

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Ὁ ΧΡΙΣΤὸς ἰώμενος τοὺς δύο τυφλοὺς



Icon of Healing Two Blind Men

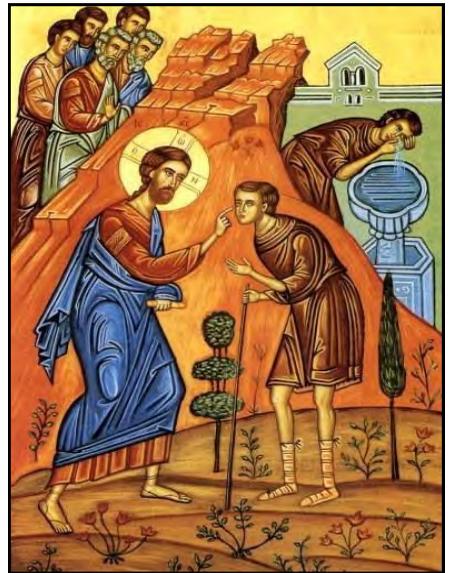
A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

On this seventh weekend after Pentecost, our readings are again taken from Paul's Letter to the Romans and Matthew's Gospel. In Paul's letter, we and the Romans are exhorted to "patience and self-denial." Paul starts out by exhorting those who are "strong" in faith to be patient with those whose faith is weak. He follows this up with the words: "May God, the source of all patience and encouragement, enable you to live in perfect harmony with one another according to the spirit of Christ Jesus". Why? So that with one heart and voice we may glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why does patience with others bring about glory to God? Because of the reason why we choose to be patient with others. The reason: because we realize that God's LIFE and SPIRIT are within them, even though they may not realize it. Our honor and respect for others is based on our understanding of humanity. Humans are created in God's own image and unto His likeness as seen in Jesus Christ. It is our faith in this truth that causes us to treat others the way that we would wish them to treat us. It is our faith that drives our behavior.

The portion of Matthew's Gospel we hear this weekend relates Jesus curing two men of blindness. The blind men are quoted as saying to Jesus: *Son of David, have pity on us!* Jesus' response to them is: *Are you confident I can do this?* They respond, yes Lord. Jesus then says: *Because of your faith it shall be done to you.*

Faith that God will be with us and help us if we ask, is critical. However, we must always remember that God will not rescue us from the challenges of life unless he feels that the challenges will hurt us. Life's challenges are



meant to help us grow. They are not punishments for things that we may have done which can be considered wrong.

Now interestingly, the story has Jesus telling the men not to "tell anyone" about the cure. They in turn tell everyone. Our human tendency is to never do the things that God tells us to do. He clearly tells us to try to live like Jesus. We humans, in turn, try to manufacture a million reasons why we can't do this. God gave us the ability - the potentiality - to live like Jesus. It is all up to us. We have free will. We decide how we will live our lives. Do we choose to live like Jesus?

SIGNS OF A DYNAMIC EASTERN CHRISTIAN

The data I quoted in the last issue of this article was taken from the data that the Dynamic Catholic Institute collected. According to their data, roughly seven (7) percent of Catholic parishioners are doing almost everything in their faith community and paying almost entirely for the maintenance and mission of the parish (I wonder what the data would tell us if we surveyed our Ukrainian Greco-Catholic parishes). The people who collected the survey data asked: What is the difference between engaged Catholics and disengaged Catholics? There is, however, no research data available on this question.

The future of our Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church depends upon us finding out what makes this small group of Catholics so engaged, because I believe that we would find similar data in our Church. If we cannot identify what drives their engagement, we cannot replicate it.

While it is important to look at the 7% of engaged or dynamic Catholics, we must always remember that this does not suggest that they are perfect. It is important, however, to find out what allows them to become so engaged. We also know that among these 7% the attitudes, and spiritual habits significantly differ. Some in this group come to Liturgy every week while others are almost completely disengaged.

Why is it good news that only 7 percent of American Catholics are highly engaged? Well, think about the tremendous contribution that the Catholic Church makes every day in communities large and small across American and around the world. Every single day we serve Catholics and non-Catholics around the world by feeding more people, housing more

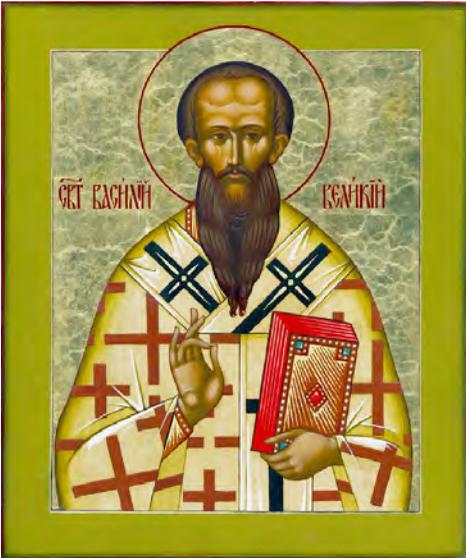


ST. MARY MAGDALENE

people, clothing more people caring for more sick people, visiting more prisoners and educating more students than another other institution on the planet. Now remember that if this is less than 7 % of our capability. This is good news.

We as Eastern Catholics have yet to become so very involved. What would happen if the our parishes and our world be changed? Our Church is trying to become involved in this type of outreach. This the thrust of our Synod's approach as a vibrant parish.

ST BASIL'S THOUGHTS ON GENESIS



ST BASIL THE GREAT

In this article I have been taking my readers through St. Basil's ideas about the days of Creation as contained in the Book of Genesis. We have reached the Sixth Day. The final act of creation, its culmination and crown. God said, *Let us make Man in our image, after our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the animals and over all the earth and over every creeping that creeps on the earth.* The authority given to Man was total, for he was to rule over fish and birds and cattle and whatever crept on the earth. No living thing was

excluded from the gift of human sovereignty.

Commentators have long noticed the plural in which God speaks: *Let US make Man in OUR image, after OUR likeness.* To what does this refer? Some have suggested that it reflects the fullness of the Godhead (also reflected in the plural noun *Elohim* when used as the divine Name) - a fullness that found ultimate fulfillment in the Trinitarian nature of God. Theologians who find in the Old Testament prophetic foreshadowing of Christian realities may justly claim this as one of them. But primary exegesis still asks what this plural would have meant to the original hearers of the text in the ancient Near East. And it seems too difficult to deny that they would have found in the plural usage a reference to the divine heavenly council.

All of the gods of the pagan nations lived and worked as part of a divine council, a heavenly pantheon. Of course Israel's intensely monotheistic faith would not allow for the existence of a pantheon of gods other than Yahweh, but it did retain an echo of the concept of God in council in the form of Yahweh's heavenly council with whom He discussed and communicated. Thus we read in 1 Kings 22:19-22 that, before arranging that King Ahab perish in battle at Ramoth-Gilead, Yahweh asked for help from His heavenly council of angels. One of the angels volunteered to go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets, enticing Ahab to join the battle.

So we see that the Jewish interpretation of Genesis is probably totally different than that of Christians. What do you think?

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



DORMITION FAST

August 1st to August 14th



As you may or may not know, our Church prepares for the feast of

the Dormition of Mary, celebrated on August 15th, with a fast. This fast begins this coming Thursday. While there are no strict rules for this fast, we are asked to make an effort to modify our “eating” during this time in preparation for the feast.



A CALL TO HOLINESS

I know that my regular readers have sensed that this particular article is almost a “stream-of-consciousness” article and can sense that I don’t believe that there is one particular, simple answer to the question: What is the call to holiness that God has given to humankind? In fact this call, in my estimation, has many different dimensions.



It is a call to “authentic living”, as I expressed in last week’s Bulletin. It is also a call to come to a true understanding of the “meaning and purpose” of our life! It is a call to make the primary goal of our life to become more like Jesus Christ through personal transformation. It is a call to not only BELIEVE in God but also to TRUST Him.

All-in-all, the call to holiness is to the work that God intends us to do during this lifetime, namely, to work at personal transformation, personal change. This requires, of course, that we have to realize that there is no one existing that doesn’t have to change. God created humans and all of the universe in such a way that CHANGE is an absolute requirement.

Interestingly, the one that thing that most humans dislike the most is CHANGE. People frequently refuse to change the way that they think and live even though the way they think and live brings them pain and anxiety. It seems that humans are afraid

(Continued on page 8)

OUR MOST IMPORTANT DOCTRINE: THE TRIUNE GOD

As I shared in the last installment of this article, God, in monotheism, is the only divine Being governing all and everything. In the New Testament (NT) the same requirement is imposed: *We love Him, because He first loved us... He that loves not knows not God; for God is love* (1 John 4:19.8). AGAPE is a kind of love originating exclusively from the nature of the one who loves, and does not depend on desirable characteristics of the one for whom it is intended. This love is unconditional and lasting regardless of the fact whether it is answered or not.

One scholar, Irinej Bulovic (1996), comparing the philosophical and Christian concept of God, states that the philosophical concept of God is, in essence, an intellectual, speculative-meditative category, independent of the concrete religious milieu in which a philosopher lives and thinks. The God of Christian Revelation is neither a God of religion, nor a god of philosophy, but a God of the Church. Man, by his nature, has a need and capability to meditatively make sense of and conceptually articulate his being, his life and experience, for himself as well as for others. However, this concept does not have its source in the logic of human opinion, but represents a subsequent description of primary experience in *direct communion with God*. Collaboration between God and man is founded on liberty and love, where God and man unite and operate as the Church or as a divine—human community of true love,



penetrating each other in the person of saint-like, authentic men. The way of conceiving God is by means of love with the participation of reason, but without its monopoly. Christian theology can be rightly considered as an exact spiritual science, based on practice, for practice is the foundation of theory. “Therefore we should meet, experience God and, then, tell a humble true word about it, well aware of the fact that it is just partially said. A word is a symbol, experience is complete reality. Experience transcends the word, even if it is authentic and true.

What is your experience of God?

THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL: NICAEA (325)

I ended the last installment of this article by sharing that it was only in Athanasius' *First Oration*, that we see a fully developed version of Arianism. This terminology was accepted by many western theologians, and increasingly by some easterners in later decades. The years between 325 and 350 are thus highly complex because although we do see a clash of theological traditions throughout this period, many of the participants see themselves involved in a dispute as much about ecclesiastical discipline as anything else. Who has the final right to declare what the Church believes. Many westerners, for instance, seem to have read strong eastern antipathy to Athanasius as being primarily theological, when in fact it may have been equally due to dislike of his personality and ecclesio-political actions in Egypt.

Once we begin to grasp the problems with Athanasius' rhetorical unmasking of "Arians" then we need to look beyond the Athanasian terminology of an 'Arian' conspiracy to get a more accurate sense of how to understand non-Marcellan and non-Athanasian eastern theologies during this period. It is perhaps possible to speak of a broad insistence on the part of many eastern theologians during these years that there is a basic distinction between Father and Son that must be protected in theological formulation. However, at the same



time, we consistently see an insistence that there is an ineffable closeness between Father and Son such that the Son's being can be said to be from the Father in some indescribable sense, and that the Son is (to use one prominent phrase from Wisdom 7:25 and Hebrews 1:3, 'the exact image of the Father's substance'. Many of those who, for instance, were able to sign up to the 'Dedication' creed of 341 at Antioch were happy with such language but probably found both Arius' language and the Athanasian/Marcellan theology unacceptable. Nicaea appears to have seemed dangerously modalist to many of them.

Even to this day, although the Church has found the language to express the relationships between Father, Son and Spirit so that there is ONE GOD WHO HAS THREE DISTINCT PERSONS, it is still a mystery and very difficult to explain. What does the Trinity mean to you? It is something we believe, not something we can prove.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, July 28 - Seventh Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 6
10:00 AM - John, John Jerome & Joel; Mary Krill

EIGHTH WEEK AFTER PENTECOST - TONE 7

Monday, July 29 - Callinicus, Martyr
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Tuesday, July 30 - Silas & Others, Apostles
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, July 31 - Eudocimus, Venerable
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Thursday, August 1 - Procession of the Cross
8:00 AM - Special Intention

Friday, August 2 - Translation of Stephens Relics
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, August 3 - Isaacius & Others, Venerables
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, August 4 - Eighth Weekend After Pentecost - TONE 7
10:00 AM - Noah Patrick Semak; Semak Family

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

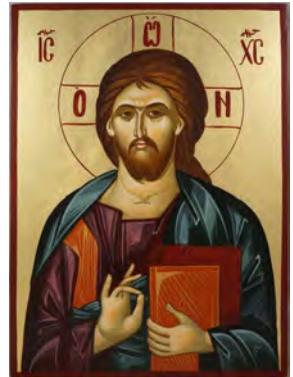
Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

(Continued from page 5 - the Call to holiness)

change because they don't know what things will be like once they change.

Further, it seems that people will only change when the pain of living and thinking becomes so great that they can't tolerate it any longer. I would be much simpler to embrace change and look forward to the joy that might come with the change.

So I would ask my readers, do you truly believe that you were created by God in such a way that personal change is required and is the solution to a fuller life? Do you believe that you have to change? If not, why not? Are you willing to discover what you need to change in your life? If not, why not?



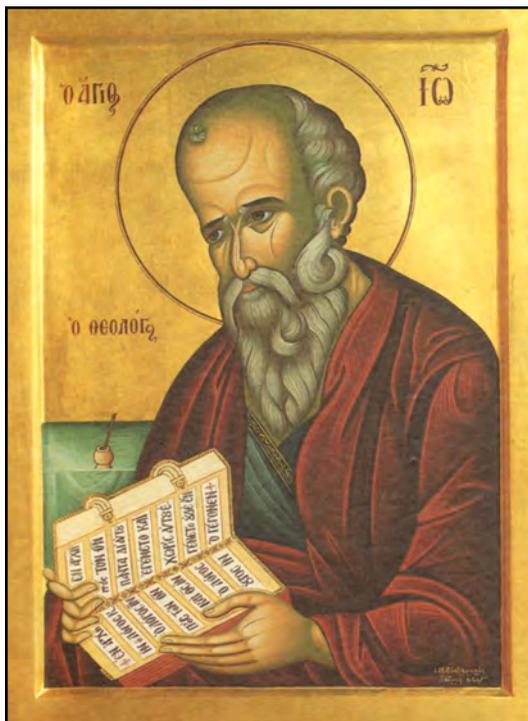
<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)

MORE ABOUT ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

I ended the last issue of this article with the statement that the Johannine Christ speaks a language that, whatever its ultimate origin, was authentically Jewish in the Palestine of the 1st century, though he speaks it with intonations and with a content unknown to the sectarians of the Essence Community (Qumran). Once this is recognized, John's literary form ceases to be as esoteric as it might at first appear. John, too, belongs to the tradition of Israelite historiography, rooted firmly in the events of the time and with close analogies to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament.

Many of the Fathers thought that the obvious differences between John and the Synoptics were to be explained by the Evangelist's intention of supplementing the earlier Gospels. It was to this effect that Clement of Alexandria made his famous statement regarding the "spiritual" nature of John. With nuances, a similar view is still held by some scholars today, and, like many views long held, it has something to commend it.

First of all, it is fairly obvious that John presupposes the Synoptic tradition. He takes it for granted that his readers know who the Twelve are, and therefore gives them no introduction. He does not mention Jesus' baptism by John the Baptizer, but he evidently supposes that the reader knows of this baptism when he



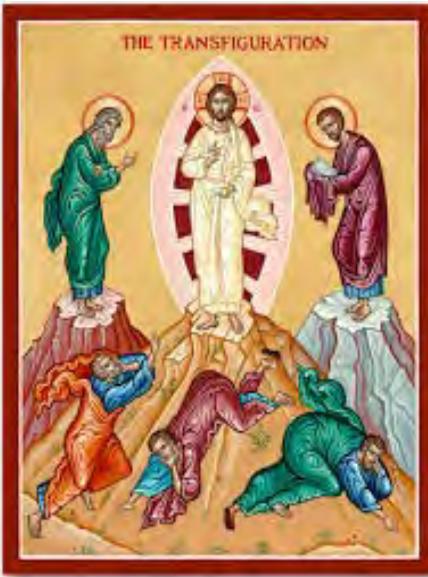
ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

records the Baptist's testimony in 1:32-34. In many instances John's meaning would be difficult to understand were we not already familiar with the Synoptic story.

Whether John made use of the written Synoptics is a different question. Probably a majority opinion today would be that he used, or at least had read, Mark's Gospel. At times John not only parallels the Marcan order, but also uses expressions peculiar to Mark.

Why not read Mark's and John's Gospels and see what you think are the similarities.

UNDERSTANDING THEOSIS - DEIFICATION



I ended the last issue of this article by sharing the fact that in First Peter there are certain Pauline influences which emphasize “Knowledge of Christ” as key to this process of *Theosis*.

Knowledge is in the middle of Second Peter’s virtue list, which begins with faith and ends with love. Lack of these virtues means one is “near-sighted and blind”; such people “are like irrational animals who do not understand.” Christians “have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”. Escaping the corruption that is in the

world is the primary religious need. For Second Peter, divinization means escaping such corruption and taking on a Godly character.

Think about it. If we focus our attention truly upon the transformation that we are called to by God, we will not become bogged down by the corruption of this world. This means that we have to reject, truly, all the things of this world and tell ourselves that the most important thing in life is to become more united with God by making an ever greater effort to live and think like Jesus. The problem is that most people don’t want to give up their concern about this earthly life. And yet the only truly freedom we can obtain is to give up on this present world and seek the Kingdom of God.

Taking on a Godly character, however, does not take place in a protected environment, but in treacherous waters. “Knowing Christ” requires successful navigation past “cleverly devised myths” and “deceptive words”, linked with a strange sensualist religiosity and with a distortion of Pauline teaching. Those who successfully avoid error achieve knowledge of the Lord and Savior. Correct knowing and correct behavior go together.

So part of this process of *Theosis* or *Divinization* is voluntarily making the singular goal of our lives the achievement of greater union with God by transforming our lives to be more like Jesus, God’s prototype of what He created humans to be like. What keeps us humans from making this our singular goal? We get too rapped up in the things of this world and always feel they are more important. Truly, nothing is more import, even grandchildren, than our relationship with God.



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНЬЙ ВІСНИК

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

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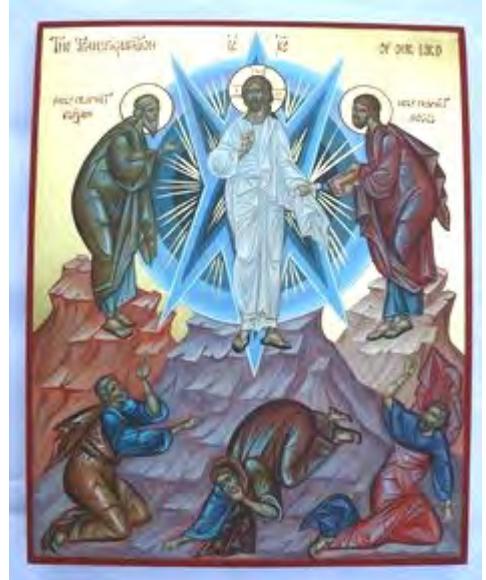
Seventh Weekend After Pentecost

July 27-28, 2019

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHRISTIAN EAST

I wonder how many of my readers sense that there is, and has been, a different sense of the meaning of SALVATION in the Eastern and Western Churches. The biblical tradition, both in the Old Testament and in the New, approaches the question of salvation from the perspective of the likeness of God's people to God. In other words, to be saved means becoming like God. In order for this to happen, a change has to take place in the human person. Of course, this may entail a change of status, as if somebody who has committed a crime is being pardoned. This, however, is not the main direction of the biblical data. Thus the Catholic and Eastern traditions as well as post-Reformation Free Church traditions, in like with the Radical Reformation, have always challenged the magisterial Reformation with neglecting this biblical data.

The Eastern doctrine of deification, the Catholic doctrine of justification, as well as the Anabaptist and Methodist theologies have maintained the inner logic between justification and sanctification as integral parts of salvation. Inner change and change of status cannot be distinguished from each other. The doctrine of sanctification has turned out to be one of the most painful dividing issues in the Lutheran versus Catholic and Orthodox conversations on



THE TRANSFIGURATION

salvation and also within Protestantism between magisterial and radical Reformation traditions.

What do we believe about salvation? We believe that it is a voluntary, cooperative act between free human beings and God and that He is constantly calling us to respond to His expression of love for us. He never forces us to change or to be saved.

They Saw Because They Believed

At that point, two blind men follow the Lord as He was passing by. But if they could not see, how could the blind men know of the Lord's departure as well as His name? Moreover, they called him "Son of David" and asked to be made well. In the two blind men, the entire earlier pre-figuration is complete. The ruler's daughter seems to be from these people, namely, the Pharisees and John's disciples, who already made common cause in testing the Lord.

To these unknowing persons the law gave evidence as to the one from whom they sought a cure. It indicated to them that their Savior in the flesh was of the line of David. It also introduced light to the minds of those who

were blind from past sins. They could not see Christ but were told about Him.

The Lord showed them that faith should not be expected as a result of health but health should be expected because of faith. The blind men saw because they believed; they did not believe because they saw. From this we understand that what is requested must be predicated on faith and that faith must not be exercised because of what has been obtained. If they should believe, He offers them sight. And He charges the believers to be silent, for it was exclusively the task of the Apostles to preach.

St. Hilary of Poitiers