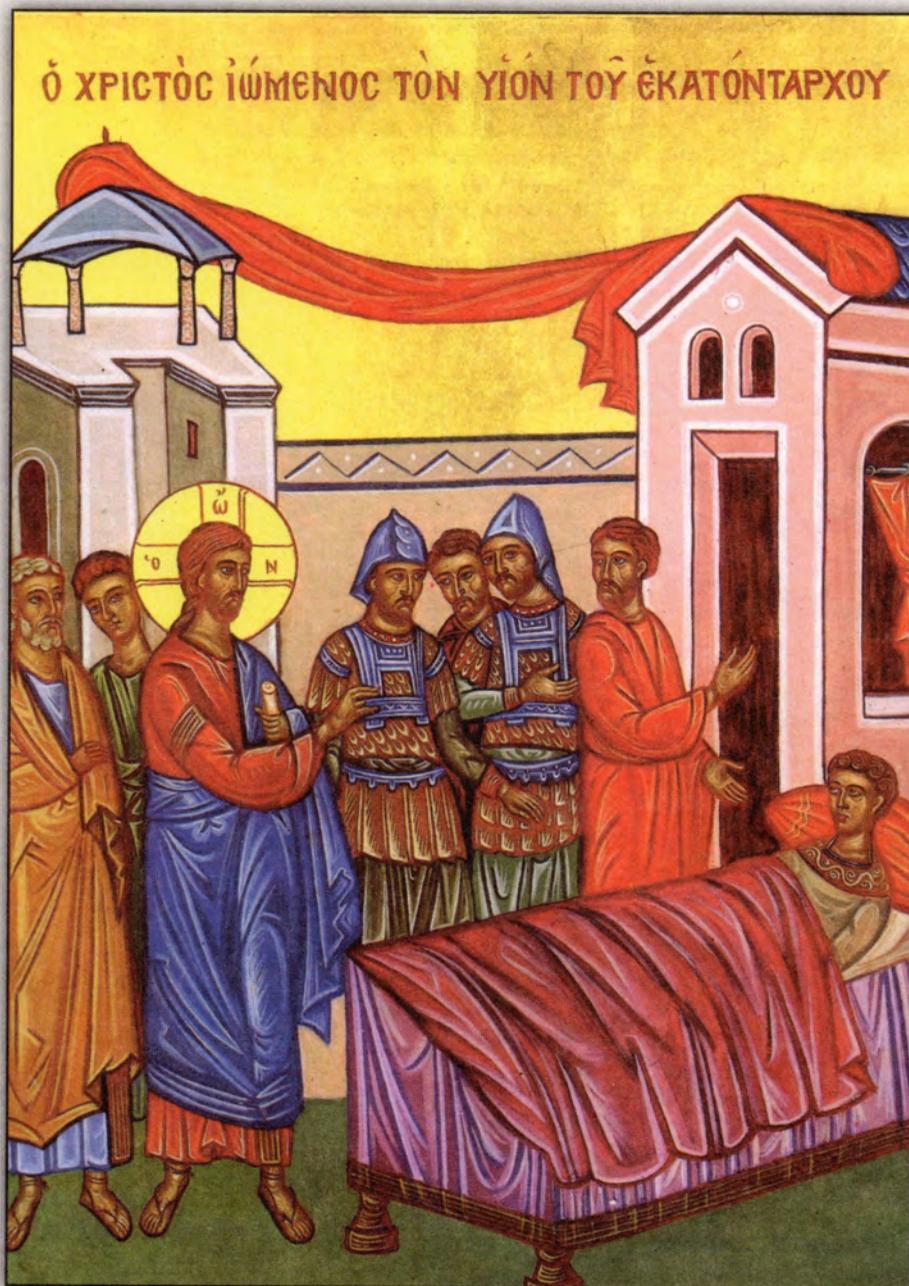


FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Icon of Christ Healing the Centurion's Servant

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

Our readings this weekend are taken from Paul's Letter to the Romans and Matthew's Gospel. Each reading has at least one sentence that really gives a deep message. The reading from Romans ends with this statement: *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* So it truly behooves each of us to make every effort to grow in our likeness of Jesus and to embrace His way of living.

The miracle story related by Mathew ends with a very important statement: *It shall be done because you trusted.* This statement highlights something that it very, very important, namely that we learn how to TRUST in God.

God will never allow life to do anything to us that is not for our benefit. We are called to believe this. However, it is so easy when things don't turn out exactly the way that we would want them to, that we loose our TRUST in God.

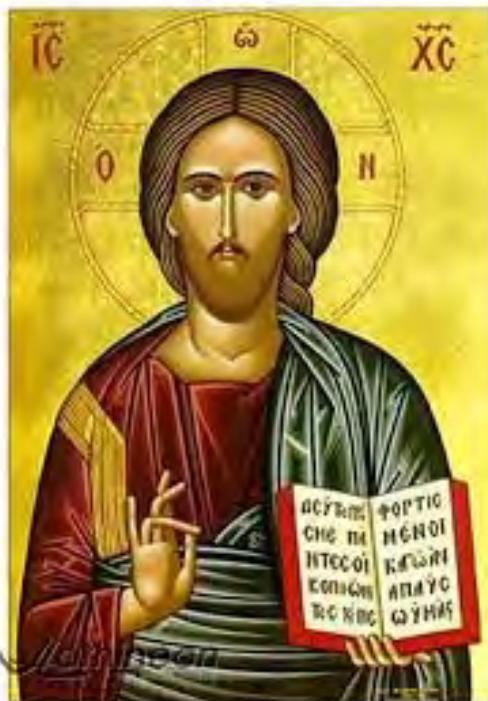
We must remember that God allows "life" to deliver those things to

us that are for our good and that can help us grow. Life never delivers things to "punish" us but, rather, to help us grow. This is so very easy to forget.

Unfortunately in our Western world, people tend to think of God as someone who is ready to "punish" us when we don't follow God's law and live as we should. This is not the way of God. He loves us so much that He is constantly calling us to be His children. Just because we refuse at times to act like His children, He doesn't punish us.

As I have told many people during my priesthood, I believe that God is within us, sharing His life and Spirit. If this is true, then He is not intent on punishing us

because that would make Him truly a *sadomasochist*. He'd be punishing Himself along with us. All He ever does is lovingly call us to enter into a deeper relationship with Him. He respects our free will and doesn't want "slaves" to return His love. He wants only the love of those He has chosen as His children.



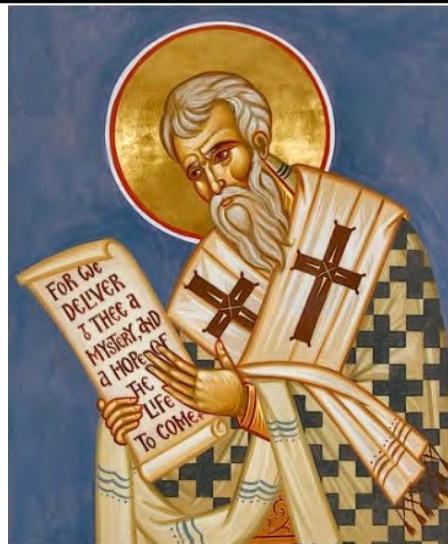
ON THE UNITY OF CHRIST

I have been sharing, in this article, Cyril's treatise on the "Unity of Christ." One of the points he makes is that the Divine substance cannot fall under the necessity of change and suffering, because if the Godhead underwent change, there would no longer be a revelation but a corruption of Godhead and manhood, and there would no longer be salvation.

I shared in a previous Bulletin, the Nestorian confession of faith. Clearly that passage shows that there is an exclusion of any such possibility of the Divine element in Christ interacting in the suffering of the human nature of Christ. Christ did not suffer in His Divine Nature. Nestorius' support for the impassible Divine nature would indicate that he is supporting a part of Cyril's Christological doctrine!

Throughout the dialogue Cyril's anonymous friend 'B' speaks of the 'Mother of Christ' as *Christ bearing*. This was employed by Nestorius in place of the word Theotokos (θεοτόκος) which he rejected. Cyril's friend 'B' indicates this in the text: 'he [Nestorius] denies that the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God and calls her the Mother of Christ'. Fr Doru clarifies what Nestorius meant by his claim: 'that the Holy Virgin has given birth to a mere man...and since she bore a *perfect human person* there was no justifiable reason for her to be called *Theotokos*.'

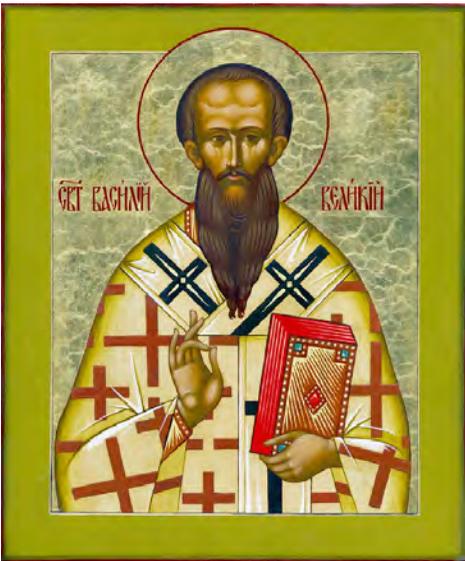
In Cyril's treatise, it is evident that he was irritated at such claims, referring to Nestorius' character as someone who is disturbed and confused, and accuses Nestorius' teaching as heretical: 'these are the teachings of a wanderer, of a sick mind that has strayed'. St Cyril shows a series of questions within the



ST CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

dialogue as to make his friend understand the notion of the Theotokos: 'then why did the Word who is God make a virgin the mother of his own flesh with a conception a *pregnancy* straight from the Holy Spirit?' Furthermore Cyril conveys to his friend 'B' a further question of the same nature: 'if they really believed that he was God, then why would they be afraid of calling her who gave him birth 'Mother of God- I mean after the flesh?' According to O'Keefe he claims that to reject the title *Theotokos* is like joining forces with another heresy.

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

As I shared in the last issue of this article, Basil saw in the book of Genesis a quiet, dethroning of the gods and reducing them to mere furniture in the hands of Israel's Lord.

We can also note a wonderful and poetic structural parallelism here. Just as on Day One God made the daytime and the nighttime, so on Day Four He creates the lights to illumine both the day and the night.

DAY FIVE

And God said, "let the waters swarm with swarms of animate beings, and let birds fly above the earth on the face of the

expanse of the heavens." So God created the great sea-monsters and every animate being that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, a "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

As on Day Two when God separated the waters below from the waters above, so on this parallel round of creation on Day Five He created life both above and below, creatures to move in the waters and in the skies. By His sovereign command He mad the waters swarm with swarms of animate beings, and the birds fly above the earth on the face of the expanse of the heavens. These creatures are described as animate beings, in Hebrew *nephesh hayya*, literally, those having a "living soul." In Hebrew the term *nephesh* or soul applies not to the divine likeness unique to mankind, but to all creatures that breath and move and live.

We see here another instance of the verb *bara*, to create, now used to describe the making of the great sea-monsters. The word here rendered sea-monsters is the Hebrew *tanninim*. We will miss the narrator's point if we translate the term simply as "whales" or "great sea creatures," as if they were just large fish. Ancient readers would have realized at once how extraordinary it was to regard God as the creator of the *tanninim*, for the ancients thought of these beings as liminal animals, creatures of chaos.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



CONGRATULATIONS

As some may already know, our Bishop had to put-off Len's ordination to the subdiaconate for one week because of a conflict in his schedule. Len is in Chicago this weekend. I would, on behalf of the Parish Family, congratulate him. We hope to schedule his ordination to the diaconate this coming November.



You're only here for a short visit. Don't hurry, don't worry. And be sure to smell the flowers along the way

A CALL TO HOLINESS

The call holiness is a call to be a genuine person - a person who lives what s/he believes. This means that if we believe that Jesus IS GOD HIMSELF in human form, then we truly listen to His message and do everything in our power to live in accord with His message.



We historically know that Jesus, the man, actually lived on earth and taught people about life and performed many, many wondrous miracles. Non-Christian historians have recorded His actual existence and things that He is said to have done. So He is an historical figure. We know that He existed. We also know that those who believed in Him had a deep and abiding feeling of His presence and existence after his cruel death on the cross. We also know that many were willing to die for their belief in Hm, such was His profound impact on their lives.

So we have the many martyrs as witnesses to the fact that He was a very special man who called them to live in a different manner. His followers sensed the truth in what He taught and they were willing to die for this belief.

So we have all these witnesses who have told us by their very lives that there was something very special about what this Jesus taught. There is true reason to believe in their witness. It was sealed by their very death. So what do we make of all of this? Does this call us

(Continued on page 8)

OUR MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINE: THE TRIUNE GOD

I have, in this article, been sharing thoughts about how our dogma of the Holy Trinity has come into existence. We truly know that it was only because of the use of key Greek philosophical terms that the doctrine of the Trinity could have been expressed.

In fact, the Aristotelian principle according to which each “nature” has an “energy - an existentially perceivable manifestation - provides the terminological background for the patristic concept of “energy” (This terminology is used, as well, in Christology, where Maximus the Confessor, for example, will maintain that the two natures of Christ presuppose two “energies” or wills). However, significantly, the Aristotelian dyad, nature-energy, was not considered sufficient in itself when applied to God, because in God’s nature, the decisive *acting* factor is hypostatic; hence, divine “energy” is not only unique but tri-hypostatic, since the “energy” reflects the common life of the three Persons. The personal aspects of the divine subsistence do not disappear in the one “energy,” and it is indeed the Trinitarian life of God which is communicated and participated in the “energy”: through the “energy,” therefore, the divine hypostases appear in their co-inherence: “I am in the Father and the Father in me”. Human persons, though also one in nature and substance, act disjointly and often in conflict with each other; in God, however, the co-inherencer expresses the perfect love, and, therefore, the perfect unity of “energy” of the three hypostases, without, however, any mingling or coalescence. The “energy” because it is always Trinitarian, is always an expression and a communication of love: “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you: abide in my love.

So it is truly possible that God is, first and



seen as “energy”. The energy that is present is LOVE. Truly love is an energy of one person directly positive thoughts and feelings for another. This is what happens between the three Persons of the Trinity. It is a UNITY of love which must spill over into love of all other created beings.

So God is the “energy” source that permeates the entire universe and brings all things into existence. But this energy source is not impersonal. Indeed God is Personal. We say that the Godhead has THREE PERSONS.... Implying that they have individual personalities or existence.

Obviously, our conception of God is la MYSTERY. We cannot know how this is possible. But we BELIEVE that it is possible. What is your thoughts about God and Who He is?

THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA (325)

I ended my thoughts about the first Council by sharing with you, my readers, my thoughts that it is misleading to assume that the controversies that arose were truly about the “divinity of Christ” even though that is the common perception of many. If it was about the “divinity” of Christ, that would imply either an *a priori* agreement about the meaning of ascribing divinity to the Son, or that the controversies focused on this specific question. Suggestions that the issue was one of placing Christ (and eventually the Spirit) on either side of a well-established dividing line between created and uncreated are particularly unhelpful. At issue until the last decades of the controversy was the very flexibility with which the term ‘God’ could be deployed. Many fourth-century theologians easily distinguished between “God” and “true God”. In discussions of the relations between the Son and the Father, or between creation and generation, arguments about the ‘grammar’ for talking about God were also under way.

Christianity grew out of Judaism. The early Church maintained the idea of Yahweh as the ONE TRUE GOD. But there was the issue of Jesus. He had extraordinary powers and seems to present a new message about the meaning and purpose of life. The Church, because it believed that Jesus was special, knew that somehow He



must have come from God to reveal to humans the meaning and purpose of life. But this was not an easy question to address. They believed in ONE GOD, the God of Judaism. How did Jesus fit into this picture. That was a struggle, a struggle which lasted more than 300 years. This was not an easy question to answer. How can you maintain the belief of ONE GOD and still think of Jesus more than just a divinely inspired and empowered human. He was real. He was a human. How did He have all this knowledge and power.

The Fathers of the Church began to use Greek philosophical ideas and words to attempt to put together our doctrine of the Trinity, wherein the notion of God being ONE (Monotheism) and Jesus being a part of that One God was possible. Indeed I truly believe that the Church was guided by God’s own Spirit to come up with the solution that it did, namely that the ONE GOD is actually THREE-PERSONS-IN-ONE. A truly profound concept which can only be embraced with faith.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, July 7 - Fourth Weekend After Pentecost - Tone 3
10:00 AM - Special Intention

FOURTH WEEKEND AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 4

Monday, July 8 - Procopius, Great-Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, July 9 - Pancratius, Bishop-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, July 10 - Anthony of the Caves, Venerable
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, July 11 - Euphemia, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Friday, July 12 - Proclus & Hilary, Martyrs
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Saturday, July 13 - Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, July 14 - Fifth Weekend After Pentecost - Tone 4
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
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

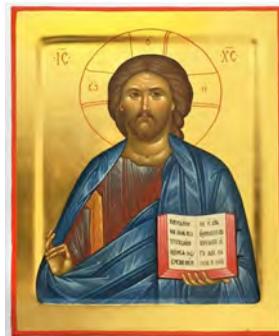
Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

(Continued from page 5 - the Call to holiness)

to belief? If it doesn't, I ask, why not? What about this message keeps us from giving ourselves wholeheartedly to the Jesus way of living? It makes so much sense to me! It makes sense to me for several reasons: (1) it truly pictures our Creator as a loving being; (2) it tells me that there is life after death; (3) that all we go through in this life has meaning and purpose; and (4) life is eternal - it will never end. These are truly reasons to rejoice. We do not have to fear death because it is only a transition to a different way of living and that all the struggles of life are for a purpose.

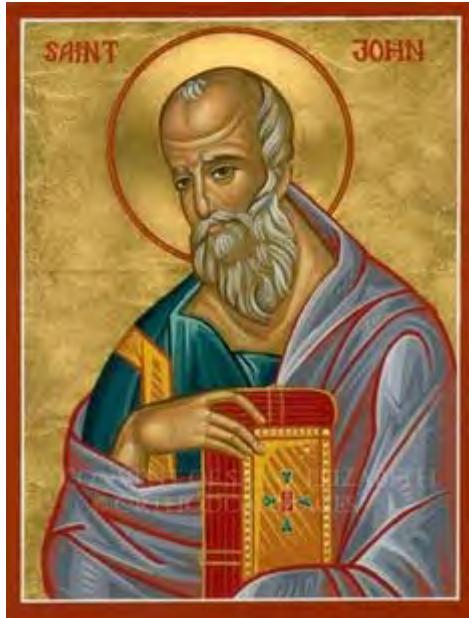
I'd ask you, my readers, to think about your idea about human life. What is it all about?



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

MORE ABOUT ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Part of the celebrated “Johannine question” consists in the world of ideas that is supposed in the Gospel. To anyone who has read the Old Testament (OT) and has some acquaintance with the Judaism represented in the rabbinical and apocalyptic writings of the period that came between the Old and New Testaments, the Synoptic world is immediately familiar. John, however, seems at first glance to have an entirely different character. Though surely set in Palestine and also representing Jesus as the fulfillment of OT expectation, John appears to be much more at home in the atmosphere of Gnosticism (i.e., a



ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

prominent heretical movement of the 2nd-century Christian Church, partly of pre-Christian origin. Gnostic doctrine taught that the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity, the demiurge, and that Christ was an emissary of the remote supreme divine being, esoteric knowledge (gnosis) of whom enabled the redemption of the human spirit. Hermeticism and other forms of Hellenistic speculation) Hermeticism

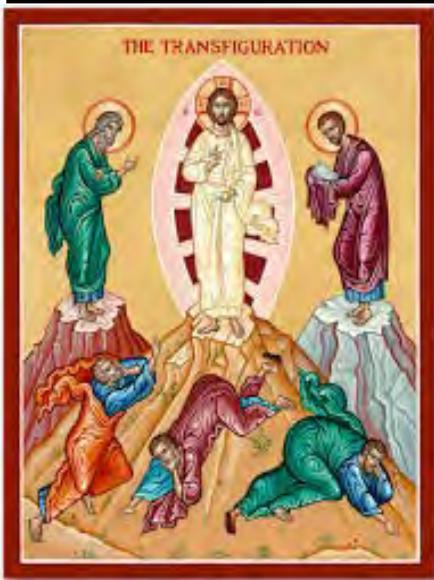
(i.e., a religious, philosophical, and esoteric tradition based primarily upon writings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus. These writings have greatly influenced the Western esoteric tradition and were considered to be of great importance during both

the Renaissance and Reformation. The tradition traces its origin to a doctrine that affirms the existence of a single, true theology that is present in all religions and that was given by God to man in antiquity) and other forms of Hellenistic speculation. Nouns like *logos*, “life” and “light” adjectives like “true,” and verbs like “know”, all used in esoteric and pregnant senses, the dualism implied in “light and

darkness,” “spirit and flesh,” all these have practically no echo in the Synoptic tradition; they are the commonplace of the syncretistic “wisdom” of Hellenism.

By the time that John wrote, the influence of Hellenism had truly entered the Church, probably through the Apostle Paul and the fact that many Jews lived in a Greek world which predominated thinking.

UNDERSTANDING THEOSIS - DEIFICATION



In the last issue of this article, I shared some ideas about the connection between Plato, a Greek philosopher, and St. Peter and what he wrote in his second Epistle. A constant theme in Plato's thought was the superiority of the soul to the body. In fact Plato wrote, as I shared, "we ought to try to escape from earth to the dwelling of the gods as quickly as we can; and to escape is to become like God, to become righteous and holy and wise." But it is a mistake to think of Plato as fundamentally escapist. His most celebrated work, *The Republic*, affirms that, rather than ascending to more

spiritual levels, the spiritual person has the higher duty of staying in human community and helping others. Social obligation and virtue are the central focus of several of his works.

But the afterlife involves real community with gods. The souls that have not been corrupted in this life, but "who truly love wisdom," go on to find "gods for companions and guides." Even clearer is the expression found in Plato's *Laws*, despite his taking a generally down-to-earth approach in this word: his protagonist advises that "what god wants is that we should be as like him as possible".

It is important to point out that Jesus did not explicitly indicate a process of *Theosis*. It is the conclusion that first Peter came to after thinking about the fact that Jesus called His disciples to "live" like Him. It naturally flows.

Imitation of God is a major theme of Middle Platonism, which seeks to systematize Plato's metaphysics and theology, and which heightens the notion of deification. These are articulated most vividly by the prolific authors Plutarch of Chaeroneia and Philo of Alexandria. Plutarch uses the same adjective that Second Peter uses in our key passage - *theios*, "divine". Plutarch uses *theios* to describe the power, incorruption, virtue and reason of God. Plutarch teaches that humans can take on the first three of these characteristics, incorruption, power and virtue; and the most revered, the divinest of these, is virtue. The goal of life is to come to resemble God. In order to do this, it is necessary to repudiate sensuality and selfishness. Spiritual progress means imitating God, taking on God's righteous, rational, controlled nature. This results in an actual transformation, taking on God's incorruption.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

Vol. 65 No 27

Fourth Weekend After Pentecost

July 6-7, 2019

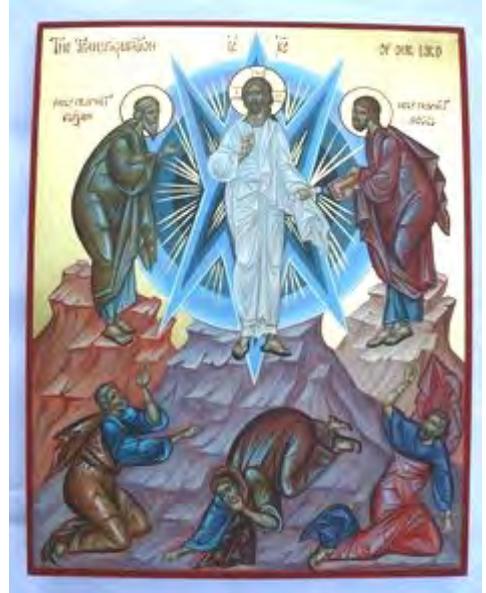
THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

The spirituality of the Christian East takes into account the uniqueness of humanity. It sees human beings as the temples of God's life and spirit.

Further, we humans are made in the image of God and unto His likeness as found in the Person of Jesus, Who is the material manifestation of God Himself. God shares with humans His ability to think, create, imagine, love and care about others. These are special powers.

Earthly life is meant to help us come to a deeper understanding of this truth and to also learn how to use these powers to grow in our likeness of Jesus and to witness to God's great mercy and love.

Because we humans are rational beings, that is that we can think and make decisions, we are unique in God's creation. While we are complex beings that also have instincts like the lower forms of living creatures, we also have the power that we call "free will". We humans are truly God's special creation. He made us so very much like Himself. Why? I believe that it is because of the demands of the power of love. Love is a unique power that needs to be shared with others. That is the very essence of love and since the power that binds Father, Son and Spirit together in Trinity is love, God must share His love with



THE TRANSFIGURATION

others, namely us humans. While God loves all of His creation, only humans can truly return His love.

So, Eastern Spirituality is all about learning how to love God by first learning how to love others.

I wonder how many of us have actually thought about who we are in God's creation? Have you?

Nowhere in Israel Have I Found as Much Faith

The Lord Jesus agreed to go to the centurion's house to cure his servant, but he replied: *I am not worthy to have you under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed.* In protesting his unworthiness the centurion showed himself worthy to have Christ enter not his house but his heart. Yet he could not have said this with such faith and humility unless he already bore within his heart the One he was too overawed to have within his house. In any case, there would have been no great happiness at the entry of the Lord Jesus within his walls if he were not present in his heart.

But what emboldened the centurion to act as he did? *I am under authority myself, he said, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one man, Go,*

and he goes; to another, Come here, and he comes; to my servant, Do this, and he does it.

Now the man who said this was a Gentile as well as a centurion. He was a professional soldier and, as a centurion, acted according to his rank: subject to authority and exercise in authority, obeying as a subordinate and giving orders to those subordinate to him. As for the Lord, though living among the Jewish people, He was already beginning to make it known that His Church would extend throughout the whole world into which He was about to send His apostles. Although the Gentiles would not see him they would believe in him, whereas the Jewish leaders who saw him would put him to death.

St. Augustine of Hippo