

SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST COUNCIL



ΠΙΣΤΩ ΕΙΣ ΕΝΑ ΚΥΡΙΟΝ, ΠΑΤΕΡΑ ΠΑΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡΑ, ΠΟΙΗΤΗΝ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΓΗΣ
ΟΡΑΖΗΝ ΤΕ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΔΟΡΑΖΗΝ. ΚΕΙΣ ΕΝΑ ΚΝΗΙΟΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ ΥΙΟΝ
ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΜΟΓΕΝΗ, ΟΝ ΕΚΘΕ ΠΡΟΣΓΕΝΗΘΕΝΑΤΕΡ. ΠΑΤΩΝ ΩΝ ΔΙΩΝΩ
ΦΩΣ ΕΚ ΦΩΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΝ ΑΛΗΘΙΝΟΝ ΕΚ ΘΕΟΥ ΑΛΗΘΙΝΟΥ ΓΕΝΗΘΕΝΑ, ΟΧ
ΠΟΙΗΘΕΝΑ, ΟΜΟΙΟΝ ΟΥ ΠΡΩΤΗ ΔΙ' ΤΑ ΠΑΤΑ ΕΙΕΝΤΕ. ΔΙ' ΗΜΑΣ ΤΕ
ΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΗΜΕΤΕΡΑΝ ΣΩΤΗΡΙΑΚΤΕΛΟΘΝΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΩΡΑΝΩ.
ΚΑΙ ΣΑΡΚΩΘΕΝΤΑ ΕΚ ΠΝΥΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΡΙΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΝΑΝΘΡΩ
ΠΗΣΑΤΑ. ΣΤΑΥΡΩΘΕΝΤΑ ΤΟ ΥΠΕΡ ΗΜΩΝ ΕΠΙ ΠΟΝΤΙΣ ΠΙΛΑΤΟΥ,
ΚΑΙ ΠΑΘΟΝΤΑ, ΚΑΙ ΤΑΦΕΝΤΑ...

Icon of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On the weekend before the feast of Pentecost, which is dedicated to remembering the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea, our readings are again taken from ACTS and the Gospel of John. The theme in both readings seems to be about people leaving: Paul leaving behind his connection to Ephesus and Jesus leaving behind His disciples. Paul said this to the Ephesians:

I commend you now to the Lord, and to that gracious word of His which can enlarge you, and give you a share among all who are consecrated to Him.

Paul is also quoted as saying that he never shrunk from telling them what was for their own good nor from announcing God's design in its entirety.

ACTS, after sharing Paul's final discourse to the Ephesians, shares that the Ephesians were *deeply distressed to hear that they would never see his (Paul's) face again*.

It is interesting that the Church shares this story immediately after we celebrated the Lord's Ascension. There appears to be a parallel here with the departure of Jesus.

The passage from John's Gospel, which entitle "completion of Jesus' work", quotes Jesus as saying that the Father gave Him authority over all mankind so that He might bestow eternal life on those the Father gave



Him. Scripture Scholars have title this the High-Priestly Prayer.

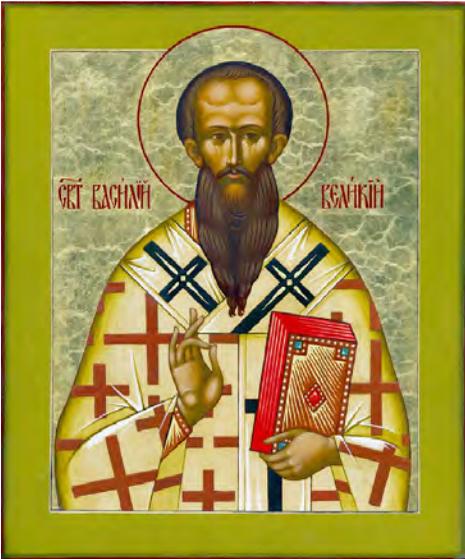
After Jesus' assertion that He was sent by the Father to bestow eternal life on humankind, a succinct parenthetical statement is inserted that defines eternal life.

Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ.

I suspect that few people would think to define eternal life in the manner. Think about it. Is this the way that you think about "eternal life," namely knowing more about Who God IS? Most people usually envision "eternal life" as a state of continued bodily existence in some form.

So as we "leave" our period of celebration of the Lord's Resurrection, we are challenged to think about what we really believe!

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

As I shared in the last issue of this Bulletin, the ancients saw the sky as solid. This solid sky is stretched out over the waters below (as a tent is stretched out), keeping the upper waters away from the lower waters. It is in this space that all creatures will find room to live. The torrential rains of the Flood would come if the windows of this expanse were opened, allowing the waters above the expanse to fall through. Those waters were kept at bay for now by the mighty solid expanse God made. To complete its creation, God bestowed a name and called the expanse “heavens”.

This part of the story would not have surprised any of the ancients, all of whom believed that an ocean existed above the clouds. Any creation story had to account for the separation of the waters down here in the sea from the waters above. Thus in the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* story (a creation story) Marduk battled the primordial sea, personified by the chaos goddess Tiamat, and split the sea apart into two halves: “he split her open like a mussel (or shellfish) into two parts; half of her he set in place and formed the sky as a roof. He fixed the crossbar and posted guards; he commanded them not to let her waters escape.

A comparison with ancient myths like the *Enuma Elish* shows not only how much Israel shared with its neighbors, but also how different were their faiths. Yahweh God had no need of ferocious combat against a rival deity, nor did He need to post guards. Even the untamable sea was no rival to His power. With a single command and sovereign act He separated the waters from the waters, and this life-giving separation persisted by His serene will alone.

We note in passing that the customary observation “and it was good” is omitted here, doubtless because the separation of the waters above from the waters below was of no functional use to society without the creation of dry land. Accordingly the declaration of goodness is delayed until the appearance of dry land on the next day.

Humans have, from the very beginning of their existence as a species, formulated myths about creation.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



PASTOR TO BE AWAY

During this coming week I will be in Philadelphia, attending the enthronement of our new Metropolitan, Archbishop Borys.

GRAVE BLESSINGS

Holy Sepulchre Cemetary

Pentecost, June 9th @ 2PM

St. Hedwig's Cemetery

All Saints, June 16th @ 1PM

At each cemetery we first meet at the mausoleum for a general PANAHYDA and then go to individual graves for a blessing.

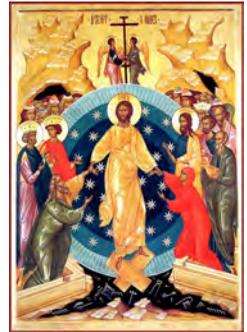
END OF LIFE ISSUES

I would thank Dr. Tony Grech and Deacon Candidate Len Mier, Jr today for leading out adult discussion on this very important subject. This is a difficult topic but one which we must consider.

Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind

A CALL TO HOLINESS

So the call to holiness is a call to understand HUMAN LIFE the way that God intended it to be when He created it. God built into human life a definite purpose and that purpose is directly connected to a relationship that He desires with us, His children.



Like any father, God designed life in such a manner that, if we humans live it as He intended, we will grow in our relationship to Him, our Creator.

How, you might ask, can we come to a correct understanding of how we are to live this human life? I suspect that it is redundant for me to assert that we need to look to Jesus. He, as I have repeatedly shared with you my readers, is God's example of how humans need to live if they want to grow in their relationship with their Creator.

Of course this is a challenge. As I look at life I see that many people want to make Jesus more God than Man because they don't believe they can think and live like Him. Of course they think this way because they don't want to "change" and to thoroughly examine their lives. To become more like Jesus, and therefore live more like Him, a person has to honestly assess their thinking and their behaviors. This frequently means that they probably have to put away some of their thoughts about what they think life should be like and, most likely, reject the attitudes (Continued on page 8)

OUR MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINE: THE TRIUNE GOD

In the last issue of this article, I shared with my readers the description of God that the Cappadocian Fathers formulated. They made no claim for philosophical consistency, although an effort was made to use current philosophical terms. The ultimate meaning of the terms, however, is clearly different from their meaning in Greek philosophy, and their inadequacy is frankly recognized. Do you remember what the Fathers formulated? They said: Three in properties and three in hypostases or Persons.

This is particularly true of hypostasis, a term crucial in Trinitarian theology, and in Christology. Neither in Aristotelianism nor in Neoplatonism was the term intended to designate a *person* in the Christian (and modern) sense, an *agent*, “possessing” his own nature and “acting” accordingly, a *unique subject* whose absolute identity can in no way be duplicated. Against the “old Nicaeans,” the Cappadocian Fathers wanted to emphasize that the Nicæan *homoousion* (*Consubstantial*) does not identify the Son with the Father on the personal level, but only on the level of the *ousia*. “Neither is the Son Father, for the Father is one, He is what the Father is; nor is the Spirit Son because He is of God, for the Only-begotten is one, but He is what the Son is.” Thus, in God, the “what” is one, but the three hypostases are personal identities, irreducible to each other in their personal being. They “possess divinity” and divinity is “in them.”



While all this seems very complex and abstract, I truly believe that it is essential that we come to some understanding about what our religion believes about God. If we say that we are believers, we must have some definite idea about WHO we think God is. We know that we have to maintain “Monotheism”, the belief in ONE GOD, and yet we also have to believe that HE BECOME MAN. So we have to understand that the Church had to come to some way to actually state this. This is a very complex belief. How can it be that God is ONE and yet have three distinct PERSONS, one of those persons having a human nature?

THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA (325)

The whole power of the mysterious dogma is at once established by the one word *homoousios*, which was sovereignly proclaimed at the Council of 318 because this word stands for both a real unity and a real distinction. It is impossible to mention without reverent fear and holy trepidation that moment - infinitely significant and unique in its philosophical and dogmatic importance - when the thunder of *Homoousios* first roared over the city of Victory. And the single word *homoousios* expressed not only a Christological dogma but also a spiritual evaluation of the rational laws of thought. Here rationality was given a death blow.

In his wonderful dramatic prose, Pavel Florensky epitomizes a centuries-old account of the Council of Nicaea: in one decision and with one pronouncement the Church identified a term that secured its Trinitarian and Christological beliefs against heresy and established a foundation for subsequent Christian thought.

The four decades since 1960 have produced much revisionary scholarship on the Trinitarian and Christological disputes of the fourth century. It is now commonplace that these disputes cannot simply be understood as the product of the Church's struggle against a heretic (Arius) and his followers grounded in a clear Nicene doctrine established in the controversy's earliest stages. Rather, this controversy is a complex affair in which tensions between pre-existing



theological traditions intensified as a result of dispute over Arius, and over events following the Council of Nicaea. The conflict that resulted eventually led to the emergence of a series of pro-Nicene theologies interpreting the Council of Nicaea in ways that provided a persuasive solution to the conflicts of the century.

Pro-Nicene theologies combined both doctrinal propositions and a complex of intellectual theological strategies. Together these doctrines and the strategies within which those doctrines were intended to be read constitute a theological culture.

Many summary accounts present the Arian controversy as a dispute over whether or not Christ was divine, initially provoked by a priest called Arius whose teaching angered his bishop, Alexander of Alexandria. Eventually, this traditional account tells us, the controversy extended through the century - even after the decisive statements of the Council of Nicaea.

MORE TO FOLLOW!

Schedule of Services

Sunday, June 2 - Weekend Of the Fathers of Nicaea
10:00 AM - Stansylawa Krowicky; Family -1st Anniversary

SEVENTH PASCHAL WEEK

Monday, June 3 - Lucillian and Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, June 4 - Metrophanes, Patriarch
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, June 5 - Dorotheus, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, June 6 - Bessarion & Hilary, Venerables
No Service Scheduled

Friday, June 7 - Theodotus, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, June 8 - Translation of Theodore's relics, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, June 9 - Weekend Of Pentecost
10:00 AM - The Deceased of our Parish Family

(Continued from page 5 - the Call to holiness)
of our modern society. The only persons Jesus ever judged during His lifetime were those who did not live in accord with their beliefs. And He did it only by calling their attention to their hypocrisy. If we say that we are followers of Jesus, then we must attempt to put aside all judgments of others. God alone can judge the behaviors of others. We must challenge any biases we have or prejudices and ask this simple question: **Who am I to judge my fellow human beings!**

Probably the one thing that gets in the way of establishing genuine relationships with others is the propensity we humans have for judging others. We are called by God to unconditionally accept and love our human brothers and sisters.



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
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

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

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

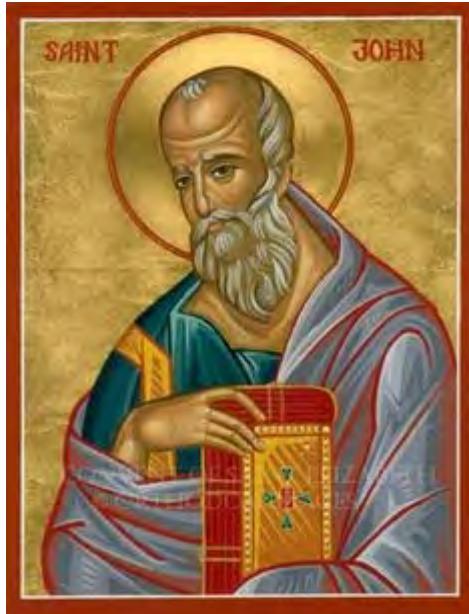
MORE ABOUT ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

This epithet, Sons of Thunder, has been particularly applied to St. John, who was truly a voice of thunder in proclaiming aloud the most sublime mysteries of the divinity of Christ. He is said to have been the youngest of all the apostles, probably about twenty-five years of age, when he was called by Christ; for he lived seventy years after the suffering of his divine Master. Piety, wisdom, prudence and love of the Lord equaled him in his youth to those who with their grey hairs had been long exercised in the practice and true experience of virtue; and, by a pure and blameless life he was honorable in the world. Our divine Redeemer had a

particular affection for him above the rest of the apostles; insomuch that when St. John speaks of himself, he says that he was "The disciple whom Jesus loved"; and frequently he mentions himself by this one characteristic which he did not out of pride to distinguish himself, but out of gratitude and tender love for his blessed Master. If we inquire into the

causes of this particular love of Christ towards him, which was not blind or unreasonable, the first was, doubtless, the love which this disciple bore him; secondly, his meekness and peaceable disposition by which he was extremely like Christ himself; thirdly, his virginal

purity. St. John suffered greatly for Christ during his lifetime, and was persecuted and often attempts were made. because of his ardent love and faith, on his life; yet he died in peace at Ephesus, in the third year of Trajan (as seems to be gathered from Eusebius's chronicle), that is, the hundredth of the Christian era, or the sixty-sixth from our Lord's Holy Crucifixion - St John being then about 94

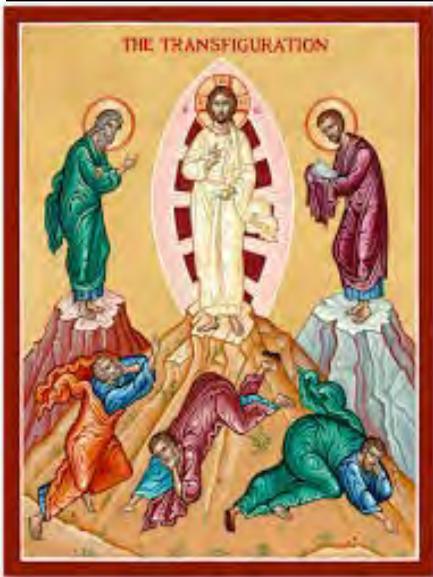


ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

years old, according to St. Epiphanius.

Some amongst the ancients thought that St. John never died, but they are very well confuted by St. Jerome. St. John was buried on a mountain without the town. The dust of his tomb was carried away out of devotion, and was famous for miracles, as St. Ephrem, and St. Gregory of Tours mention.

UNDERSTANDING THEOSIS - DEIFICATION



In the last issue of this article, I presented some of the New and Old Testament biblical references which suggest that *Theosis*, is the goal and purpose of this earthly life. The first two categories I dealt with were the **IMITATION OF GOD** and **TAKING ON GOD'S NATURE**. I would continue presenting these biblical references.

INDWELT BY GOD

- Truly it is the spirit in a mortal, the breath of the Almighty, that makes for understanding (Job 32:8)
- The Spirit of truth...abides with you, and he will be in you (John: 14:17)
- It is that very Spirit bearing

Witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Romans 8:16)

BEING RE-FORMED BY GOD

- What is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6)
- Be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:2)
- Clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:24)

BE CON-FORMED TO CHRIST

- He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory (Philippians 3:21)
- ... predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son (Romans 8:29)
- All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18)
- When He [Christ] is revealed, we will be like him (1 John 3:2)

FINAL DIVINIZATION OF THE COSMOS

- The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the lord, as the waters cover the sea (Habakkuk 12:14)
- The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever (Isiah 32:17)
- When all things are subjected to him, then...God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28)

If you really want to grow in your faith, why not pick up your Bible and find these various references. It will give you practice in using the Bible.

These references will help you to understand THEOSIS!



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.

Vol. 65 No 22

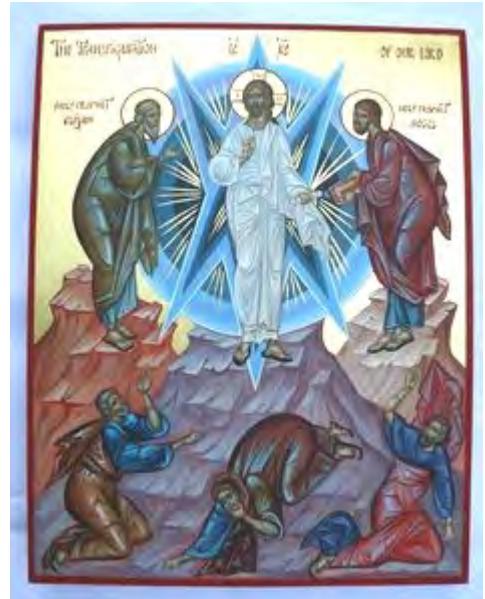
Weekend of the Fathers of Nicaea

June 1-2, 2019

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

One Eastern theologian reminds us of the fact that the idea of deification, oneness with God, God-likeness, is “that which from the beginning has constituted the innermost longing of man’s existence” even though humans may deny it or refuse to believe it. Indeed all religions attempt to formulate a belief about the meaning and purpose of life. Certainly, the early church and the fathers faced the same kind of challenges we do in today’s postmodern cacophony of religious and philosophical voices. The use of *Theosis* was daring. Non-Christians employed it to speak of pagan gods deifying creatures. The philosophers earlier on had used *theosis* in that way. It was not a Christian word first, nor was it only employed by Christians even after they made it central. But they cleaned it up and filled it up with a Christian meaning.

The challenge of Christian theology lies not only in its encounter with other religions. It should also take account of modern philosophical and scientific culture. Christian philosophers have wondered whether the new open-ended view of reality in the sciences opens up new horizons for dialogue with Christian theology. For example, John Polkinghorne notes that in the midst of such discussions on the relationship between modern science and theology, the claim of



THE TRANSFIGURATION

Eastern theologians may be correct, “that the true end of creation lies in deification.”

Without some understanding of the meaning and purpose of life, human life with all of its vicissitudes seems worthless. Deification suggests that the goal of human life is union with the Creator. I must admit, this makes more sense to me than anything else. How about you?

Knowledge of the True God Nurtures Us to Eternal Life

Are we saying that knowledge is eternal life? Are we saying that to know the one true and living God will suffice to give us complete security for the future without need of anything else? Then how is "faith apart from works dead?" When we speak of faith, we mean the true knowledge of God and nothing else, since knowledge comes by faith. The prophet Isaiah tells us this: "If you do not believe, neither shall you understand." But he is not talking about a knowledge that consists in barren speculations, which is entirely worthless. For one of the holy disciples said, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder." What then shall we say to this? How is it that Christ speaks the truth when He says that eternal life is the knowledge of God the Father, the one true God, and with Him of the Son? I think, indeed, we must answer that the saying of the Savior is completely true. For this knowledge is life, laboring as it were in birth of the whole meaning of the mystery and

granting to us participation in the mystery of the Eucharist, whereby we are joined to the living and life-giving Word. And for this reason, I think, Paul says that the Gentiles are made fellow members of the body and fellow partakers of Christ, inasmuch as they partake in His Blessed Body and Blood. And our members may in this sense be conceived of as being members of Christ. This knowledge, then, which also brings to us the Eucharist by the Spirit, is life. For it dwells in our hearts, reshaping those who receive it into son-ship with Him and molding them into incorruption and piety toward God through life, according to the Gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ, then, knowing that the knowledge of the one true God brings to us and promotes our union with the blessings of which we have spoken, says that it is eternal life. It is the mother and nurse of eternal life, being in its power and nature pregnant with those things that cause life and lead to life.

St. Cyril of Alexandria