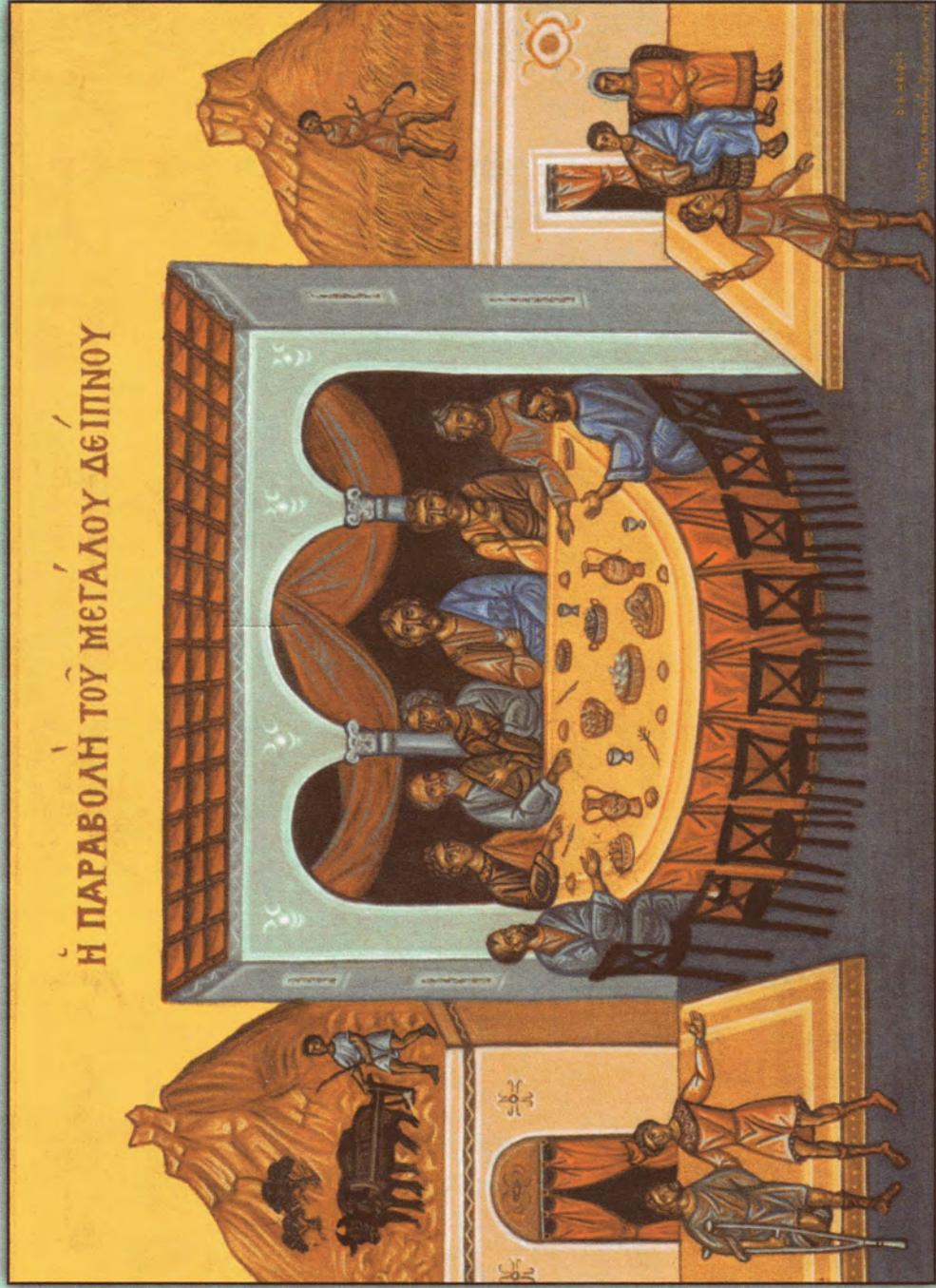


SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS

Ἡ ΠΑΡΑΒΟΛΗ ΤΟΥ ΜΕΤΑΛΛΟΥ ΔΕΙΠΝΟΥ



Icon of the Parable of the Great Feast

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 30th Weekend after Pentecost we also remember the Forefathers of Jesus Christ. This is in preparation for the feast of the Lord's Nativity.

On this weekend our readings are taken from Paul's Letter to the Colossians and Luke's rendering of the Parable of a man giving a large dinner party. The message contained in each reading is quite appropriate for this time of year when our society is busily having Christmas parties and we think about God becoming a human being for the sake of our salvation.

In the Letter to the Colossians Paul states this "... put on a new man, one who grows in knowledge as he is formed anew in the image of his Creator." Indeed the up-and-coming Winter Feasts remind us of the fact that Jesus Christ is God's revelation to us about human life. God became a human being so that we might have an example - a model - of how to live so that we can become all that God intended when He created us - that we might become truly a child of God.

The parable of the dinner party is also truly appropriate. This is an allegorical parable in which men's reactions to the invitation to a share in the messianic and salvific banquet prepared by God are described and also how God will provide for a share in it even for the outcasts of Israel - that is the poor, the lame and those discovered by the servants along the road.

It should be noted that a second



invitation is required by ancient Near Eastern etiquette. To refuse it is a serious breach of friendship. All make excuses for not attending. The true reason for the excuses lay in "the riches and pleasures of life." Certainly nobody will remain outside the Kingdom because he was uninvited.

At this time of the year, Christmas, the world seems to become obsessed with the riches and pleasures of this world. And yet Christmas is a feast that invites us to come to the banquet of the Lord and to embrace His way of living so that we might obtain eternal life.

So I had to ask myself and you, my readers, do we make excuses for why we don't make Christmas a much more spiritual day? Do we get so involved in decorations and gifts that we don't think about the meaning of the feast? Do we remind the people with whom we celebrate this feast about the true meaning of the feast?

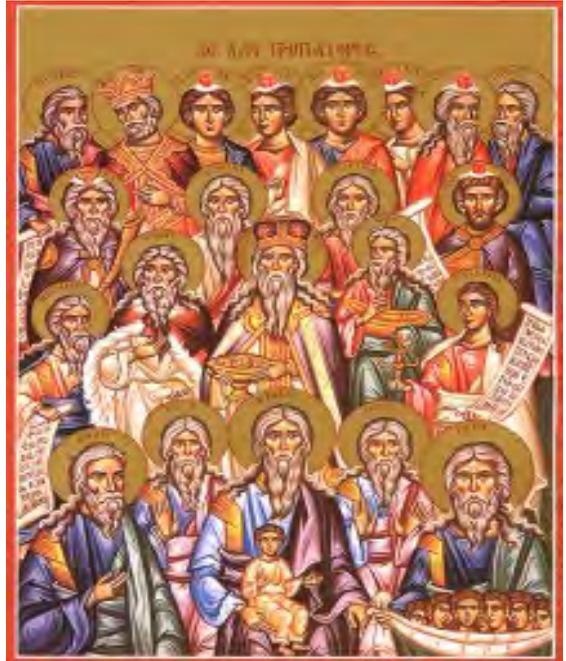
Only we can put Christ back into Christmas. We do this by the way that we choose to celebrate the day. How will you celebrate it?

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE FEASTS WE CELEBRATE

THE HOLY FOREFATHERS OF CHRIST

On this second to last weekend before Christmas, the Church commemorates the Holy Forefathers, (i.e., *the earthly ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ, beginning with the first man, Adam, and on through Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, King David, and others*). These ancient people, separated from us by millennia, nevertheless have a direct and close bearing upon us, contemporary Eastern Christians. I say Eastern Christians because it is only in the East that they are mentioned.

What connection is there between them and us? In general, the Church brings them to our attention now, right before Christmas, largely because of their faith – their belief in the promise given by God to Adam that a Savior would come into the world and to show humans how to live and spiritually grow in union with God. All the forefathers – who lived on earth long before the birth of Christ – lived and burned with this faith, never allowing it to be extinguished. They are a shining example to us, who are living on earth after the Incarnation of our Lord. Just like those ancient people we, too, have never actually seen Christ: they only knew that He would come into the world, while we believe that He did come into the world. They firmly believed He would come and their faith was justified. They had a much



different idea about the Messiah. He was going to gain their nation freedom.

Our Eastern Church remembers these Forefathers as a way to express our faith that Jesus was an actual human being and that His humanity was connected with a real group of people. The Church goes to great lengths to demonstrate that Jesus, while He was/is God, was/is also a human being.

On this weekend we are called to express our faith and belief that Jesus Christ IS truly God and truly Man and that His Divine Nature did not dictate to His human nature how to live. This is why we are called to imitate Him. As a man He nobly dealt not only with death but also the challenges of life. He is our roll model *par excellence*.

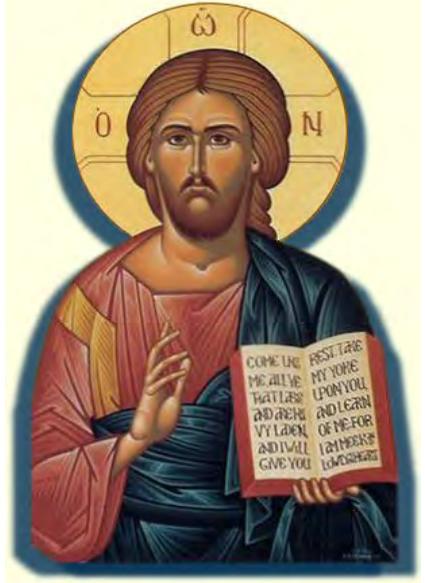
ACQUIRING THE MIND OF CHRIST

As I am sure it has been obvious to those who have been following this article, I have been in search of way to acquire the mind of Christ. To learn how to “think” like Him so that I can “act” or “behave” like Him. I am also sure that most of my readers already realize that our thinking governs and dictates our behaviors.

Perhaps one of the things that many do not understand, however, is that when I talk about our thinking governing our behavior, I am not just talking about our *conscious thoughts*. It has been my professional experience that most people are more governed by their *unconscious* thoughts than by their *conscious* ones. Indeed a good portion of our lives are dictated by what is in our *unconscious minds*. Therefore, in order to acquire the mind of Christ we first must reflect on our own *unconscious thoughts* and, when we discover that they are in conflict with those of Jesus, work to change them.

I know that many will immediately tell me that this is just too difficult. It is only difficult if you think it is difficult. You can quickly discover what your unconscious thoughts are by just asking yourself a series of questions. Try to preface these questions with: **DO I HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT:**

- 1 All human beings have God’s Life and Spirit within them?
- 2 I am no better than anyone else?
- 3 Life’s challenges are only opportunities for me to grow in my hope and trust in God?
- 4 I am called to treat others as I want to be treated not as they treat me?
- 5 It is critical for my own spiritual growth that I unconditionally forgive and love others?
- 6 God is calling all human beings to enter into communion with Him?



It is important to note that we know the mind of Christ from what we know about how He lived. We know that He was a man who never ignored others. We also know that He was a man who subscribed to the idea of “being of service to others.” We also know that He was not a man who was narcissistic and self-absorbed. He was a man who was self-confidence and that His confidence was built on His belief in God as His Father.

Ask yourself this: Am I truly attempting to learn how to think and behave like Jesus Christ?



St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan

CHRISTMAS FOOD DRIVE

Starting Today December 9th



As a Christmas Outreach effort, we are collecting “dry food products” to be distributed to the poor. There will be a big box in the vestibule to receive

your donations.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

- December 24: Christmas Eve: 10 PM**
- December 25: Christmas Day: 10 AM**
- December 26: Synaxis of Mary: 8 AM**
- December 27: Martyr Stephen: 8 AM**

Christmas Eve is traditionally a day of strict fast and abstinence - no meat or dairy products

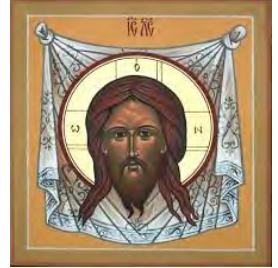
MANY THANKS

On behalf of our Parish Family I would extend a heartfelt **THANK YOU** to all who helped decorate our Church Building for the Christmas Holy Days. We were able to quickly get the decorating done. Save January 13th to un-decorate!



CALLED TO HOLINESS

Hopefully you, my readers, read the last issue of this article. In that I attempted to make an argument why we must develop a real and genuine ability to unconditionally love others. Only unconditional love can truly be given to God. Because He is our Creator and Father, we must approach Him in a way that respects His role as God and Creator. This means that we must recognize His primacy in the life-giving process. Indeed we often think that humans are the defining factor in the begetting of life. *Oh, Contraire!* Although it takes to humans to bring about the fusion of “sperm and egg”, God still has a role to play in this process. We must realize that our human actions don’t always result in the production of new life. God determines whether life comes into the world.



Given this, it is truly important to remember God’s role in human life. When we truly remember this, we relate to Him in a much different manner. We understand that He is truly the giver of life and we

(Continued on page 8)

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE ST. PHILIP'S FAST

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16th

Today, Heavenly Father, the Church remembers Christ's *Forefathers* according to the flesh, both those that came before the Law and those that lived after the giving of the Law. The Church commemorates in a special manner the Patriarch Abraham, to whom the promise was first given, when God said to him, *in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*. As I think about the promise You gave to Abraham, Heavenly Father, I realize that You have also promised me, through the Person of Jesus, eternal, everlasting life if I work to develop myself spiritually and become more like Him. For He is the example You have given us as to how humans should live. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17th

Heavenly Father, today the Church remembers and celebrates the Great Prophet Daniel and the Three Holy Children Ananias, Misael and Azarias who survived the flaming fires of the furnace. They, like the Prophet Daniel, survived life-threatening situations because of their belief in God. The Church remembers them because they prefigure and proclaim the incarnation of God in the Person of Jesus, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Church prays this: Great are the achievements of faith. In the fountain of flame, as by the water of rest, the Three Holy Children rejoiced. And the Prophet Daniel proved a shepherd of lions as of sheep. I sincerely ask You, Heavenly, by their prayers, to save my soul. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18th

Today, Heavenly Father, I remember the holy martyr Sebastian and those with him. They suffered for their belief in Your incarnation. They professed faith in Jesus Christ and suffered martyrdom. While I don't believe I will be challenged the way that they were, I beg You to give me the strength to have the faith that they did. They truly believed You came into the world as a human in order to show me how to live and benefit from this earthly life. Help me to understand that the reason You have brought me into existence is to offer me an opportunity to truly grow spiritually and become one of Your children in the truest and deepest sense. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19th

Your martyr Boniface, O Heavenly Father, courageously lived his life and received, as a prize the crowns of incorruption and eternal life from You. He truly possessed Your strength and cast down the tyrants that demanded that he deny Your only-begotten Son, Jesus. Instead of denying Christ, he offered himself up as a spotless sacrifice. Help me to have the strength of faith to resist the false celebration of these Winter Feasts. Help me to truly prepare myself to spiritually celebrate of the coming Winter Feasts, especially the Feast of Christmas. Help me to not get distracted and seduced by my society's overly, commercialized approach to Christmas and thus fail to spiritually celebrate what Christmas reveals to me. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

A PRAYER A DAY FOR THE ST. PHILIP'S FAST

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20TH

Heavenly Father, the Church today already prepares to celebrate the Nativity According to the Flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ and remembers the Hieromartyr Ignatius, the God-bearer. I would pray this day with the Church and say: Bethlehem, made ready, for Eden has been opened for all. Ephrata, be alert, for the Tree of Life has blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb has become a spiritual paradise wherein the divine Fruit was planted. Help me to know that if I eat of it, I shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is coming forth to help me develop in myself the likeness of Him so that I might gain eternal life and salvation. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21ST

Heavenly Father, today the Church again calls me to contemplate the great mystery that I am preparing myself to celebrate, the Feast of Your Incarnation in the Person of Jesus. I pray with the Church: Since I contemplate the One Who is the Master of creation now wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem, let me sing hymns to His Mother in advance of the feast. She is quickened with joy like every mother, for she has held the Son of God within her womb. I also ask You, Father, to help me to remember the Holy Martyr Juliana and ask You, Father, to grant me the strength to live as she did with a deep and unwavering faith. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22ND

On this third day of the Church's immediate preparation for Christmas, Heavenly Father, I remember, together with the Church, the Holy, Great-martyr Anastasia. I pray with the Church: O Jesus, Your lamb Anastasia cries out to You with great love: O my Bridegroom, I long for You in great pain. I am crucified with You and, in baptism, I am buried with You. I suffer for Your sake in order to reign with You. I die for You in order to live in You. Accept me as an immaculate victim, since I am martyred for Your love. Heavenly Father, help me, through the intercession of this holy martyr, to truly gain the strength to prepare myself for Christmas. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 23RD

Today, Heavenly Father, the Church calls me to remember the Ten Holy Martyrs of Crete. They were martyred for piety's sake and their belief in Your incarnation as a human being in the Person of Jesus, the Christ. Let me, together with the Church, honor Crete, that land most marvelous, which sprouted forth these ten flowers revered by all -these goodly pearls of Christ our God - these ten holy Martyrs. Although they were but ten, these most blessed men put to shame the ten thousand armored host of the wicked emperor Decius, who attempted to stamp out belief in Your Son Jesus. Help me, Heavenly Father, to gain true strength of faith by remembering their courageous lives. I make this prayer to You, my God, Who I believe to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **AMEN**

Our Christmas Preparation is rapidly coming to an end. Are you prepared?

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, December 16 - Sunday of the Forefathers - Tone 5
10:00 AM + Special Intention

31st WEEK AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 6

Monday, December 17 - Daniel, Great Prophet
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, December 18 - Sebastian & Others, Martyrs
No service scheduled

Wednesday, December 19 - Boniface, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, December 20 - Ignatius, Bishop-Martyr
No service scheduled

Friday, December 21 - Juliana, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, December 22 - Anastasia, Great Martyr
No service scheduled

Sunday, December 23 - Sunday of the Ancestors - Tone 6
10:00 AM + Special Intention

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

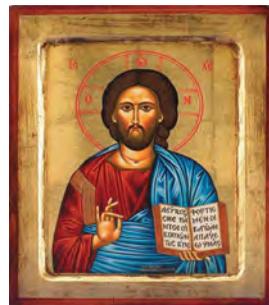
Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness)
truly bow to Him for His great love for humankind. If we only think that human life is brought into the world because of the actions of two human beings, we miss the whole vision of life. God, the Creator, is intimately involved in the actions of our world. All happens in accord with His will. He is not an “absentee-landlord” of His creation. He is deeply involved in His creation, even though we, at times, do not recognize His involvement.

Yes, He condones that illegitimate child or the child brought about by rape. He has His purposes - things which we may not understand. He is truly the Lord of Creation. Again, think about how you see the universe and God’s involvement in it!



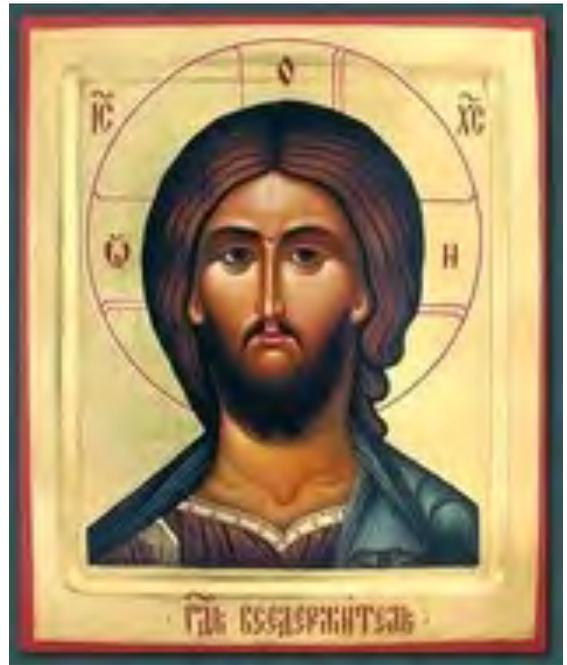
<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org>
[facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

I have been sharing thoughts about how our understanding of Jesus as God and Man came about. In the last issue, I indicated that a priest, Arius, came up with an idea of Who Jesus Is that was later rejected by a Council of the leaders of the early Church.

Athanasius, Alexander's young deacon, and later his successor, took up the struggle against Arius in the decades after Alexander's death. The controversy blew up in the early 320s CE and came to the attention of Constantine shortly after he became sole emperor in 324 CE, with the defeat of his one-time colleague and co-emperor, Licinius. To settle this unwelcome dispute he called a council in 325 CE at the city of Nicaea in Asia Minor (*possibly because of its desirable climate*). The council of Nicaea then condemned Arius and produced a symbol of faith (called in the West a creed, after its initial word *credo, I believe*) which included the word *homoousios*, to characterize the relationship between the *Logos*, or the Son, as he was then more commonly called, and the Father. The use of *homoousios* meant there was unbroken continuity of being between the Father and the Son, everything the Father was the Son was, save for owing his being to Him.

This became the foundation stone of the doctrine of the Trinity, but it had profound implications for the way Christians were to come to think about



Christ. Christ could no longer be thought of as God reaching out to humankind through his *Logos*, which was an intermediary between God and man. In Christ, the stark contrast between God and man was bridged by one who was both. The Son of God became the Son of Man. It becomes more common now to speak less of the *Logos* than the Son: it is now appropriate to use the formula: the "Word of God, and God," or, the "word of God, Who is God". This Christ, the Council of Nicaea affirmed, is what it is to be God, yet He is other than the One He calls Father - and this is known in the Spirit. We only know God as Triune because the Spirit of God has informed the Church with regard to His true nature. ***Do you believe this?***

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY GOSPELS

In the last issue of the article, I reported that the authorship of Luke's Gospel was sometime after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Most of Luke's descriptive language is indeed drawn from Old Testament texts and can just as easily be dated before the fall of the city. But a comparison of Luke with Mark and Matthew reveals important modifications, best explained by a date after 70 CE. Luke deletes the reference to a flight in the winter, eliminates "the abomination of desolation," and speaks instead of an army besieging the city. A still more convincing argument for a date after 70 CE comes from the general attitude of the entire Gospel. Luke divides the eschatological discourse of Jesus, so that one part speaks only of the Parousia and the presence of the kingdom, whereas the other is almost completely preoccupied with the fall of Jerusalem. Whereas Mark 13 and Matthew 24 combine both momentous acts of God, Luke separates them, as if to say that the fall of Jerusalem did not inaugurate the Second Coming of Jesus. The Church is still expecting the Parousia! Indeed Luke has edited the words of Jesus or of John the Baptizer, as found in Mark or Matthew, so that the Kingdom is no longer announced as imminent. The full eschatological kingdom is still being prepared for by the ministry of the Church.

The Lucan version of the Lord's Prayer adds the simple but important word "daily" in the petition for bread: Matthew, for his part, leaves the impression of asking for strength in the single, eschatological moment. Luke again adds "daily" to Jesus' demand that his disciples carry their crosses. Luke makes it clear that Christians face a long, continuous testing. We conclude, therefore, to a date after 70 CE. There is no reason to go beyond 80 or 85 CE. A very old tradition supplied by Irenaeus and the Monarchian prologue and accepted by Jerome and Gregory Nazianzen, gives southern Greece as the place of



composition.

We have been reading from Luke's Gospel for several months. We know that he is the author of the Third Gospel and the ACTS of the Apostles. He truly alludes to his predecessors and stresses the care with which he has collected and judged the material that he includes in his Gospel. He regards those who wrote the gospel message before him as comprising two groups: "eyewitnesses and truly ministers of the word". He places himself in the latter of the group since his understanding of the message of Jesus was gained through others.

What does this mean to you?:



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 64 No 50 30th Weekend After Pentecost December 15-16, 2018

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

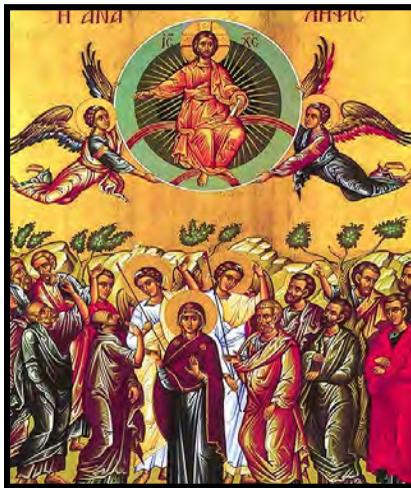
The spirituality of the Christian East calls us to truly think of human life as a “Journey to the Heavenly Father” - an ongoing process of personal change. The Church is meant to help us on this journey by calling us to celebrate again and again certain events in the life of Christ that have a real message for us. That is why she, that is the Church, celebrates them in the manner that she does.

For example, the up-and-coming Winter Feasts, which are truly “THEOPHANIES” or “MANIFESTATIONS” of

God to us, are meant to call us to our true vocation, that is children of our Triune God. The first, Christmas, reminds us that God is joined to humankind because He Himself took on human nature. So the feast reminds us that the life we experience is none-other-than a sharing in God’s own lifeforce. Life truly changes when we become truly convinced that

human life is a sharing in Divine Life.

Further, Christmas reminds us that God Himself, in the Person of the Son, experienced human life and knows what it is like. Therefore, God knows the challenges that life can present probably even better than we do. Christ endured, from what we know about His life, more challenges that we will ever be called to face. He showed us that it is possible for humans to face the challenges of life in a noble and courageous manner.



Life's Journey Is an Ascension to the

The challenges He faced were as a human being and not as God.

So, if God Himself, in human form, could face life’s challenges in a truly dignified and noble fashion, we must come to believe that we can do the same. This is how the Christian East looks at these feasts. They have a profound message for us.

What do you think?

The Great Feast

This familiar parable is read in the Church each year just two Sundays before the feast of our Lord's Nativity. In it we are reminded of the great care with which God prepared the way of His incarnation. All of the Law and the Prophets look forward to this moment, the moment when the God-man Jesus Christ comes into the world. He is, in fact, the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets – the goal towards which they were all aiming. The whole world was prepared by them for this great event. As the parable tells us the King – that is God – has prepared a great feast for us and has invited us to come and enter into the joy that He has prepared for us.

Today we begin in earnest to move toward the

feast of the birth of our Incarnate Savior Jesus Christ. Today we are called to see the great preparation that has gone into this event, to marvel at the great love and care of God for us that He would labor so long and with such great care for us. Today we look back at the whole of the history of the people of God and see that it is the history of God's preparation all leading to the moment when He would take flesh, become incarnate and enter the world as a child. We have been given an invitation to come and join the feast, to abandon the world and enter the Kingdom of God, to leave our own life and receive instead the Life of Christ. We have been invited, chosen by God – will we then accept the invitation and choose Him?