

SUNDAY OF THE SEVENTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:5-15)

REFLECTIONS ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 21st weekend after Pentecost, we also remember the Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council. There are multiple readings assigned, each, I believe, having a very distinct message for us. I would first reflect on the readings assigned for the weekend of Ordinary Time. These are taken from Paul's Letter to the Galatians and Luke's Gospel.

In the section that we read from Galatians, Paul presents his basic teaching - the basic teaching of Christianity. His first premise is this: man is not "justified" by observing laws or rules but, rather, by belief in the teachings of Jesus which lead to behaviors that are like those of Jesus.

He then concludes that belief in Jesus and His way of living should lead us to truly believe that "Christ is living" within us. Our belief should help us transform ourselves so that we can say that we no longer live but that Christ is living in and through us.

Our reading from Luke's Gospel presents one of the more well-known parables of Jesus, namely the parable of the sower of the seed. This parable clearly captures what so often happens to us human beings,

namely that we often let things get in the way of us fully and completely embracing the teachings of Jesus.

Think about the parable. The seed falls either on the footpath, rocky ground, among briars or good ground. It is only when the seed falls on good ground can it grow and produce fruit.

The soil of a footpath represents a certain real hardness of heart. The rocky soil represents a certain fickleness, that is not really committed to helping the seed grow. The brier-filled soil represents getting too involved with the things of the world so that the word cannot grow.

How do I make the soil of my mind and heart truly fertile? It means working to develop an open spirit to

the word of God and doing all to promote its growth within me.

God has shared His Word with us, that is His Son Who has shown us how to live in order to gain the most out of life. It is for us to believe this and then to do all in our power to promote its growth within us.

Why not do an assessment of the soil of your heart and mind and determine what kind of soil is within you.

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2—Reflections)

On this 21st weekend after Pentecost our Church would also have us remember the Fathers of the 7th Ecumenical Council. Although I have shared information before about the first seven councils of the Church, I would share the following about this specific council.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council, convoked by the Empress Irene, met at Nicaea from September 24 to October 13, 787 CE. The Patriarch Tarasios presided. The council ended almost fifty years of iconoclast persecution and established the veneration of the holy icons as basic to the belief and the true spirituality of our Eastern Christian Church.

As the Synaxarion says, "It was not simply the veneration of the holy images that the Fathers defended in these terms but, in fact, the very reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God."

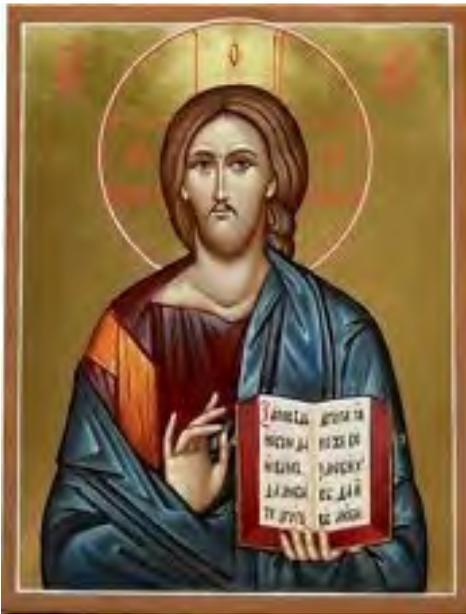
The second Council of Nicaea is the seventh and last Ecumenical Council wherein both Catholic and Orthodox bishops participated. In holding the seventh place, the Council of Nicaea has taken to itself the symbol of perfection and completion represented by this number in Holy Scripture. It closes the era of the great dogmatic disputes which enabled the Church to describe, in definitions excluding all ambiguity, the bounds of the true Christian Faith. From that time, every heresy that appears can be related to one or other of the errors that the



Church, assembled in universal Councils, has anathematized from the first until the seventh Council of Nicaea.

The struggle of Iconoclasm was not merely a conflict between two conceptions of Christian art. Deeper issues were involved: the character of Christ's human nature, the Christian attitude towards matter, the true meaning of Christian redemption. Icons truly represent that Christ was a true human being in every sense of the word as well as God. Icons also tell us of the personal "transformation" that we humans are called to embrace in order to become the humans God intended when He created us.

ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST



The beginning of the Eastern Church's view of the Atonement is the Incarnation. The middle of this process is the Cross, through which Christ, as St. Basil the Great explains, "gave Himself as a ransom to death, in which we were held captive and descending through the Cross into Hades that He might fill all things with Himself. By this He loosed the pangs of death." The end of this process was His rising on the third day. Through His rising, He "made for all flesh a path to the Resurrection from the dead, since it was not possible for the Author of Life to be a victim of corruption.

For the Eastern Church, the

the heart of the matter of redemption is *Theosis* and re-creation: "that in the dispensation of the fullness of time, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both that which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him." The Good News is that all of God's good creation is called to enter the Church, which is union with the Triune God. Through the union of the natures in the God-man, our Lord Jesus Christ, the created world and the uncreated God are united.

Our goal is not sin-redemption but, rather, *deification*: that Christ might become formed in us. Through participating in Christ's Death and Resurrection in the sacramental-ascetical life, we become living members of Christ's Body in this world, delivered from death, the inclination to sin, and the darkness which comes from it. Being healed in our will by following the teachings of the Lord through the empowering action of the Holy Spirit, the Eastern Christian is crucified with Christ, dying to the passions and sinful pleasures of the world (*the old man*), and becomes a partaker of the immortal energies of God through the Church. As Christ is continually formed in us, we become by grace everything that God is by nature. This is the Eastern Church's view of *Atonement* and its view of *Salvation*.

Hopefully my readers are beginning to understand the difference between the Churches of the East and West with regard to these two key ideas: *Atonement* and *Salvation*. Different approaches to the purpose of this earthly life.



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

FEAST DAY CELEBRATION

Sunday November 11th



This year our Parish Council has elected to try something different to celebrate our Patronal Feast. Instead of having a catered dinner, we will be meeting at a

restaurant: CARIERAS ITALIAN which is located on Telegraph Road, north of Ford Road and South of Warren Road. It is on the West side of Telegraph. This will allow members of the Council to enjoy the celebration without the responsibility of "clean-up."

Donation: \$20 with a cash bar.

There will be a choice of four different entrées and the meal comes with salad or soup and coffee. There will be dessert.

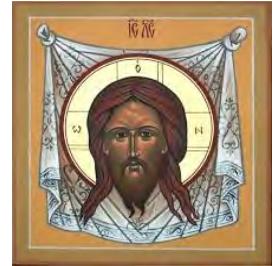
RESERVATIONS ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY

For those needing transportation, we will be making arrangements. The Reservation Sheet is coming.

In this life, when you deny someone an apology, you will remember it at time you beg forgiveness

CALLED TO HOLINESS

If you have been following this article I am sure that you will understand that it is my belief that *holiness* is not only possible but is truly the *goal* of this



earthly existence. I think that you will also understand that it is my belief that there is not just one way to achieve the desired *holiness*. While our tradition has already identified a number of very different ways to go about growing in *holiness*, each of us must attempt to identify a way for us to grow.

Holiness, for me, is advanced when I

- (1) desire to become more like Jesus;
- (2) understand that holiness is the goal of this present life;
- (3) challenge my thinking and behavior and change both to put on the thinking and behavior of Jesus;
- (4) actively and concretely engage in doing things that will help me become more like Jesus; and
- (5) truly believe that God came in the person of Jesus to model for me how humans should live.

So, I guess I'm saying, that *holiness* is becoming the

(Continued on page 8)

MAN, THE TARGET OF GOD



For man, God is the eternal event that has no beginning. If God had not wished to create man and make him a partaker and communicant of His perfection and His life before the world began, He would have remained forever unknown to all created beings and an incomprehensible mystery, Christ, the Son and Word of the eternal Father, Whose incarnation constitutes the solid foundation of Christianity's knowledge of God, is the bearer of every revelation of the Divine Event.

Revelation of the true God is *not after man* for it infinitely surpasses man's measure and for this reason our Lord Jesus Christ condescended to become our "only Teacher". In His Person He bore the fulness of the knowledge of God

and testified: *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.* He vouchsafed to show us in familiar and understandable words the way to the eternal truth, and He *made know unto us* all that He heard from His Heavenly Father. He spoke about the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven "in parables" and "proverbs. Nevertheless, He sent "another Comforter, that He may abide with us forever" to remind us of His words, to explain His parables and to interpret His proverbs. In other words, Christ became for our sake the unique source and incomparable Event of authentic theology.

However, by 'suffering death', Christ inherited all the nations and made 'friends' with whom He shares the knowledge of God and His councils. Christ's friends are also partakers in the mystery of His theology. He imparts the anointing of His Holy Spirit to them, that they may be taught of God, and have the right understanding to know and confirm the testimony of the true God. By their heavenly life and words, Christ's friends, the saints of all ages, also become theological events, who keep the light of faith burning and the sensation of the personal God alive in the world.

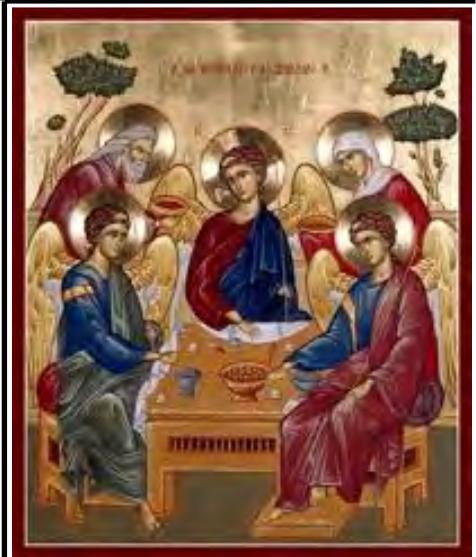
It is extremely important, I believe, that we see God as PERSONAL. Why? So that we can develop a relationship with Him. He is not just a "concept" or an "abstract idea". He is our FATHER.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY TRINITY - WHO IS GOD?

I shared in the last issue of this article, some of the thoughts of John Damascene. It seems to me that the doctrine of *perichoresis*, that is *coinherence* that John introduced into Christian theology, expresses will the realization that within the Trinity there is relationship, a relationship expressed in prayer. There is, as it were, a kind of mutual yielding within the Trinity: the Father makes space for the Son and the Spirit (*to use obviously inappropriate, spatial language*), and the Son and the Spirit yield to the Father as they turn to him in prayer. This is expressed, in the rare economy of paint, in the Trinity icon of Andrey Rublev (*as seen here*). The mutual gestures of the Father (*on the left as you face it*), the Son who becomes incarnate (*in the middle*) and the Holy Spirit (*on the right*), are gestures of mutual respect, yielding and therefore affirmation.

There is a beautiful passage in a short treatise by Clement of Alexandria, *Who is the rich man who is being saved?*, which was composed perhaps at the end of the 2nd century. It reads thus:

Behold the mysteries of love, and then you will have a vision of the bosom of the Father, whom the only-begotten God alone declared. God in His very self is love, and for love's sake He became visible to us. while in his ineffability He is Father, in his sympathy with us he has become Mother. By His loving the Father became feminine, a great sign of which is the one he begat from himself; and the fruit born of love is love. For this reason he came down, for this reason he put on human nature, for this reason he willingly suffered what belongs to being human, so that having measured to the weakness of those he loved, he might in return measure us to his own power.



It flows from love's very self, Clement is saying, that the Son became human in the Incarnation. His self-emptying (measuring himself to our weakness) expresses his very being: the love that reveals that he belongs to the Father's bosom. In emptying himself, the Son does not become something else, he simply expresses himself, expresses what he is: love from love.

Our doctrine of the Holy Trinity is, perhaps, one of the greatest mysteries of our faith and, at the same time, one of the most beautiful. Indeed the greatest power of our Triune God is love which pours forth to us in great abundance. It tells us that we are loved.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, October 14 - 2st Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 4
10:00 AM + Andrew Farmer; Len Mier, Jr. (40th Day)
+ Michajlo Zaloplanyj; Wife Jaroslava

23rd WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 5

Monday, October 15 - Euthymius, Venerable
No service scheduled

Tuesday, October 16 - Longius, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Wednesday, October 17 - Hosea, Prophet
No service scheduled

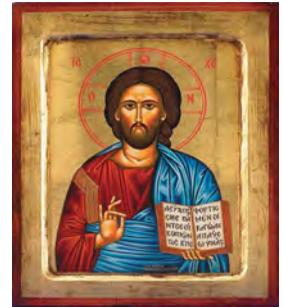
Thursday, October 18 - Luke, Apostle & Evangelist
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday, October 19 - Joel, Prophet
No service scheduled

Saturday, October 20 - Artemis, Great Martyr
No service scheduled

Sunday, October 21 - 22nd Sunday after Pentecost - Tone 5
10:00 AM + Len Mier Sr; Len Mier Jr

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)
of human that God intended when He, from all eternity, conceived me as a person. I also believe that God designed life to present to me all the challenges I need to personally change myself, growing in my likeness of Jesus. While I believe that I cannot achieve complete *holiness* in one lifetime, I do know that I can grow in *holiness*. Since God has revealed through Jesus that life is eternal, I know that I am called for all eternity to engage in growing in my likeness of God, as seen in the person of the human Jesus. True *holiness* means having a true and genuine relationship with our Triune God. It means becoming less self-centered and more other centered - becoming 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)

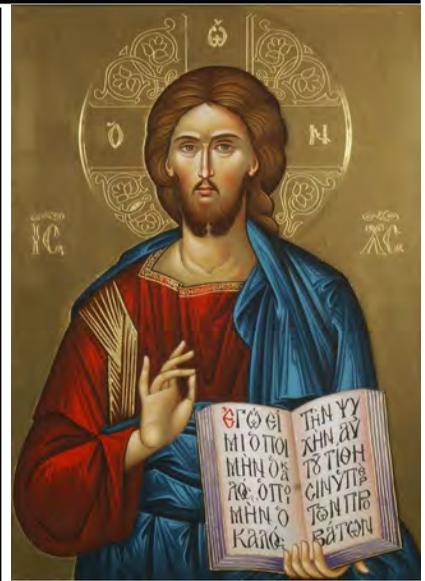
MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

I ended that last issue of this article by sharing what Theodore the Studite said about the icon of Christ. He said that the icon is the best possible illustration of what is meant by the hypostatic union. What appears on the image is the very hypostasis of God the Word in the flesh. In the Byzantine tradition the halo around Christ's head always has the inscription "The One Who Is", which is the name that God gave Moses when He appeared to him in the Burning Bush. It is neither God's indescribable divinity nor His human nature alone which is represented on an icon, but the person of God the Son who took flesh: "Every portrait", writes Theodore, "is the portrait of an hypostasis (*person*), and not of a nature."

To paint an image of the divine essence or of God before His incarnation is obviously impossible; just as it is impossible to represent human nature as such, other than symbolically. Thus symbolic images of Old Testament theophanies are not yet "icons" in a true sense. But the icon of Christ is different. With bodily eyes, the hypostasis of the Logos could be seen in the flesh, although its divine essence remained hidden. It is this mystery of the Incarnation which makes possible the sacred icons and requires their veneration.

The veneration of any icon is based on our veneration of the Icon of Christ which brings God in His Divine Nature into union with human nature (*a mystery which I have been writing about in another article in this Bulletin*).

The defense of images forced Byzantine thought to reaffirm the full concrete humanity of Christ, an additional doctrinal stand against Monophysitism (i.e., *the belief that in the person of Jesus Christ there is only one nature - wholly divine or only subordinately human - not two*).



But it is important to recognize that this stand was made neither at the expense of the doctrine of the hypostatic union nor at that of the Cyrillian understanding of the hypostatic identity of the incarnate Logos, but in the light of the former Christological formulations. The victory over iconoclasm was a reaffirmation of Chalcedonian and post-Chalcedonian Christology.

It is the formulation of Chalcedon that we Eastern Christians embrace to its fullest: *Jesus Christ is fully and truly God and fully and truly man*. One of the great Christian mysteries that we embrace in faith.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY GOSPELS

Hopefully you, my readers, have, over the past number of weeks, gotten a better idea about the Gospel of Matthew. Since we are now reading from the Gospel of Luke during our Divine Liturgies, I thought that I would now share information about Luke's Gospel.

Christian tradition has consistently named Luke, Paul's "beloved physician" as the author of the Third Synoptic Gospel. Irenaeus is probably the earliest witness. In the beginning of the 3rd century, confirmation comes from Africa (Tertullian), from Egypt (Clement of Alexandria), and possibly even earlier from, Italy (Muratorian fragment). As one scholar points out, Luke was not a prominent figure in the apostolic church. He was neither an apostle nor an eyewitness of Jesus' earthly life. It is much more difficult, therefore, to explain how Luke's name later became attached to the Gospel than it is to accept the Church's long-standing tradition.

The fullest defense that the author of the Third Gospel was a physician has been made by several authors (i.e., Hobart and Cadbury). They have shown that one cannot prove from the language of the Third Gospel that its author was a physician. Not only is the same vocabulary shared by other ancient Greek writers who were certainly not medical men, but it also seems certain that physicians in those days did not possess a technical language all their own (*as they do in our present age*). Nonetheless, Luke makes enough significant changes in his sources, particularly in what he drew from Mark, to make the tradition about "Luke the physician" very plausible (e.g., Luke's reference to a "great" fever in 4:38; his statement in 5:12 about the "man covered with leprosy"; his omission of a derogatory remark about physicians in 8:43). Finally, in Acts 28:7-10, Paul and his traveling companion, Luke, are highly honored for curing many sick



persons on the island of Malta. A number of other texts in Luke conveniently fit with the description of a medical person.

Another tradition that is voiced by Eusebius, Julius Africanus and the Monarchian prologue to Luke, identifies Luke's hometown as Antioch on the Orontes. Granting that Luke is also the author of Acts, we can appreciate Luke's real acquaintance with church affairs in Antioch. The Western Text introduces a "we" cause at 11:28. This is probably not the original reading but it is best explained by the Antiochian tradition of Luke's origin.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 441 21st Weekend After Pentecost October 13-14, 2018

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

So our Eastern Spirituality is based on several fundamental beliefs: (1) that we humans are made in God's image and have the potential to grow in His likeness as expressed in the Person of Jesus; and (2) God chose from all eternity to come as a human in order to show us how to live more effectively and grow as His children - beings that understand we are created in His image. There are corollaries to these two beliefs.

Being in the image of God certainly entails being rational and free but that is not what it means; what being in the image means is having an *affinity* with God, not a natural affinity, but one granted us through God's grace, in virtue of which affinity we can know God, have some kind of communion with him. Put more exactly, being in the image of God means being able to pray. One of the aspects of the

language of images is that images are not just likenesses or pictures, but that they are derived from an original. An image of God is derived from God, it manifests him as a kind of theophany, and the purpose of an image is to enable others to recognize the original, to draw them to the original (*just as icons are intended to draw us to the person depicted*). If one truly understands image in this sense, then the whole of St. John's Gospel is concerned with the image: the Son imaging forth the Father, so that Christ can say to Philip, 'He who has seen me

as seen the Father.'

So our Eastern Spirituality calls us to think of ourselves as created in God's image and to work to make ourselves "icons" of God just as Jesus is the icon of the Father. This, of course, is only achieved when others come to see Jesus in our thinking and behavior.



Life's Journey Is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

Not the Seed at Fault, but Ourselves

The parable of the sower and the seed could also be called the parable of the fate of the word of God in human hearts. It is very simple, clear and easy to understand. There is no mistaking its meaning.

There is also no mistaking Jesus' love and concern for His people. It must have been very frustrating and disappointing for Him to go from village to village and bring them grace and salvation only to find that His words were falling on deaf ears and cold hearts.

It is with this pain and concern for souls that He tells this beautiful parable. This is also why He cried out many times at the end of His parables, "He who has ears to hear, let him

hear." Yet He continued on, patiently teaching, sowing the seed of truth and praying that it will take root and bring forth fruit.

When hearing this parable, do not these thoughts strike us: "How has the seed, the word of God, taken root in our souls? What is the fate of Christ's teaching in our hearts? What type of soil have we cultivated for God's word? Are our hearts cold, stony, filled with weeds and thorns?"

We cannot blame anyone but ourselves if the teachings of Jesus are not reflected in our lives. It is not the seed which is at fault, only ourselves.