthew's Gospel. Paul's words again express his belief that God's life is within us. He writes: "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us". This is not easy to understand at first glance. If you think about it, however, you come to understand that Paul is saying that the life we have within us is God's own life force - LIGHT. This was clearly manifest in the human person of Jesus. All living beings are brought into existence and maintained in existence because of God's life force. God is truly joined to His creation and yet He is more than His creation.

As we begin this new church year, we hear in Matthew's Gospel the "GREAT COMMANDMENT." A lawyer, attempting to trip up Jesus asks Him: "Teacher, which commandment of the law is the greatest? Jesus' response is: "You shall love the Lord your God

with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. The second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" While all three synoptic gospels have a version of the great commandment, they diverge more than usual in their versions of this incident. The question is placed in terms of the rabbinical understanding of the Law. The rabbis counted 613 commandments in the Law, of which 248 were positive precepts and 365 were definitely prohibitions. These commandments were distinguished as "light" and "heavy" according to the seriousness of the subject. This type of



question was normal in rabbinical discussion, and it is difficult to see how it could have been conceived as a "trial" of Jesus. On the other hand, he is represented as claiming the power to interpret the Law independently and even to restate it. The answer that Jesus gives quotes two texts of the Law that form the foundation of the new morality of the gospel. Jesus arranges these two commandments in such a way that there is no parallel in Jewish literature. He binds love of God with love of neighbor.

Think about this!

THOUGHTS ABOUT THE EUCHARIST

After more than 50 years serving the Divine Liturgy I am still in awe of the genius of both Basil the Great and John Chrysostom in formulating the two Liturgies we use for our worship. It seems that the depth of thought and action contained in these services can never be totally fathomed. In the contemporary order of the Liturgy, the exclamation “Let us love one another” takes up so little time that it is almost impossible for us to truly hear it - to hear it not only with out outer but also our inner ear. For us today it is just one of the exclamations that precede the symbol of our faith, the Creed. But in earlier times, this was not so. We know from the liturgical evidence of the ancient Church that a *kiss of peace* (which we have practiced in the past but which we currently do not just because of the many viruses that are present in our world) was actually performed after this exclamation and the entire Church, the entire gathering, took part in it. John Chrysostom said: “When the time comes for the exhortation of the mutual reception of the peace, we all kiss each other.” And this rite is not only eucharistic, for the kiss of peace comprised an important and inalienable part of all true Christian worship. Thus, it was performed after a baptism, when the bishop kissed the



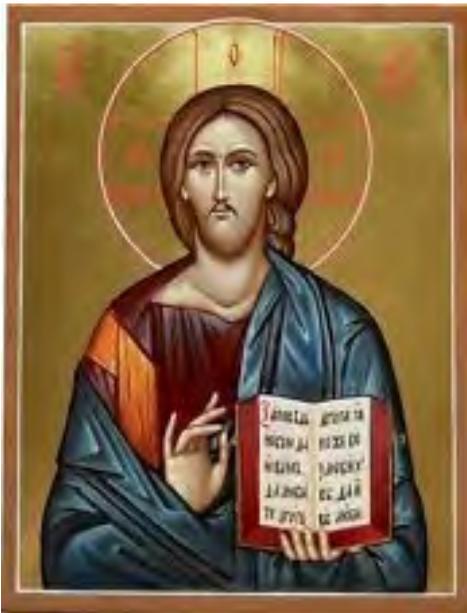
anointed with the words “The Lord be with you.”

It is obvious from the history of this moment in the liturgy that it underwent a substantial change. From an *action* - and, moreover, a common action - it was transformed into an *exclamation*. And with this change the content of the summons contained in this exclamation also changed, at least in part. The contemporary exclamation *Let us love one another* is a call to a certain condition, while in its ancient forms it summoned the gathering to a specific act: “greet one another”. And we have evidence that this act was performed even without any exclamation.

It is obvious that, as has occurred more than once in the history of worship, an exclamation that itself was derived from an action then gradually displaced or narrowed the action to the sanctuary alone, where to this day it is performed between the celebrating priests and deacons.

This is something that I really have to think about reintroducing in the Liturgy. It’s a very meaningful act. It is only when we truly love one another that we can profess true belief in God Who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So look in the very near future for the reintroduction of this very meaningful action within the Liturgy.

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST



In the last issue of this article, I introduced the thoughts of Anselm, the father of modern Scholastic theology. He can be seen as a bridge between St. Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas. By using classical philosophy and logic as instruments of discovery (*instead of a means of interpretation*), Anselm's doctrines made the infinite truth of God subject to a created finite intellect. In contrast, the Scriptures, in particular Paul's writings, are quite clear that God's revelation "is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12).

The current Roman Catholic position, originating from Anselm, officially states that "justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ, who offered himself on the cross as a living victim...whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men." The question then is raised: How does this Atonement happen and who is it offered to? The Eastern Church likewise see Christ as the One Who gave His life as a ransom for many.

Christ is the ransom that was paid to death as St. Athanasius the Great says in light of Hosea 13:14: "The ransom was offered to death on behalf of all so that by it He once more opened the way to the heavens." In stark contrast, the Anselmian Roman Catholic doctrine asserts that the debt was paid to God the Father to satisfy His infinite wrath, a byproduct of offense to His justice and honor. This doctrine of Atonement also states that sin is an affront to the Divinity, for which mere man cannot make reparation; it regards sin as a transgression in the legal sense rather than the Eastern Church's perspective of an illness of the heart and will. In this light, Anselm's assumption is that a "divine honor" has been wounded and is in need of "satisfaction." This necessitates a legal transaction by which Christ pays the Father with His own blood the debt incurred by man's sin. The Resurrection of Christ does not occupy a central place in man's redemption.

My readers will see in the coming issues of this article that the Eastern Church DOES NOT embrace this idea.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

ADULT DISCUSSION GROUP

Sunday September 9th

I presented an article for our Adult Discussion Group. It is about how the Eastern Church sees the death of Christ on the Cross. This is one instance where the Eastern Church truly differs from Western Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. You've got to read it.

PARISH ACTIVITY

Sunday, September 16th



Our Parish Council announces a special event to mark the beginning of the new Church Year. We will have a PANCAKE BREAKFAST on the third Sunday of September. This will take place immediately after our Divine Liturgy. Please take the time to sign-up on the sheet in the vestibule.



CALLED TO HOLINESS

If you have been following this article, you will understand that in more recent issues I have been suggesting that the call to holiness

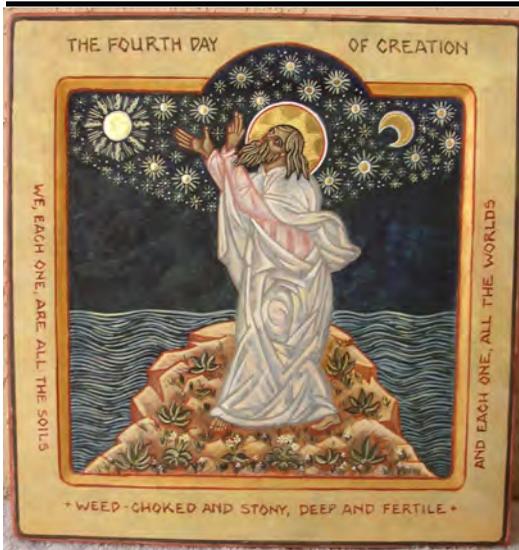


is a call to create "Holy Moments" - that is moments when you allow God to take center stage in your thoughts. There is no limit to the number Holy Moments you can create, other than you the consciousness to grasp each moment as it is unfolding.

Some people will ask genuinely, "How do I know what God wants me to do in any given moment?" This is a great question. We know that God wants us to live holy lives, grow in character and virtue and become the best-version-of-ourselves. These three things are interconnected. You cannot grow in character and virtue and not become a-better-version-of-yourself, and vice versa. You cannot become a-better-version-of-yourself and not draw one step- closer to God. And every time you grow in character and become a-better-version-of-yourself, you are living a Holy Moment.

The first thing to be clear about is that our mere *(Continued on page 8)*

THE WORLD AS GIFT AND WORD



I have found this article to be very difficult to focus. I know what I wanted to convey in it, but it is not easy. The rationality of the world exists for the sake of the human person and has its culmination in the human person; the human person does not exist for the sake of the rationality of the world. It was a personal God who had the human person in view when the world was created. But just as the knowledge of things progresses and grows more sophisticated, so too does language progress in richness and nuance. This progress moves toward the infinity of the divine Word in whom are comprised in an undifferentiated way the infinite roots, that is to say, the meanings of created things.

Through created things God has

given humans two gifts: first, the possibility to think and to speak, for this arises from the very fact that God conceived the inner principles of things and posited them in existence, having created for them beforehand a material covering adapted to the level of humanity; and second, the need to conceive and express these inner principles so as to be able to make use of them in reciprocal human relationships and in this way bring about that dialogue between themselves and God, which God himself willed to have with them, so that human beings might respond to God through their own thinking and speaking. It is precisely in this that all things find their meaning. The human person discovers ever new alternative dimensions of creative things not only through his own reason and new combinations and uses of the things themselves, but also through the feelings and continual new thoughts his body produces in its contact with things and through the every changing relationships between himself and his neighbors, which use created things as their medium.

All this says is that as we interact with all of creation, we gain new insights into the nature of all things and understand, hopefully, their relationship with us. We can come to know ourselves, others and God by truly understanding our creation. Think of all the new things that humans are discovering through the use of various technologies. All the new discoveries tell us more about God and ourselves.

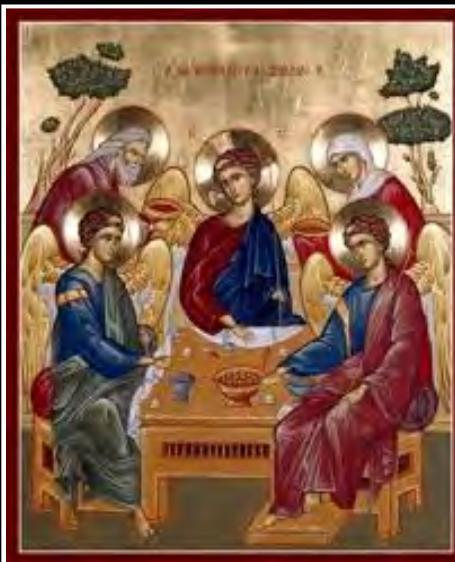
Look around you and understand!

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY - WHO IS GOD?

In the last issue of this article, I stated I began to address the issue 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"? In relationship to the Godhead; only in matters concerning the created order can we hope to answer this question, and not always then. All we can hope to do is catch some glimpse of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, but we shall never understand it. The case of the Holy Spirit may well be more mysterious. However, it does not make it less important.

There are, however, some things we can say. First, as Fathers, such as Athanasius and Basil, pointed out when the divinity of the Holy Spirit was called into question in the fourth century, the role of the Spirit is to effect the presence of the Holy Spirit in those who believe. Deification takes place through the Spirit in power. The Holy Spirit is the power of God to effect anything that is brought into existence. *(Think about our Liturgy. The gifts of bread and wine are only transformed or changed when we call upon the Holy Spirit to change them. Even though we call upon the Father and remember the words of the Son, the gifts are not transformed until we invite the Holy Spirit to change the gifts).*

The Holy Spirit is God's power to "DO THINGS." All of the sacraments, mysteries, involve the descent of the Holy Spirit in power. None of this would make sense if the Holy Spirit did not belong to the Holy Trinity. The Holy Spirit comes in answer to prayer, to his being invoked in worship alongside the Father and the Son. Baptism is in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christian worship is addressed to the Father, through the Son,



and in the Holy Spirit - or more briefly, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. 'Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit' is one of the most frequent phrases in Eastern Christian worship. It is in what appear to be liturgical passages, preserved in the early writings of the Church, including the New Testament. In the earliest Christian hymn we find the most consistent witness to the Trinity, O Gentle Light, which is in Vespers and the Presanctified Liturgy.

Once the Church believed that Jesus was also God, they had to wrestle with the fact Three-In-One - Triune.

THE GREAT MYSTERY!

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

Rectory: (313) 582-1424
Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance
By Appointment

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

Funerals
*Membership of an immediate
family member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
313.563.5509

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.431.9554

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

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

16th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 7

Monday, September 3 - Anthimus, Martyr - LABOR DAY
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, September 4 - Babylas, Bishop-Martyr
No service scheduled

Wednesday, September 5 - Zachary & Elizabeth

Thursday, September 6 - Miracle of the Archangel Michael
No service scheduled

Friday, September 7 - Sozon, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, September 8 - Birth of Mary, the Mother of God
No service scheduled

Sunday, September 9 - 16th Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 7
Parish Celebration of the Nativity of the Mother of God
10:00 AM + Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

openness to doing the will of God is pleasing to Him - as are our efforts to discern what God is inviting us to do and experience in any given moment. And perhaps most important, we will get better at this as we continue to practice it. Even though we may fumble around and make many mistakes, each effort to know and do God's will attunes us ever more closely to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. In our first attempts to seek and do what God is calling us to do in any given moment, we may hear only the faintest whisper. And this whisper will be competing with the many other voices we hear each time we have a decision to make. It does get better and easier!



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

MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

When we talk about the Person of Jesus Christ, we say that within Him there was a “hypostatic union” - that somehow He was fully and truly God while, at the same time, being truly and fully human. It was His “Personhood” that united His Divine and Human Natures. His personhood was individual and separate from the rest of the Godhead and is, indeed, separate from His Divine Nature. Therefore He, as a Person, joined His Divine and Human Nature, which He took from Mary, into one Person.

The hypostatic union implies that He, Jesus the Logos, made humanity *His own* in its totality. Thus the Second Person of the Trinity was indeed the subject, or agent, of the *human* experiences, or acts, of Jesus. We don't even try to understand how this was possible. It is a mystery. All we can say is that God, in His infinity wisdom and mercy, decided that He would come and show us humans how to live in order to achieve the primary purpose of human life: namely greater union with God.

One can only imagine that such a concept of a God-Man would generate great controversy and speculation. Thus, in the early Church, we see that

there were many opinions about Who Jesus Is. Arian and Nestorius are two priests, who had many followers, who, in their desire to understand Who Jesus is, came up with ideas which the whole Church decided were false or untrue. The Church decided that Jesus had to be fully and truly God and fully and truly man so that He could be a model for us on how we are to live in order to gain the “fullness of life” or “eternal life.”

Jesus becomes the true instrument for our “AT-ONE-MENT” with God. By His very life He showed us how to think and behave so that we might become “ONE-WITH-GOD” which is the, of course, the reason for our earthly life. Jesus showed us how “humans” should think and behave in order to become truly the children of God. However, God does not demand that we enter into communion

with Him. He only wants His love to be voluntarily returned to Him. What real father demands that his children love him? Love has to be voluntarily given and received. The Jesus way of living and thinking makes it possible for us, as humans, to voluntarily return God's love and to be united to Him. It also has great reward for us. We benefit greatly for embracing the Jesus way.



UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY GOSPELS

I would continue sharing information about Matthew's Gospel. Matthew is called a Jewish Christian Gospel, and in this it differs from Mark and Luke. The allusions to Judaism and the use of the Old Testament (OT) are a part of this pattern. The central theological purpose of Matthew is to show that Jesus is the Messiah of the OT. The Jews should have recognized him, but they did not. The messiahship of Jesus emerges against a background of Jewish unbelief and hostility. Jesus is Son of God and Son of David. The humanity of Jesus is transfigured by softening the emotional reactions attributed to Jesus in Mark and by the hieratic style of the miracle stories. In these details Jesus does not appear less human but as a man with a mysterious and superior personality. Matthew retains a number of the texts in which the "Messianic Secret" of Mark appears, but he continues his Gospel after these passages as if they had not occurred. Jesus is transparently the Messiah in Matthew, and only willful unbelief can obscure this truth. The obtuseness of the disciples to the messiahship of Jesus, a basic theme in Mark, is softened by Matthew. Again He keeps a number of Mark's texts, but continues with his own material in such a way that the



disciples appear to have a good understanding of the messiahship, if not a complete one. In this respect Matthew has certainly retrojected the faith of the apostolic church into the Gospel narrative; but in spite of this it is the faith of the apostolic church that his Gospel proclaims.

Jesus is Messiah, but not the king Messiah of popular, Jewish expectation. Matthew identifies Jesus as the suffering Son of Man whose saving work is accomplished through his passion and death. He is the lowly Messiah, a friend of the poor because he is one of them. Jesus renounces wealth and power and calls

upon his disciples to do the same. He has no political message; only Matthew has the verse in which Jesus says that those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. The reign comes with Jesus, but it is not a reign of the king Messiah over a Jewish world empire. The reign is accomplished by free submission to the sovereign will of God.

Matthew is a Jewish Gospel, but it is also a Gospel of the Church. The reign of God in Matthew is clearly identified with the community of the disciples, a community that identifies with Jesus Himself. It is important, I believe, that we understand the Gospels.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 35 15th Weekend After Pentecost September 1-2, 2018

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

At the very core of Eastern spirituality is the notion of “repentance”. That we are all in need of repentance is beyond dispute. The very first words preached by both John the Baptizer and Jesus were: “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.” However, it is important that we have a correct idea about repentance.

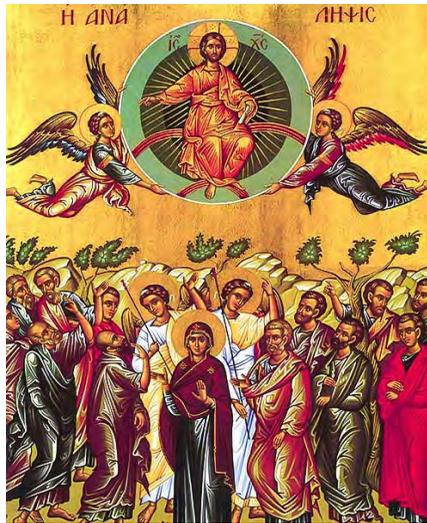
Repentance, says St. John of the Ladder, “is the renewal of baptism.” We know from Holy Scripture and our life in the Church that baptism means dying to the old man and being raised together with Christ in newness of life.

So as St. John teaches us, repentance is the renewal of baptism, then it too must signify the renewal of the very same death and resurrection in Christ that we receive at baptism. But what exactly is this kind of death, and what is this kind of resurrection? The short answer to this question, as

St. Paul says in Romans 6:7, must be *that* death which sets us free from sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.

So, in practical terms, how do we die to sin? Christ Himself tells us

plainly that “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and 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 and honest citizens? Most certainly not. For if Jesus is truly the “way”, then surely, if we would be His disciples, we must follow Him, follow His



Life's Journey Is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

way. His way is, as you might already guess, the “way of the Cross.”

The way that He endured His own death by crucifixion, gives us a real insight into what His “way” is. Eastern spirituality is based on our attempts to make His “way” our “way” of living!

More to come!

Hail Theotokos!

We shall never cease to hymn to you as one should, O Theotokos, and say: Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

Hail, O you, through whom Joy will shine forth!
Hail, O you, through whom the curse will disappear!

Hail, O Restoration of the Fallen Adam!

Hail, O Redemption of the Tears of Eve!

Hail, O Peak above the reach of human thought!

Hail, O Depth even beyond the sight of angels!

Hail, O you who have become a Kingly Throne!

Hail, O you who carry Him Who Carries All!

Hail, O Star who manifest the Sun!

Hail, O Womb of the Divine Incarnation!

Hail, O you through whom creation is renewed!

Hail, O you through whom the Creator becomes a Babe!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

And why do we cry, "Alleluia?"

Hail, O hidden Sense of the Ineffable Plan!

Hail, O Belief in Silence That Must Be!

Hail, O Forecast of the Marvels of Christ!

Hail, O Fountainhead of truths concerning Him!

Hail, Celestial Ladder, by whom God came down!

Hail, O Bridge leading earthly ones to heaven!

Hail, O Wonder, ever-thrilling to the angels!

Hail, O Wound, ever-hurting to the demons!

Hail, O you who gave birth to Light ineffably!

Hail, O you who told no one how it was done!

Hail, O you who surpass the wisdom of the wise!

Hail, O you who enlighten faithful minds!

Hail, O Bride and Maiden ever-pure!

From the Akathist to the Theotokos