

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Christ Teaching the Apostles (Luke 6:31-36)

REFLECTIONS ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 19th weekend after Pentecost, are readings are taken from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians and also Luke's Gospel. Paul writes about his visions and revelations. He shares with us that he begged the Lord to rescue him for a "thorn in the flesh" which had plagued him for a number of years. He then shares with us the Lord's response to his request this: *My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection.* This simply tells us that God gives us the strength to face any particular challenge that may confront us. It is all a matter of belief and not a matter of trying to escape from the challenges of life. The Lord's response allowed Paul to then

state: *I boast of my weakness instead, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.* We need to think about the true implication that these words have for us as we journey through life.

Our reading from Luke's Gospel truly lays out the teaching of Jesus. It is concerned about *love of one's enemies.* This passage challenges us to truly listen to the message of Jesus

and to understand what He really suggested as a way of living.

One of the poignant lines in the reading is this: *If you do good to those who do good to you, how can you claim any credit? Sinners do as much.* Jesus is then quoted as also saying: *love your enemy and do good!*

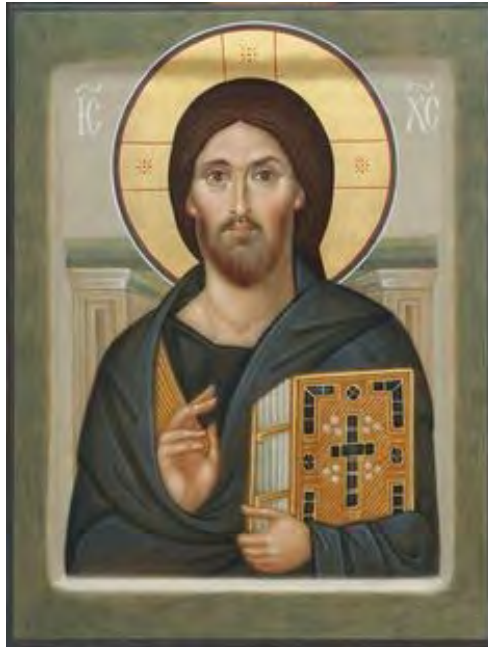
So the Jesus message is all about

what we need to do in order to grow as human beings. It suggests ways of living that are truly "transformative". If you think about it, when I learn to love others, even my enemies, in a way that is unconditional, I am changed. I become someone more like Jesus.

Of course I have to believe that God became incarnate in the Person of Jesus

to show me how to live so that I might become truly God's child - I might grow spiritually which is the purpose of this present life.

I find that this task is more and more difficult in our modern world where the "typical" response is to hate our enemies and any who are not like us. This challenges us to truly believe the message of Jesus. **DO YOU?**



THOUGHTS ABOUT THE HOLY EUCHARIST - THE DIVINE LITURGY

It is the attitude and belief of our Church that it is in the “eating and drinking of the changed gifts” that the Lord is present. We do not have the same type of approach to the Eucharist that is common in the Western world. This is to say, “adoration of the Blessed Sacrament” is not within our tradition.

This is dramatically seen in the fact that the “changed gifts” must be consumed at every service. This sometimes makes it different when a priest ‘miscalculates’ how many will receive communion. The dried Blessed Bread that we retain in the tabernacle is there only so that it might be available for the sick and dying. The particles are not there to ‘augment’ the amount of communion that is distributed during the Eucharist.

It is when we join together as believers in Jesus Christ and join Him in offering our lives back to the Father in thanksgiving for the gift of life, that our worship is genuine and that we are joined with Christ.

Think about it. The bread and wine we use are symbols of life (*we need food to survive*). So Jesus, recognizing this, tells us that when we join with Him in offering up to the Father the symbols which represent our lives, that He, Jesus, is truly present to us. It is critical, I believe, that we understand how our Church worships God.

Our Church calls us to join with Jesus in offering our lives back to the Father in thanksgiving. We must see that the bread and wine offered not



only represents Jesus and what He did, namely offering His life back to the Father in Thanksgiving for the gift of life, but also represents us.

When we approach our worship in this manner, it becomes helpful to our personal transformation. Again it is the “intent” to offer ourselves, with Jesus, to the Father in thanksgiving for the gift of life, that our worship becomes real and complete. We don’t just offer Jesus up to the Father. We must join with Jesus in this act of thanksgiving.

Our Eucharistic Service is not an act of worshipping Jesus. Rather it is an act of worshipping God Who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I suspect that in many instances this requires us to “change” the way that we think about the Divine Liturgy - Our Thanksgiving Service (i.e., *Eucharistic Service*). This particular understanding of the Eucharist requires us to think about what we are doing and to **HAVE THE INTENTION TO JOIN WITH JESUS IN WORSHIPPING THE FATHER, THE GIVER OF LIFE.**

I sincerely hope that these thoughts will stimulate my readers’ thoughts about the Eucharist and about our worship of God.

Would love to hear your thoughts on this!

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST



As I suggested in the last issue of this article, the Anselmian doctrine of Original Sin does not exist in the Eastern Church's biblical-patristic mindset. Due to a faulty translation of Romans 5:12 in Jerome's Vulgate (*When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. His sin spread death throughout all the world, so everything began to grow old and die, for all sinned*) St. Augustine formulates the doctrine that not only do all men inherit mortality and the inclination to sin, but they are guilty and legally liable before God for Adam's sin. This doctrine profoundly affects the perspective of how one is saved

and from what he is saved. Augustine makes a twofold distinction: a hereditary moral disability (*the inclination to sin*) and an inherited legal liability (*guilty before God for Adam's sin*). The Council proceeded, the Council of Trent that was only recognized in the West, to anathematize all who refused to accept the doctrine of Original Sin: that is, that all had received Adam's guilt for his personal sin.

In this system, if Christ paid the debt to the Father, and if the sacramental life placates the wrath of the Father, then isn't it no surprise that Protestantism developed as it did, questioning the need for the Church? It might be said that Anselm's doctrine makes the Protestant Reformation possible, even inevitable. Consequently we must ask: How then does Christ's saving act become effective for each person? And how is one freed from the Augustinian notion of Original Sin? For the Reformers, it was justification by faith alone which trusted in Christ's vicarious sacrifice apart from the Church.

For Roman Catholics, justification came through the Pope and the church by the grace of holy baptism. Atonement theology effectively makes the Roman Catholic Church the means of a legal justification which pronounces 'not guilty' through the sacraments, rather than a process which restored the innate 'goodness' of man.

From this we see that there are several different interpretations about what God revealed to us about life. This means that there can be more than one answer. One is not right and another wrong.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



PATRONAL FEAST

November

11th

Remember to save this date. We will be celebrating our Patronal Feast on that date. Founded in May of 1952, our parish has, for the last 66 years, been under the patronage of St. Michael the Archangel. We celebrate his feast on Thursday, November the 8th. More details will be announced in the very near future. **SAVE THE DAY!**

Being a little weird is just a natural side-effect of being awesome.

- Sue Fitzmaurice



fb/theidealist

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

CALLED TO HOLINESS

Several issues ago I introduced an idea that author Matthew Kelly introduced me to, that is *Holy Moments*. The truth that Holy Moments are possible reminds us that



in the face of the overwhelming problems in our world, we can wake each day and joyfully share God's truth, goodness and beauty with everyone who crosses our path.

The modern world is a complex world, and the problems our world faces are complex problems. So the temptation is to turn to complexity for answers to these complex problems. But the answer is not more complexity and the solutions to our complex problems are much simpler than we seem willing to realize. We have become hypnotized by complexity, but the essence of Christianity is simple. In that simplicity, Christianity is good and beautiful, positive and hopeful. Goodness, beauty and hope - these are things that people need. They are things that each of us need. And if you and I don't allow these things to flow through us into the world, then who will? When will they? *(Continued on page 8)*

MAN, THE TARGET OF GOD



The prayer of the three youths in the fiery furnace represents the fifth characteristic of personhood which is to be an intercessor for the whole world. In his prayer, the man who is a true person is able to lay one hand on the shoulder of God and the other hand on the shoulder of man and to become a mediator before God. When man becomes an intercessor for the whole world in his prayer, he becomes, like Christ, another Adam. Christ is the New Adam, Who bore in Himself all humanity, suffered with it, died with it and glorified it. Likewise, man as a realized hypostasis brings before God in intercession every creature.

Psychologically this means that when we become less self-centered and more other-centered,

we become more like Jesus. The whole process of becoming more like Jesus requires that we become less self-centered. It is a tendency of human nature to be self-centered. We tend to worry about ourselves, think about our own self interests and to disregard, at least unconsciously, others. The process of growing in our likeness of God - in the likeness of Jesus - means growing in our interest of others before ourselves.

We humans are frightened by this. What does it mean if we think about others before ourselves? Will we be taken advantage of? Will we lose ourselves? The process is to become other-centered rather than self-centered.

The sixth and final characteristic of personhood is that the man who has become a true person is as if beyond all barriers. All barriers are abolished for him and he becomes truly free. This divine freedom is manifested within him in the love that he is able to have even for his enemies. Love for enemies is a divine characteristic which is imparted to him through the Holy Spirit. The presence of this love is a token of the presence of the Holy Spirit in man. Without the grace of the Holy Spirit this love is impossible, because it is far above human nature.

Can you truly say that you love your enemies - the enemies of our country - as yourself? If not, why not? Do the values of our country so influence your thinking that you forget the words of Jesus? I would rather put my hope and trust in Jesus than the values of my country!

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY - WHO IS GOD?

As I shared in the last issue of this article, John Damascene outlined various ways in which the sense of the mystery of God has been preserved in Christian theology. He tells us that we can only say what God is not but confesses that he believes that God is, therefore, ineffable, incomprehensible, invisible, inconceivable. Furthermore, we do not know God, we only know 'about' Him; we do not know his being or essence, only his activity or power. John also evokes a distinction between *theologia* and *oikonomia* - theology and economy - God in himself, essentially the Trinity and God in his dealings with the created order. We know the latter much better than the former, though even in the economy much is beyond our understanding. Remember, our belief is that God is a Mystery beyond our understanding. St John refers, as well to the distinction, introduced into Christian theology by one we call "Dionysios the Areopagite," between *kataphatic* and *apophatic* theology - theology of affirmation, in which we affirm what God has revealed of himself and theology of negation, in which we deny that our concepts match up to the reality of God. Apophatic theology being more fundamental.

It is essential to remember that in the Eastern Church, God remains a mystery which cannot truly be defined. In the Western Church, there is a real attempt to "define" God which usually results in people making God into their image and likeness rather than making man in the likeness of God. The Western world has managed to manipulate the facts to make God in the image of man. God, obviously, is like man in-so-far-as God always embraces the prejudices of man. This



of course makes God hate all the things that men and women hate and makes Him support all the things that humans either accept or reject. It is important, in the Western world, that God supports all the "political" ideas that humans formulate.

In the Eastern Church and world, God is not limited by what humans believe and think is appropriate. He is beyond human political ideas. In fact, through Jesus, He calls us to reject the political ideas of humans, which are all calculated to support the ideas of the few and rich, and to embrace the ideas of God which are that all humans are created equal and that all are important.

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 30 - 19th Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 2
10:00 AM + Special Intention

20th WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 3

Monday, October 1 - Protection of the Mother of God
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, October 2 - Cyprian, Bishop-Martyr
No service scheduled

Wednesday, October 3 - Denis the Areopagite, Bishop—Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, October 4 - Hierotheus, Bishop-Martyr
No service scheduled

Friday, October 5 - Charitina, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

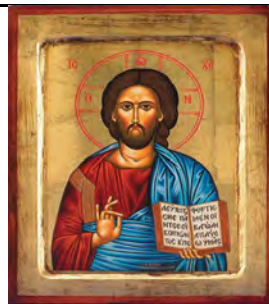
Saturday, October 6 - Thomas, Apostle
No service scheduled

Sunday, October 7 - 20th Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM + Stanislaw Krowicky; Leo & Mary LaDouceur

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)

And can the world and all the people trapped in misery wait? Now is *our* time. Can on truth change the world? I know with absolute certainty that this is possible. The single truth that Holy Moments are possible and that you and I - with all our faults and flaws, defects and weaknesses, brokenness and constant need - can collaborate with God and create a singly Holy Moment is life-changing.

In a world that can seem so dark at times, God gives you and me a candle and a match and says, "You are the light of the world." You? Me? I know, it seems impossible, but it is both the story of Christianity and the legacy of each Christian. It has to be our story and our legacy.



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

MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

I am sure that my readers have come to the conclusion that I have been attempting to present the Eastern Church's understanding of Jesus Christ and that it might be different from that of the Western Church. Our Eastern perspective, which is Byzantine, is truly different from the Western Church but is equally as Catholic and true. I presented, if you will recall, words of St. John of Damascus, one of the leading Eastern Fathers (*he wrote many of the prayers we have for our Easter Resurrections Matins and also our funeral services*). So he is no stranger to our worship. His text, as quoted in last week's Bulletin, is certainly representative of the Byzantine perspective. It represents this author's true affirmation of the hypostatic union and modifies the character of human nature. But this modification is clearly seen in the framework of a dynamic and salvation-oriented Christology. The humanity of Christ is "paschal," in the sense that in it man passes from death to life, from ignorance to knowledge, and from sin to righteousness. However, in many less-justifiable cases, the ignorance of Jesus, as described in the Gospel texts, is simply interpreted as a pedagogical



device or "appearance" on the part of Christ to show His "condescension." This obviously unsatisfactory solution is rejected by other authors who affirm Christ's real, human ignorance. "Most Fathers admitted," writes the anonymous author of the *De sectis*, "that Christ was ignorant of certain things; since He is in all things consubstantial with us, and since we ourselves are ignorant of certain things, it is clear that Christ also suffered ignorance. Scripture says about Christ: "He progressed in age and wisdom" [Luke 2:52]. This means that 'He was learning what He did not previously know.' Obviously, Byzantine theologians are authentically concerned about recognizing in Christ *our fallen humanity*, but their minds are less clear about the moment when, in Jesus, this humanity became the transfigured, perfect and "natural" humanity of the New Man.

The Church struggled with what it understood about Christ. If He was truly and fully God and truly and fully man, what does it mean? As man, he had to be ignorant, just as we are, of certain things, although as God He might not be. How do you explain a mystery? Jesus is both God and Man!

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY GOSPELS

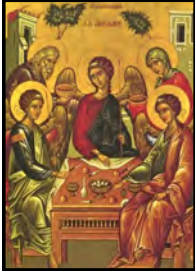
That the canonical Greek Matthew is not a translation of an Aram original is universally accepted by scholars. It can be retranslated into Aramaic no more easily than Mark or Luke. Its Greek is superior to that of Mark. It contains a number of wordplays (6:16; 21:41; 24:30) possible only in Greek. The 21 Old Testament (OT) quotations found in Matthew, Mark and Luke are given according to the Greek Septuagint (LXX) which the Byzantine Church accepts as the official text. In the quotations particular to Matthew the Hebrew text is followed more closely but with affinities to the LXX, and the indications are that Matthew did not use the Aramaic Matthew for these quotations. They may come from a handbook of quotations. Matthew's dependence on Mark for his narrative passages is clearly beyond doubt; and of special pertinence here is Matthew's dependence on Mark in the story of the call of Matthew - a passage that in the hypothesis of the authorship of Matthew must be autobiographical. If an Aram M existed, it would not be the exact original of the present Greek Matthew: the Greek Matthew would have to be such a substantial and thorough rewriting as to eliminate all traces of the original. If Matthew was the author of the Aram M, he cannot



be the author or translator of the Greek Matthew.

The case for an Aram M was ably present by J.J. Lagrange, and is at present upheld by P. Benoit, two noted scholars. Most scholars do not find the arguments for it convincing, however. The doubts can be summed up simply in the absence of any trace of the existence of an Aram M except for the quotation of Papias and the use of Papias by writers who depended on him. If the Greek Matthew is the original Gospel - and everything suggests that it is - then it cannot be attributed to the tax collector Matthew, one of the Twelve. There is nothing to suggest the personal identity of the author.

So as you, my readers can see, when you attempt to take a very fundamental approach to the Gospels, you run into problems since we cannot even be sure who the real authors are of the Gospels. This, however, does not lessen their importance and their role in the Church. In using the Gospels we also look at Tradition, namely how the Church has seen and used these special writings. They truly represent the early Church's attempts at understanding the revelation of God through the Person of Jesus Christ. They are not history but, rather, writings that call us to faith.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 39 19th Weekend After Pentecost September 29-30, 2018

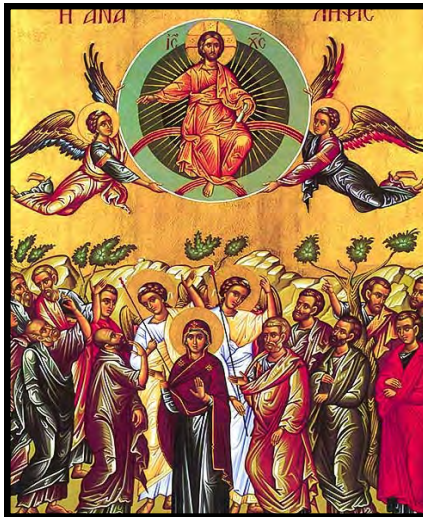
THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

Our Eastern Spirituality calls us to “stand before the mystery of God.” We are always standing before God, for there is no place where God is not, as opposed to a place where he is: wherever we are we are before God. But there are places where, from human perspective, the presence of God is more apparent to us, places where it is less easy for us to forget that God is here.

These places are many and various, and our sensitivity to them is in part a matter of our own upbringing and history. There is, for example, a strong tradition that mountains are places where God is encountered. The reason is partly because mountains are not easily modified by humans. We can drill through them and carve paths over and around them but they withstand any radical modification. Other places are more easily covered

over with what humans have done to make themselves at home in them, but mountains - and rivers and the sea - are resistant to human fashioning.

The first step in the pursuit of Eastern Spirituality, in coming to know God in accordance with our traditions, is the rediscovery of this sense of standing before God (*standing is a more customary attitude for prayer in our Eastern Church tradition than kneeling*) and pre-eminently standing before God in church. This is the place where people pray, where the liturgical services are



Life's Journey Is an Ascension to

held, a place surrounded and defined by icons. We have a multitude of icons in our churches so that we might feel and understand that we are in a spiritual dimension - in God's Kingdom.

We can, however, develop a sense of continuously standing in the presence of God. ***This is the goal!***

Be Merciful, Just as Your Father is Merciful

Perhaps no other attribute of God, besides His love, attracts us to Him as does His mercy. This quality distinguishes Him from all false gods. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, the endless procession of saints extols His mercy, repeating the refrain: "His mercy endures forever!"

His mercy caused Him to devise a plan of redemption that would reach every human being, moved Him to give His only Son as a ransom for all sinners, established His kingdom and His Church, inspired the Scriptures, provided the sacraments, forgives all our transgressions and heals our diseases, and gives us peace, joy, and hope and time for repentance. Great is His mercy!

That indescribable, overflowing, and undeserved mercy melts away all our pride and arrogance, fills us with gratitude, and gives us a new birth, a new life, a new will, and a new viewpoint. Now we look at our fellow inhabitants of the earth with the eyes of our merciful Father.

And so the chain reaction goes on from God to us to others. As His mercy endures forever, so may our mercifulness – as that of His children – be likewise enduring.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for His mercy endures forever. Amen.