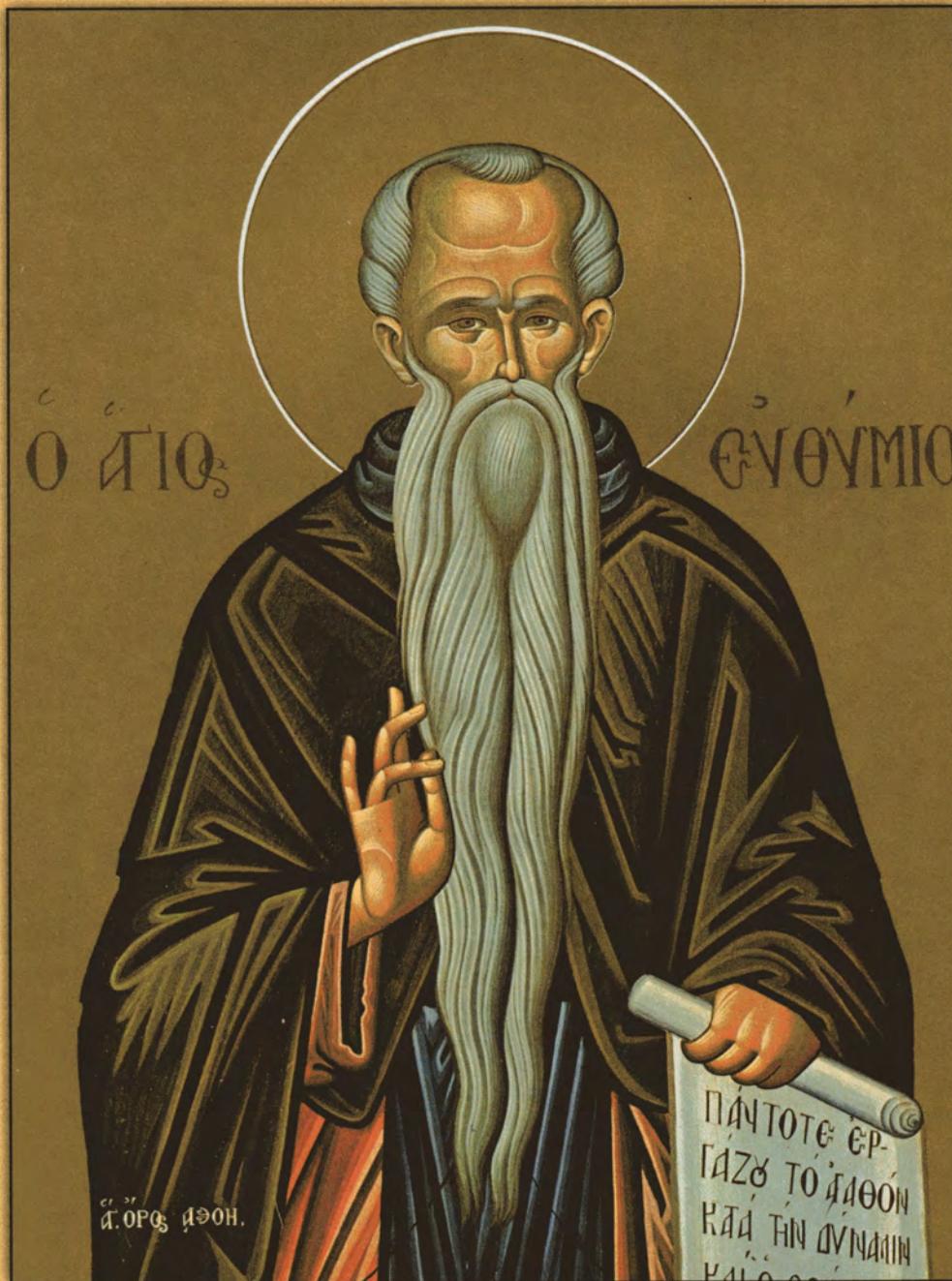


THIRTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Saint Euthymius -- January 20th

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this 35th weekend after Pentecost, our designated readings are taken from Paul's Letter to the Colossians and Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with one of the ruling class. Paul's letter is a literal catalogue of *virtues* that he feels the followers of Jesus should practice. We have heard this list before: heartfelt mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness and, of course, love. Paul asserts that *love* binds all the other virtues together. He also stresses that if a person practices these virtues, Christ's peace will reign in their hearts. This reading is concluded with the statement: *Let the word of Christ, rich as it is, dwell in you. Wonderful advice.*

Our Gospel reading, which we have heard before, recounts one of the ruling class asking Jesus: *Good teacher, what must I do to share in everlasting life?* Jesus' response is twofold. He first tells the man that he must deal with his fellowmen in a decent manner, quoting those Mosaic commandments that deal with human relationships.

The man replies that he has kept all of these commandments since childhood. To this Jesus replies: *There is one thing further you must do. Sell all you have and give to the poor. You will have treasure in heaven.*

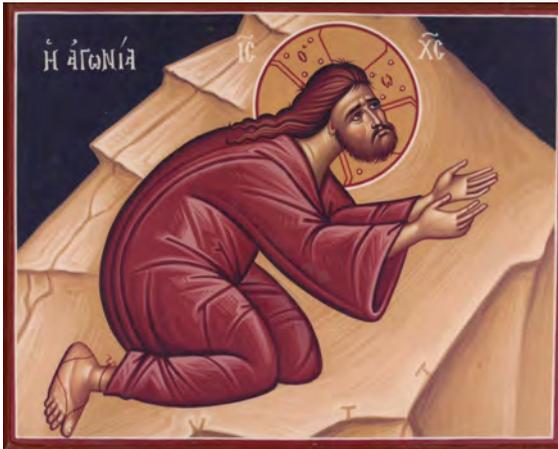
Everyone knows the end of this story. The man goes away sad *for he was a very rich man*. He thought too much about the things he had. The things of this world seduced him to believe that they were important. This is perhaps the most



common of all human failings. We humans seem to be easily mesmerized by the things of this world. They seem to make us feel that we have control over the events of life. We quickly forget that we cannot take anything with us when death calls. As a friend of mine told me: *There are no luggage racks on hearses.*

So, the morale of this story is that during this life time we should attempt to store-up those things which prepare us for the next life, namely good deeds and beautiful memories. If the goal of this lifetime is to grow in our likeness of God, as seen in the Person of Jesus, then like Him we must attempt to leave behind good memories and deeds.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF EASTERN SPIRITUALITY



THE SCRIPTURAL ELEMENT

The Word of God presented in the holy and divinely inspired Scriptures remains the foundation of the whole of our spirituality. “Sanctify them be means of truth - Your word is truth” (John 17:17). In our Church, the Gospel Book always lies on the middle of the Throne (Table or Altar) and, while no mark of worship is paid to the reserved Eucharistic elements, each priest approaching the Holy Table kisses the Gospel first. The Gospels are the very substance of the dogmas and liturgies of our Church and form the basis of our spirituality. This is so obvious that one need not insist upon it. But, besides this central point, some secondary points deserve to be raised.

Our Eastern Church can be called a “Biblicist” Church. She has always recommended and encouraged the reading of the Bible . In fact right now, our Holy Synod is encouraging us to read the Gospel of Luke. There will be some materials available to help you pursue the reading of Luke. In the fourth century, John Chrysostom was the stubborn champion of assiduous Bible reading, even among the laity. I would encourage all of my readers to become well-acquainted with the Holy Gospels and the other books of the New Testament. They should be read in public and private and no superstition avails to destroy their power. *(To be continued)*

In its present state, Eastern spirituality is the result of nineteen centuries of evolution: an evolution to which various ethnic and cultural factors have contributed (e.g., Palestine, Syrian, Hellenism, Slavism) but whose homogeneity has been secured by a common Christian faith. The elements that have been revealed successively in the course of this evolution must not be conceived as superimposed layers, each of which finishes where another begins. They are, rather, dynamic streams rising one after another; they diverge, cross one another, meet, and continue down to the present time.

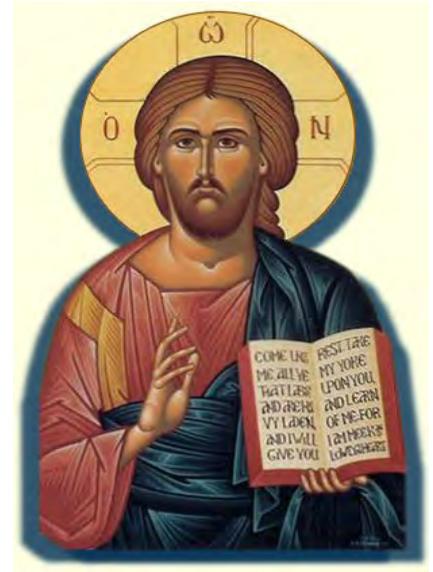
We may clearly distinguish in the development of our spirituality, six main elements: the Scriptural; the primitive Christian; the intellectual; the early monastic; the liturgical; and the “technical-contemplative elements. I shall present them one at a time in the order presented here.

LIFE'S PILGRIMAGE: GROWING IN THE LIKENESS OF JESUS

The Eastern Fathers speak of three distinct stages that every human being must transverse on his or her path toward communion with God: *Catharsis*, or purification of the self from egotistical passions; *Fotisis*, or illumination or enlightenment of the soul that follows *Catharsis*; and *Theosis*, or union with God, the final destination and fulfillment of the human soul. The Fathers thought of these three stages as archetypal in that they are part of the very structure of the human soul and its ultimate destiny. That means, regardless of one's religion or religious beliefs, salvation implies a movement through these stages. Simply put, you cannot reach or know God without first purifying your heart from lowly passions.

The verification of the Gospel and the claims of the Church about its therapeutic promise is the presence among us of the very people who have been healed, that is, the saints. We are not talking about some extraterrestrial beings but people like you and me who, after implementing the therapeutic methods of the Church, have witnessed it in themselves and have proved to the world that it's the church's pedagogy leads to the healing and the salvation of human beings. During the time after Jesus until now, the saints offer witness to the fact that the Grace of God heals human beings at their very core.

When we speak of the salvation of a human being in this world, we are talking not about someone who prays and reads all day long by himself or herself but about a human being who may live an ordinary, normal life. The perfected human being in Christ manifests certain characteristics that demonstrate the presence of God. St. Paul, following Christ's



message that one can understand a tree by its fruit, goes on to enumerate for us the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, joy, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (*recall the Epistle for this weekend*). We truly demonstrate these qualities in our way of thinking, feeling and acting. It is a sign that the Holy Spirit is manifest in our lives. This is the real healing of human beings according to the Gospel and the real goal of the therapeutic pedagogy of the Church.

Do you see that the Church presents a way of living that is truly therapeutic?

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



PARISH FINANCIAL REPORT INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION REPORTS

I am working on the preparation of our 2018 Parish Financial Report and John Dicky is working to prepare Individual Contribution Reports. Sickness has impeded some of our progress. We hope to have this completed soon.

A BIG THANK YOU

I would shout out a truly big THANK YOU to all those who helped last week in taking down our Christmas decorations. It seemed like we did it in record time thanks to the generous help of many.

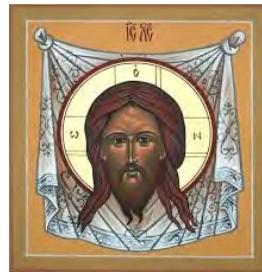




***The world is what YOU think of it,
so think of it DIFFERENTLY and
your life will change***

CALLED TO HOLINESS

Again, this article is multi-dimensional and tends, at times, to be stream of consciousness. I like the article since it allows me to explore a whole lot



of different things. I tend to write this article after I have written all the other articles and so in some ways it really ties together all the others. Its all about trying to understand the relationship that God is calling us to have with Him. It is a relationship of love. He so desires, it is my firmest belief, to have a true and genuine relationship with us that He has spared nothing to make our relationship real.

There are multiple thoughts that also guide my writing of this article. First, I truly believe that life is given to us in order to help us spiritually grow. It presents all kinds of opportunities for us to PLACE OUR HOPE AND TRUST IN GOD! Nothing in life, I sincerely believe, is meant to TEST US or to PUNISH US. Life presents all kinds of challenges to help us spiritually grow. If we judge the events of life as either TESTS or as PUNISHMENTS, then we know that we have to

(Continued on page 8)

HOW TO BE A SINNER

As I introduced this article in last week's Bulletin, I thought it would be good if I also devoted considerable attention to the potential pitfalls of sinner language, which can include toxic levels of guilt and shame. These pitfalls can cause us to forget the innate glory of humanness. But probably the more common phenomenon is the person who doesn't believe that sinner language relates to him/her, the "basically decent person" who cannot conceive that he or she is in desperate need of divine healing, of reconciliation with God, others and the created world.

True knowledge of yourself - especially your sins - is vital to your health. A full self - understanding is extremely rare, if not unattainable. According to St. Isaac the Syrian, seeing ourselves as we really are is a greater miracle than raising the dead. We tend to hide from ourselves or, because much of our thinking is honestly unexamined and inherited from our family or peers, we can't truly evaluate it. So the first thing we have to do is *discover* ourselves as sinners. This discovery, not surprisingly, is always a process. Ideally, we are



always growing into a deeper understanding of ourselves in relation to God and each other. Self-discovery, including that of our sinner identity, is a journey. Most of us don't wake up one day crying out, as the psalmist does, "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Ps 51:3). Most of us are able to live into its words only gradually. This voyage, like any other, will take us through peaks and valleys. Self-discovery by definition

is always a personal matter. It is private and its looks different for everyone.

The author points to several factors that can help soften our hearts and sharpen our self-perception. It is my hope that these might help bring you, my readers, to the discovery that you are

a sinner - a forgiven sinner. He then leads his readers on a look at what the experience of beauty, purity, truth and light can do.

It is my hope that, as I share with you my thoughts and that of this author, that it will help you, my readers, to true, honest self-discovery, which is the beginning of salvation and redemption. I also believe that this is intimately connected with God's Call to Holiness.

THE HOLY TRINITY: STRUCTURE OF SUPREME LOVE

I ended this article in the last issue of the Bulletin by stating that the Son becomes man but the Father remains the goal of the incarnate Son's striving and that of all the men whom the Son has united to himself. The incarnate Son could not have been without this goal or else he would not have been able to imprint this striving towards it upon all the faithful. Because the Son assumed human nature, we humans have the same *striving towards union with God that he did/does*.

The Son becomes man in order to be the model and the center from which a force shines out making men like Christ in their striving towards God the Father. This force, which becomes an intimate principle within all who believe yet always remains at the same time above them, is the third divine Person, the Holy Spirit. In the Spirit God becomes wholly immanent and yet imprints upon all men this yearning for the transcendent God. The Holy Spirit must be a Person in order to make us grow as persons ourselves, yet he must be the equal of the transcendent God in order to lead us into his presence and, by divinizing us, give us a place as true partners with God.

When the God in Trinity reveals himself to us, he reveals himself as a Savior-God, and a God whom we experience in the saving activity that he exercises upon us and within us. He



is revealed to us as an economic Trinity.

I wonder how many have ever stopped to think about what the real relationship is between God and humans. To do this you have to really want to discover the meaning and purpose of earthly life. It is unthinkable that you and I have been accidently created without any real purpose or meaning in mind. As I look around the universe, I discover that each created think as a meaning and purpose (*although I sometimes wonder about bugs even though I know that they have a meaning and purpose*). Ask yourself: *Why did God create me? For what reason am I here right now?*

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday, January 20 - 35th Sunday After Pentecost - Tone 2
10:00 AM - Special Intention

31st WEEK AFTER PENTECOST – TONE 3

Monday, January 21 - Maximus the Confessor, Venerable

No service scheduled

Tuesday, January 22 - Timothy, Apostle, Anastasia, Martyr
No service scheduled

Wednesday, January 23 – Clement of Ancrya, Mmartyr
No service scheduled

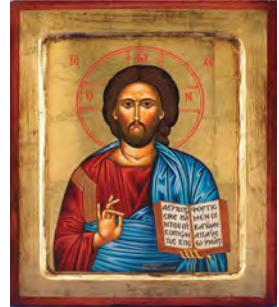
Thursday, January 24 – Xenia, Venerable
No service scheduled

Friday, January 25 - Gregory the Theologian, Bishop
No service scheduled

Saturday, January 26 - Xenophon & Mary, Venerables
No service scheduled

Sunday, January 27 - 36th Sunday After Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM - Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - Called to Holiness) change our way of thinking. God is not in the business, I sincerely believe, of finding ways to punish us. He is sharing His life with us and has revealed how to live OUT OF LOVE. He is not a vindictive God who sees our puny foibles as some how insulting His nobility and therefore making us worthy of some kind of punishment. That is mankind's way of thinking. The fact that He came and suffered death for the sake of trying to show us how to live is sufficient for me to say that HE LOVES US and wants only that we will return His love.



Think about how you see God. Is He a lover of humankind Who make us in His image and gave us the potential of growing in His likeness OR NOT?

St. Michael the Archangel
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Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

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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
586.755.3129

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

Steve Petryk
248-615-0456

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

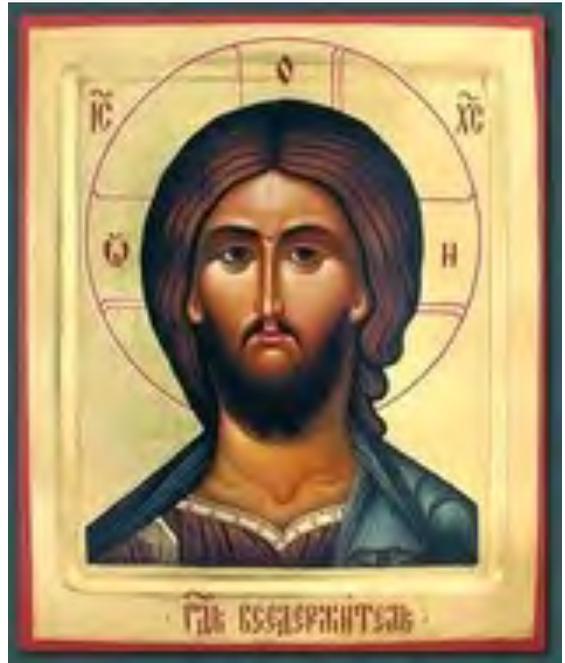
<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and -
[Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

MORE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

In the Eastern Christian tradition, the Council of Chalcedon (451) is regarded as the council that provided the fundamental answer as to who Christ is: in Christ, God assumed humanity, so as to be able to die, and deliver us from death. So we might say that at Chalcedon it was affirmed that Christ shows us what it is to be God in the way he dies as a human being.

Further reflection on Christ and his nature took its guidelines from the definition of the Council of Chalcedon. The complex history is perhaps best regarded as a series of ways of preventing various misunderstandings as to who Christ is; indeed, this is perhaps the best way of understanding the achievement of the first seven Ecumenical Councils as a whole.

In the sixth century reflection focused on seeking to avoid further misunderstanding about the unity of Christ. In particular, attempts were made to accommodate the conviction of those who had rejected Chalcedon that it was necessary to affirm that 'One of the Trinity suffered in the flesh': that the union of natures in Christ was so deep that suffering in some mysterious way entered into the Trinity itself, so that, whatever suffering we endure, we can be sure that this suffering has been in some way embraced by God himself - a doctrine sometimes called 'theopaschism.' But it did little to halt



the growing schism in the East between the Orthodox and those the Orthodox called 'monophysites' (so-called because they believed in 'one nature in Christ').

The seventh century saw a serious political crisis for the Byzantine Empire in which it lost most of its eastern provinces, where the monophysites were strongest, first to the Persians, and then, after a brief respite, to Islam - in the event, for ever. This provoked a further attempt to achieve union over the understanding of Christ that needs to be briefly looked at as it involves the reflections of one of the greatest Byzantine theologians, St. Maximos the Confessor.

More to come!

MORE ABOUT HOLY SCRIPTURES: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

With its beauty the Gospel of Luke has always attracted both theologians and artists as well as ordinary believers. It is widely used in the divine services and in Church teaching, especially in catechesis and spiritual life. It is precisely through it that we know the beautiful parables of Jesus about the merciful father, the Good Samaritan, the Publican and the Pharisee, the rich man and Lazarus, the dishonest steward, and others, and we also know about some of the miracles and events from Jesus' life, for example, the prophecy of Zachariah and the birth of John the Baptist, the prophecy of Simeon and Anna, Jesus at twelve years old visiting the Temple, the commissioning of the seventy-two disciples, the hospitality of Martha and Mary, the healing of the woman with a severely crooked spine, the healing of the ten lepers, the encounter with Zacchaeus, the disciples' journey to Emmaus..

In addition, Luke, of all the evangelists speaks the most about Mary, Jesus' mother: he describes the Annunciation at Nazareth, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, Simeon's prophetic words addressed to Mary that a sword will pierce her heart, and how Mary and Joseph searched for twelve-year-old Jesus in Jerusalem, noting that at Nazareth "his mother treasured all these things in her heart" (Lk 2:51). It is necessary to mention the prophetic shout of a woman in the crowd: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you" (Lk 11:28), — and the beatitude that Jesus uses in response, addressing it to every true disciple: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Lk 11:28). If to this we add Mary's reaction to the words of the archangel Gabriel, expressed by the verb "to ponder" [in oneself, in one's heart] (in Greek, *διαλογίζομαι*), then we can see that the evangelist Luke gives us in his



Gospel not only events "carefully investigated from the very first" and "written in order" from the life of Jesus and his words, so that we may know "the truth concerning the things about which we have been instructed", but also he sees in the image of Mary the model of the ideal disciple who ponders in his heart the Word that was heard and who obeys it.

I shall continue to share thoughts about Luke's Gospel with the hope that my readers will pick up a New Testament and read this Gospel.



THE EASTERN HERALD

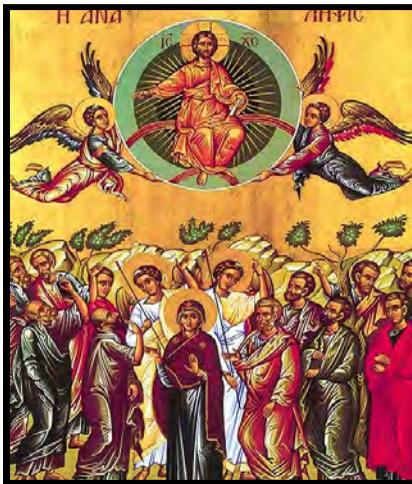
СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 65 No 3 35th Weekend after Pentecost January 19-20, 2019

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

In the fourth century, St. Gregory of Nyssa was asked a difficult question about children who die young. The ascetic who asked this question was wondering what could really be achieved by his spiritual labors, when he knew for sure that he was going to commit sins that would hinder his entrance into the kingdom. So it seemed like the child who died young was better off. Gregory's answer reveals the basic orientation of Eastern theology. The human condition in the next life is not primarily a matter of justice, reward and punishment. God's aim is rather to fulfill the purpose for which He created human beings, namely, to participate in God's life. The earthly life is for growth and development for this eternal communion. From this perspective it becomes very understandable that according to Irenaeus, God originally intended that

humans would enter into *Theosis* through a natural process of growth. This process would have involved an education in love, a free collaboration with God. This thought changes entirely what we are called to do during this lifetime. Our purpose here is to grow ever-more in the likeness of Jesus. We know, however, that we can never do this in one lifetime. Our true salvation is that we have an *eternity* to grow into the persons that God intended when He created us.



Journey Is an Ascension to the Heavenly Father

Christ's death on the Cross was to destroy DEATH and therefore revealed that human immortality is God's gift to humankind so that we might achieve the goal of human life, namely communion with God which is achieved by growing in His likeness.

So, the goal of this life is to do all that we can to grow in the likeness of Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer.

'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'

Most of the wealthy, religious people who asked Jesus public questions were trying to trick him into some imprudent statement -- "Should we pay taxes to Caesar?" (Luke 20:22). "Why do your disciples pluck grain on the Sabbath?" (Luke 6:2). "This lady was caught in the very act of adultery. Shouldn't we stone her as Moses directed?" (John 8:4). But this man's question was no trick. It was a sincere question to which he needed to know the answer -- how to inherit eternal life.

The word translated "inherit" is Greek *kleronomeo*, "acquire, obtain, come into possession of something, 'inherit.'" [5]

The question tells us several things about the young man:

- He must be feeling inadequate in his spiritual preparation somehow or he probably wouldn't ask the question.

- He sides with the Pharisees rather than the Sadducees (another religious party in First Century Judaism) because the Sadducees didn't believe in life after death, and this question clearly implies that he does.
- He believes that eternal life is something that one earns or merits by what he does.

Ask the common man or woman in your community and you'll probably come up with a similar belief. You go to heaven if you do good. You go to hell if you do bad things. Well, only VERY bad things. Eternal life is a reward for what you do on earth. That's what people tell you.

The young man's question betrays both his superficial understanding of inheriting eternal life, and his superficial understanding of a person's ability to do good deeds that are pure, unmixed by ulterior motives.