

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



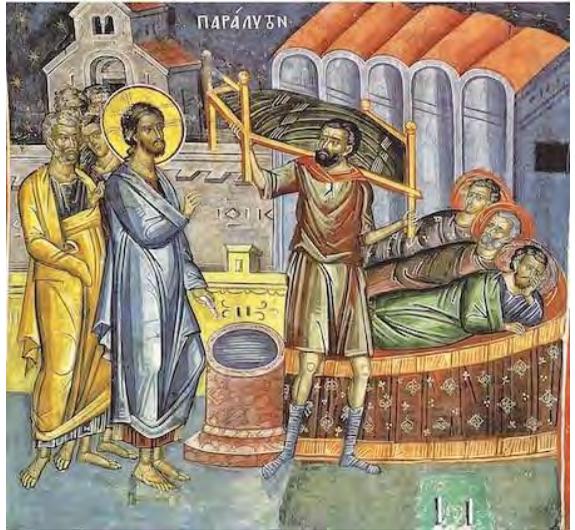
Icon of Healing the Paralytic

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this sixth weekend after Pentecost our readings are again taken from Paul's letter to the Romans and St. Matthew's Gospel. The passage from Paul's letter highlights the qualities of "Fraternal Charity". He writes: *Love one another with the affection of brothers. Anticipate each other in showing respect.* In effect Paul tells us to treat others like siblings, always remembering that we are all of the same human family. In fact he also writes: *Bless your persecutors; bless and do not cure them.* This is the way that siblings should act toward each other. No other human being is really a stranger. She/he, like us, is made in the image and unto to likeness of God, whether he/she is aware of it or not.

The story shared in Matthew's Gospel is about Jesus curing a paralyzed man, the faith of the man, the critical judgment of Jesus' actions by some officials and then Jesus demonstrating His power. Jesus responded to the man's faith. He also did a "good deed" and was criticized. So often this happens to people. They attempt to do something good and others criticize them.

One of the problems with this story is that it seems to connect paralysis with sin. Jesus begins the curing process by saying to the man: *Have courage son, your sins are forgiven.* The man's paralysis was not really the result of his sins. That was, however,



the belief people had during the time of Jesus. That is why Jesus spoke about forgiving the man's sins.

Jesus recognized that he was a man of faith. The point that the Gospel writer was trying to make, I believe, is that sin can debilitate us and keep us from truly having a full life. Belief in Jesus, however, can provide us with the fullness of life. If we embrace the Jesus way of thinking and behaving, we will not only have the fullness of life but will have internal peace and quiet - we will know why we are here and the true meaning and purpose of life.

If we can come to a real and true understanding of the meaning and purpose of our lives, we will have true salvation. Salvation is knowing the meaning of our existence. One of the tasks of this earthly life is to discover this type of understanding.

SIGNS OF A DYNAMIC EASTERN CHRISTIAN

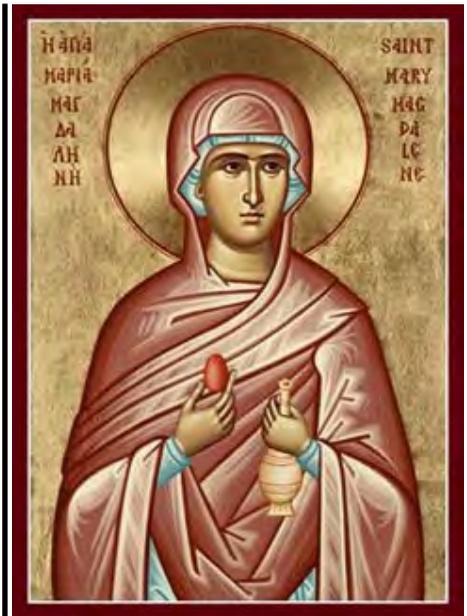
Transforming people one at a time is at the heart of God's plan for the world. It is also essential to developing dynamic Christians and vibrant parish communities. If you get the man or woman right, you get the world right. Every time you become a-better-version-of-yourself, the consequences of your transformation echo through your parish, family and beyond to people and places in the future. It is God who does the transforming, but only to the extent that we cooperate. Remember, salvation is a cooperative effort between God and us. God's grace is constant, never lacking. So our cooperation with God's desire to transform us is essential; it is the variable. Are you will to let God transform you?

Helping individuals with this transformation from who they are to who they are capable of being is the great work. Eastern Christianity, I believe, can truly help men and women in becoming all God created them to be.

In one of the recent meetings I had with the clergy of our Eparchy we were exchanging ideas about parish life. In most cases our clergy were lamenting about how few people seem to be actively involved in their parishes. One priest shared this: it doesn't matter where you go, you will discover the same fifty people do everything in the parish. It seems that all of us agreed with this statement.

There is a concept known as the Pareto Principle. It states, in essence, that roughly 80 percent of effects come from 20 percent of causes. In business this same concept is often referred to as the 80/20 principle. The idea is that 80 percent of your business comes from 20 percent of your customers.

One man did a study of Catholic parishes to



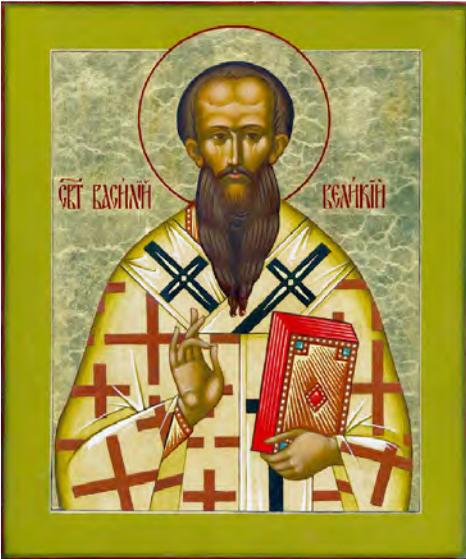
ST. MARY MAGDALENE

see whether this 80/20 principle holds true for Catholic parishes. This is what he discovered:

- 6.4 percent of parishioners contribute 80 percent of the volunteer hours in a parish
- 6.8 percent of parishioners donate 80 percent of financial contributions
- There is an 84 percent overlap between the two groups.

Although these are small percentages, they represent “dynamic” Catholics. What are the signs of a “dynamic Eastern Christian”?

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

I ended the last installment of this article with St. Basil's beginning comments on DAY SIX of the Genesis story of creation: *So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that creeps on the earth."* And God said, "Behold! I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every living

thing that is an animate being, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that He had made and behold - it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

The structural parallelism is maintained, for just as on Day Three God created the dry land, so on Day Six He fills it with animals and men. Before, the earth spontaneously sprouted vegetation and the waters spontaneously produced sea-creatures, and now the earth spontaneously brings forth animate beings according to their kinds. The phrase animate beings found in Genesis 1:20 is in Hebrew *nephesh hayya*, and it here refers to all the animals found on the earth - animals such as sheep and cows and oxen, creeping things such as lizards and locusts and other living things on the earth, referring to wild animals incapable of domestication. Like the fish and the birds, they were made according to their kinds, with a consistent stability that would allow animal husbandry.

As with everything else He created, God looked at His handiwork and saw that it was good, fully able to fulfill its function. Animals, especially wild animals, were often in that day thought to be dangerous and a threat to human existence. In this vision, everything is harmonious and works together to fulfill God's purposes - even the wild animals and earth's creeping things, even the lion and the viper.

Hopefully as you read St. Basil's thoughts about Genesis, you, my readers, are beginning to see that this Old Testament Book was never meant to be an exact description of how God brought all things into existence.

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



LATEST NEWS

During the past week I again received a call from our chancery informing me that currently November 3rd is a good day for Bishop Benedict's Visitation and Len Mier's ordination as a deacon. The secretary said that they would confirm this date in August just in case some problems develop. We will be planning a catered dinner in our parish Social Hall for that event.

GREETINGS

A former parishioner, Christine Sowinski, who has moved to Austin Texas, sends her greetings to all the members of the Parish. As you may know, one of her daughters, Laurie and her husband, live in Texas. If you want to contact her, I have her address.

*We're born alone, we live alone,
we die alone. Only through our
love and friendship can we
create the illusion for the
moment that we're not alone.*

A CALL TO HOLINESS

Although I may have shared this before, the call to holiness is also a call to what I like to call "authentic living," that is living in accord with what I believe. For example, if I truly believe that all humans share in God's own life and are the temples of God's own Spirit, then it behooves me to treat them with respect, kindness and love. For how I treat others is directly connected to my relationship with God.



In our modern world many people like to forget this belief because they are so busy "judging" others and/or finding fault with others. We must always remember that it is not our job to "judge" others. Judgment of others is the prerogative of God and God alone. It is usually true that we humans judge others, it is my belief, because we are insecure in our own beliefs and we need to be right. It is critical that we don't base our beliefs on what others believe but, rather, on what we believe God has revealed to us through His Church.

The "authentic living" that I referred to above is about being a person who (1) takes time to actually decide what he/she believes, (2) why he/she believes what s/he does, and (3) then attempts to live in according with those beliefs. Of course deciding what I believe is not necessarily a simple process. It takes time, effort and a certain degree of honesty.

(Continued on page 8)

OUR MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINE: THE TRIUNE GOD

Man's opinion of God influences his relationship with everything else and, most importantly, it determines his attitude towards himself, towards other people and generally, towards the meaning of life. What kinds of thought can men have about God? Who is God? What is God like? Throughout the centuries, the concept of God was differently interpreted, explained, used and abused. Different answers to these questions shape an image of God in the conscience of man, which presents two fundamental (basic) aspects: descriptive-representational and emotion-valuable. The image of God is a subjectively experienced entity, total conscience of a person, integrating, in a unique experience, the observations, emotions and thoughts about the divine Being. The image of God is a concept wider than representation of God in a unique experience. One question that must be addressed is that of God's goodness, one of the various features attributed to God or gods in archaic, polytheistic and monotheistic religions.

In all monotheistic religions God is absolutely good and His goodness does not consist only of His love towards His creatures, but it also embodies His inner nature. This very feature of God in Judeo-Christian interpretation is a fundamental doctrine which can be read and interpreted again and again in the Holy Scriptures. In the Old Testament we can follow the development of monotheism in a polytheistic environment. God in



God in monotheism is the only divine Being governing all and everything. The creation (reality) is not divided among different centers of divine influences. An indivisible whole of man and God is the first requirement followed by loyalty: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord they God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

Since the Trinity is our most important doctrine, I shall continue fleshing out the "image" of God in religious experience. A mental image is not like an icon.

More to Come!

THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA (325)

The decision at Nicaea did not solve the tension between the various traditions that had emerged about the Person of Jesus and its terminology seems to have been chose, at least in part, as an *ad hoc* tool to censure Arius. This can in part be seen from the fact that Arius was eventually readmitted to communion on the basis of a statement that did not include the technical terms of Nicaea. However, to many the creed seemed strongly to favor the unitarian tendency among these existing trajectories or traditions.

Arius himself is of little significance in the years that follow. Indeed, during the years 326-50 the term *homoousios* is rarely if ever mentioned. While the council appears to have been well known because of its size and association with Constantine, its creed was not seen as the authoritative statement of faith by anyone whose writing survives (no precisely worded creed occupied such a position). A great deal of controversy was caused in the years after the council by some supporters of Nicaea whose theology had strongly unitarian tendencies. Chief among these was Marcellus of Ancyra, who had been an important figure at the council and may have significantly influenced its wording. Marcellus and his followers were condemned by a number of meetings during these years and the absence of Nicaea and its terminology from debate is probably due to the modalist



(the doctrine that the persons of the Trinity represent only three modes or aspects of the divine revelation, not distinct and coexisting persons in the divine nature) trajectory into which it seemed so easily to fit.

During his exile Marcellus went to Rome and there met Athanasius (339-49 CE), who had been exiled from Alexandria for maladministration (it must be remembered that Athanasius turned out to be one of the Great Eastern saints). Partly in conjunction with Marcellus, Athanasius developed an account of his opponents as being part of a conspiracy on the part of supporters of the now dead Arius. One key technique in his polemic was to offer an account of Arius' theology and then present later credal decisions and the writings of his enemies as those of 'Arians'. The rhetorical construction of 'Arianism' seems to have begun before Athanasius' exile, but it is only in his *First Oration* that we see a fully developed version.

The path to our dogma of God as Triune!

Schedule of Services

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

Sunday, July 21 - Sixth Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 5
10:00 AM - Safe Trip for Andrew; Grandmother
- Intentions of Robert & Gloria

SEVENTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 6

Monday, July 22 - Mary Magdalene, Equal to the Apostles
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, July 23 - Trophimus & Others, Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, July 24 - Boris & Gleb, Martyrs
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, July 25 - Dormition of Anna
8:00 AM - Special Intention

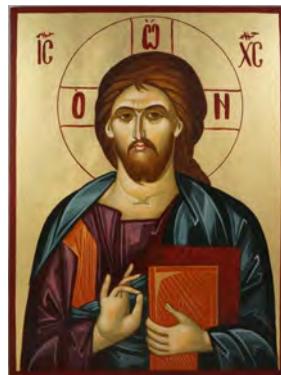
Friday, July 26 - Hermolaus & Others, Priest-Martyrs
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, July 27 - Panteleimon, Great-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, July 21 - Seventh Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 6
10:00 AM - Special Intention

(Continued from page 5 - the Call to holiness)

It really means this to me. If I call myself a Christian, I have to know what Christians believe and can't just pick and choose what I like to believe. Too often modern Catholics have been given the name "cafeteria" Catholics, meaning that they don't really know what the Church teaches and just pick and choose what they think the Church believes or wants the Church to believe. This is not "authentic living." When I engage in this kind of behavior, I am only duping myself, thinking I'm something that I am not. Now it takes time and effort to really know what the Church believes. There are a lot of misconceptions about what the Church believes.

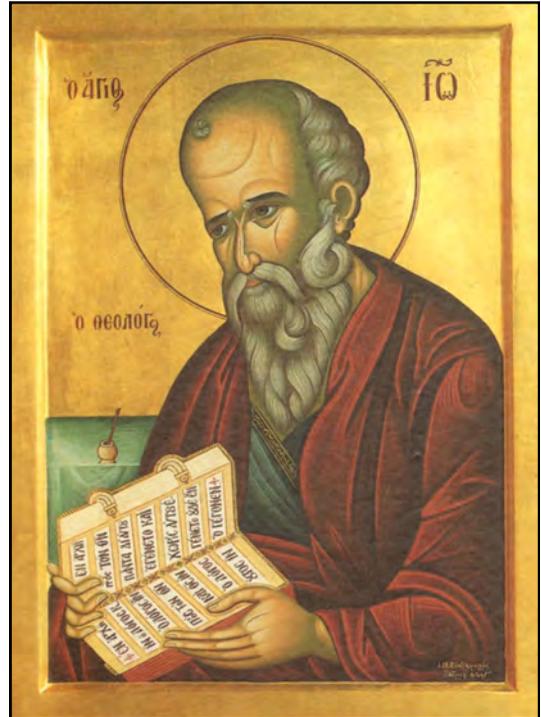


<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

MORE ABOUT ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

I ended this article in the last issue with a reflection that at one time many authors questioned whether St. John was influenced by Gnosticism (a 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). From the writings that they found in Egypt that are attributed to the Gnostics, it has become quite clear how distinct the world of John and the Gnostics are, and how unthinkable John's dependence on them really is. The Gnostics, aided by the affinities they discovered in the Johannine vocabulary, assimilated John into their system as they assimilated so much else, and it was this assimilation that produced the Gnosticism rightly regarded by the Fathers as a Christian heresy.

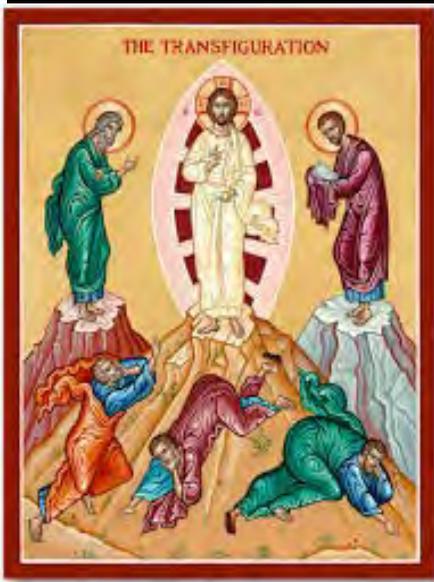
Furthermore, other documents discovered since 1947 have shown that the introduction of dualistic ideas and terminology, and much of the vocabulary peculiar to John in the New Testament, had in fact taken place at least in some parts of Palestinian Judaism long before the coming of Christianity. In other words, the "Gnostic" language of John is quite as authentically Jewish and Palestinian



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

as is the language of the Synoptics, though the two traditions admittedly stress different aspects of contemporary Judaism. Why John's Gospel has the stress that it does may be subject to various explanations. What is clear enough, however, is that John and the Johannine Christ speak a language that, whatever its ultimate origins, was authentically Jewish in the Palestine of the 1st century CE, though they speak it with intonations and with a content unknown to the sectarians of Qumran (the place where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found).

UNDERSTANDING THEOSIS - DEIFICATION



In this article I am attempting to present *Second Peter's Notion of Divine Participation* which is foundational to the Eastern Christian idea of *Theosis*. Several simple words in Peter's second letter are foundational, suggesting that a virtuous life will allow people to *became sharers of the divine nature*.

Some scholars want to treat lightly all of the "Hellenistic garb" found in Second Peter, arguing that his apocalyptic tone shows biblical, not Hellenistic roots. Others truly believe that the main Hellenistic influence on Peter is Hellenistic *Judaism*, especially the apocalyptic

genre. The original meaning of the Greek word "apocalyptic" is "revelatory," but since much of the literature that spoke of revelation also spoke of God and God's angels separating the good people from the evil people, carrying out an end-time judgment, and re-making the world, the term "apocalyptic" has naturally taken on this implication of end-time catastrophe and judgment.

Echoing the popular apocalyptic literature of the time, Second Peter promises that incineration is "coming to the ungodly", who will be destroyed like animals, sent "to the deepest darkness". Yet there is no hint of any knowledge of covenant thinking or of the importance of holy days, things one would expect from a Galilean Jew. Despite the reference to prophecy fulfilled, no specific prophecy is given: and despite a knowledge of biblical stories, some details are peculiar (Balaam's father's name is misspelled). These peculiarities in Jewish knowledge tend to suggest a pre-Christian identity as either a non-Palestinian Jew or a devout Gentile who was being instructed in Judaism.

Second Peter's apocalypticism bears resemblances to some passages in Isaiah, but with only one certain quotation. But the allusions to the influential apocalyptic book we call *First Enoch* are more obvious.

While a person can also find in Second Peter Pauline influences, the prime religious value in Second Peter, the key to spiritual transformation, is "Knowledge of Christ." The principal summarizing passages all say something about knowledge.

Second Peter is very short. Why not pick it up and read it for yourself.



THE EASTERN HERALD

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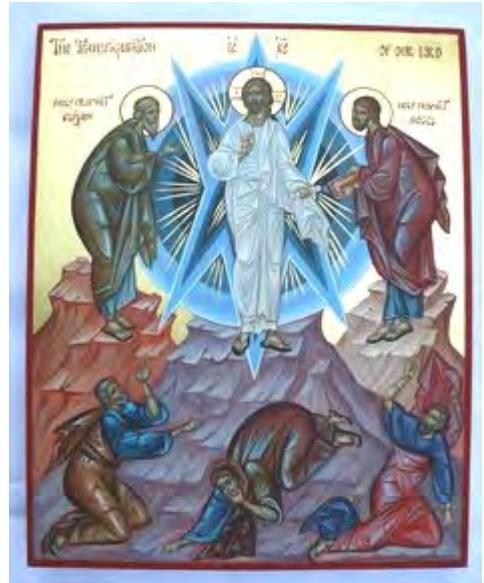
The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 65 No 29 Sixth Weekend After Pentecost July 20-21, 2019

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

In Eastern Christian spirituality the human being as a person is of decisive importance. This does not mean that Christian spirituality is individualistic. The human person is always seen in a social context. It is the person together with neighbors who is the subject of Christian spirituality. This means, too, that anthropology and ecclesiology (the understanding of the human person and the understanding of the church respectively) are interrelated.

The human being as a person is also always understood as being created in the image of God. The image character of a person's being and the image purpose of a person's existence constitute the characteristics of Christian spirituality. Therefore, the human being as person and God as the co-personal counterpart are seen as the decisive factors in this spirituality. What Martin Buber, from a Jewish point of view, called "the I-Thou relationship" is thus relevant also for Christian thought. The human being as image of the divine reality is never understood merely as a reflecting mirror, but as an individual subject, challenged in freedom by God and responding in action and worshipful recognition - or sinful revolt - to that challenge. The basis of this Christian spirituality was

The basis of this Christian spirituality was



THE TRANSFIGURATION

laid in the early church. Its authoritative writers and spiritual fathers developed its anthropology into a concise foundation for their reflections on spiritual development. In this context the two concepts of "image" and "person" are crucial.

During the coming weeks I will be exploring the human person as "Image of God" and its meaning for us.

They Marveled and Glorified God

Do you see how He is shown to be Creator of both souls and bodies? He heals the paralysis in both soul and body. The healing of the soul is made evident through the healing of the body, even while the body still remains a creature crawling on the ground. The crowds were slow to recognize who He was: "When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to humans." ... He proceeded by His daily actions to arouse them and lift up their thinking. It would have been no small thing for Him to be thought greater than all others, as having come from God. If they had established this adequately in their own minds, they would have known in due order that He was indeed the Son of God.

But they did not grasp these things clearly. Because of this they did not come close to recognizing who He was. For again they were saying, "This man is not from God! How can this man be from God?" Their minds churned over these statements continuously. Which thing many now also do; and thinking to avenge God, fulfill their own passions, when they ought to go about all with moderation. For even the God of all, having power to launch His thunderbolt against them that blaspheme Him, makes the sun to rise, and sends forth the showers, and affords them all other things in abundance; whom we ought to imitate, and so to entreat, advise, admonish, with meekness, not angry, not making ourselves wild beasts.

St. John Chrysostom